



MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

ABOUT THE MINISTRY | MINISTRY PROGRAMS | NEWS | CONTACT US

About the Ministry

HOME > ABOUT THE MINISTRY

Learn More

- ➔ [About the Ministry](#)
- ➔ [Minister's Biography](#)
- ➔ [Parliamentary Assistant's Biography](#)
- ➔ [Our Organization](#)
- ➔ [Our Legislation](#)
- ➔ [Agency Governance](#)
- ➔ [Plans and Reports](#)
- ➔ [Consultation Documents](#)
- ➔ [Branches and Offices](#)
- ➔ [Agencies and Administrative Authorities](#)
- ➔ [Related Sites](#)

Resources

- ➔ [Telephone Directory](#)
- ➔ [Forms](#)
- ➔ [Publications](#)
- ➔ [Laws](#)

Ministry of Government Services 2009-2010 Accessibility Plan

Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, sets out the roadmap to make Ontario accessible by 2025. Under this act, accessibility standards are being developed and implemented to break down barriers in key areas of everyday life.

These standards will increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment.

The Government of Ontario is preparing to lead the way towards an accessible province, beginning in January 2010 when the first standard — for customer service — comes into force.

Each year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

Building on last year's plan, this 2009-2010 accessibility plan demonstrates how the Ministry of Government Services contributes to the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at:

English

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/ministry/accessibilityPlans/ministries_accplans10.htm

French

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/french/ministry/accessibilityPlans/ministries_accplans10.htm

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. All Ontario Public Service (OPS) ministries must comply with the Regulation by January 1, 2010.

To transition OPS ministries to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation (CUSTOMER SERVICE REGULATION), this section has been added to the ODA Planning to highlight customer service initiatives.

Commitment: Compliance with the CUSTOMER SERVICE REGULATION

The Ministry of Government Services (MGS) is committed to complying with the customer service regulation by January 1, 2010. Using best business practices, the ministry developed a compliance strategy to ensure it complies quickly and efficiently in a way that is commonly recognized across the organization.

The ministry's goal is to implement the customer service regulation so that it compliments other



corporate initiatives and leads by example by going beyond minimum standards.

Status: Completed

Action:

On November 30, 2009 MGS met the requirements of the customer service regulation. The ministry developed a number of processes and internal products that became part of a set of best practices that emerged across the OPS. For example, ServiceOntario redesigned its customer-feedback process to comply with the regulation; which is now a process of choice for other parts of the OPS.

The ministry will continue to comply with the customer service regulation and provide overall leadership in delivering accessible service.

Commitment: MGS Accessibility compliance kit (the Kit)

MGS created an accessibility compliance kit that will help the ministry comply with the customer service regulation. The Kit supports the goal of demonstrating leadership in accessibility by providing encouragement and suggestions on how to develop and implement additional accessibility features in customer service. For example the Kit provides a set of suggestions on how managers and staff can work together to ensure ongoing training on accessibility takes place.

Status: Completed

Action:

The ministry created an accessibility compliance kit that was used by each program area to ensure they adopt practices and procedures for accessible customer service as required by the customer service regulation. The kit was designed to provide simple but thorough compliance, encourage and support leadership compliance and be adaptable as a model to implement future accessibility regulations.

The kit was distributed to the ministry and third-party organizations that provide services on behalf of the ministry starting in June 2009.

The kit was well received by ministry divisions as they comply with the customer service regulation efficiently. It was also been used by several other ministries.

Commitment: Compliance Implementation Support

Various tools will be developed to support all program areas implement the MGS accessibility compliance kit.

Status: Completed

Action:

A compliance-orientation presentation was created and offered to all MGS program areas to understand the overall ministry compliance strategy and process.

An implementation workshop was developed to help the ministry implement the accessibility compliance kit. It was designed to help managers work with their staff to comply with the regulation, streamline the implementation process and make compliance more efficient.

Commitment: Policy

MGS will ensure its policies for accessible customer service are consistent with the customer service regulation.

The OPS accessible customer service policy and guideline will be made available across the ministry. This policy has helped guide different areas of the ministry to develop their procedures and practices to serve customers with disabilities.

Status: Completed

Action:

To show leadership in accessible customer service, and to comply with the customer service regulation, the ministry created the declaration of accessible customer service practices.

As a part of the MGS accessibility compliance kit and implementation process, all ministry staff committed to the requirements of the customer service regulations to serve customers with disabilities.

Commitment: Principles

MGS is committed to providing goods and services to customers with disabilities and adhering to the customer service regulation's principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equity.

Status: Completed

Action:

All employees of MGS were encouraged to make the ministry more accessible by applying the customer service regulation principles to their work. The principles were built into all parts of the MGS accessibility compliance kit including the:

- Step-by-step implementation guide
- OPS accessible customer service policy
- MGS accessibility training manual
- Declaration of accessible customer service practices
- Posters that displayed accessible customer service practices
- MGS accessibility training strategy

Ongoing:

MGS will continue reflecting these accessibility principles in ministry business.

Commitment: Service Animals / Support Persons

The regulation requires that all service-providing organizations allow service animals on the premises (unless not permitted by law), and to allow support persons to accompany people with disabilities at all times while on the premises.

Status: Completed

Action:

These requirements were included in the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy. They were also included in the following items in the MGS Accessibility compliance kit: MGS accessibility Training Manual; Declaration of Accessible Customer Service; and a poster promoting the organization as an accessible customer service organization.

Ongoing:

There is a long-standing customer service practice in MGS. The ministry will continue to ensure service animals and support persons are welcomed in ministry offices. The ministry will also ensure new programs and initiatives are developed with this in mind.

Commitment: Posting of Notices

The customer service regulation has several requirements for notices to inform customers of the measures taken to ensure a positive service experience. For example, offices are required to post a notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on are disrupted. In addition, offices are required to inform customers and clients about each location's accessibility features.

Status: Completed

Action:

These requirements were included in the OPS accessible customer service policy and were included in the MGS Accessibility compliance kit.

Ongoing:

The OPS accessibility leads network, a group of accessibility representatives from each ministry, is developing a model for posting service disruption notices. MGS will continue supporting the development of this tool and incorporate it into its accessible customer services practices and procedures. We will expand the notice-posting to include all ministry Internet and Intranet sites.

Commitment: Assistive Devices

The ministry will refine its practices and procedures to ensure people who use assistive devices are able to obtain the ministry's goods or use our services. It will also require all ministry service providers to be able to use assistive devices to serve customers with disabilities.

Status: Completed

Action:

MGS employees are required to know how to use the assistive devices their clients and customers use to deliver services.

Ongoing:

MGS will continue to assess its use of assistive devices and incorporate up-to-date devices that are consistent with our ministry values and responsibly use public funds.

Commitment: Training

All staff and third-party service providers of MGS will receive accessibility training as required by the customer service regulation.

Status: Completed

Action:

The MGS accessibility compliance kit includes an accessibility training manual. This manual was specifically written to include the accessibility training requirements set out by the OPS diversity office and the accessibility directorate of Ontario.

Ongoing:

The accessibility compliance kit also includes a proposed accessibility training strategy to support ongoing training according to the customer service regulation and to prepare for upcoming regulations.

Commitment: Communicating

The ministry is committed to taking into account a person's disability when communicating with them.

Status: Completed

Action:

The ministry is required to take into account a person's disability when communicating with them. This is outlined in the OPS accessible customer service policy and guideline; the declaration of accessible customer service practices; and the MGS accessibility training manual. The resource guide in the manual also provides sources to arrange alternate formats for communicating in a wide range of mediums.

Ongoing:

MGS will continue to assess these processes for arranging alternate formats and create plans to improve the speed and logistics of making those arrangements.

Commitment: Feedback

MGS has had many facilities for customers to provide feedback on their service experience. The ministry will ensure that these feedback facilities are upgraded to meet the requirements of the customer service regulation. This means customers with disabilities will be able to provide feedback in a variety of ways, and they will be able to know what will happen to the feedback they provide.

Status: Completed

Action:

ServiceOntario has redesigned its customer feedback process to include the requirements of the customer service regulation. The new feedback process stands as a best practice model that is being used by other parts of the ministry, OPS and many jurisdictions around the world.

The MGS accessibility compliance kit also gave program areas a feedback process, creating a uniform way of ensuring customers with disabilities can provide feedback and know what will happen as a result of the feedback they provide.

Ongoing:

The ministry will continue upgrading its feedback process to show leadership through ServiceOntario.

Commitment: Ongoing Compliance

MGS will continue to assess the extent and effectiveness and make improvements wherever necessary in accordance with our commitment to leadership in accessible customer services.

Status: Underway

Action:

The ministry will develop a process to randomly check how well it is complying with the customer service regulation and incorporate reminders into communications and training programs. The ministry will use the feedback it receives to make changes and improvements to our accessible customer service.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments (Ongoing / New)

Commitment: Accessible Web Content

MGS will increase the accessibility of web content and commonly used online forms.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

In September 2009, a memo was circulated to all staff about the importance of ensuring all web content and commonly-used online forms are accessible to people with disabilities. This notice gave staff information about how they can learn more about making web content accessible, such as ensuring the Word documents, or documents posted in PDF, are edited to ensure they are accessible.

MGS will establish and implement a plan to identify existing web content and commonly-used forms that are not accessible and provide them in an accessible format. This will include formatting online forms to be accessible to people who are blind or who have other vision disabilities; posting videos with captions or transcripts for people who are deaf or hard of hearing; making sure photos are properly tagged for people with vision loss.

Commitment: Internet sites (OPS Careers etc.)

MGS will continue the developing of the OPS careers Internet and intranet sites, by applying the accessibility standards of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to provide the public and OPS employees with fully-accessible information.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

The OPS Careers portal uses W3C standards accessibility principles when changing the website. The current website contains accessible information on careers in the OPS, and provides tools and tips for candidates preparing for an interview in the Ontario government.

Ongoing:

MGS will continue to make improvements to the OPS Careers portal as technology upgrades are introduced. For example, the ministry will use a new content management solution to make this website more accessible in 2010.

Commitment: Information and Communications Regulation

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, a regulation will be enacted to establish accessibility standards for information and communications in Ontario. The ministry will begin planning to implement the regulation to ensure it complies by the deadline.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

An implementation strategy will be created to help the ministry meet the requirements of this regulation and ensure it has the tools and materials needed to meet the requirements. The strategy will be based on simplicity, uniformity, integration and leadership. An implementation plan will be developed which will indicate: how program areas will implement the requirements of the regulation; how the implementation plan will be communicated; and how the implementation process will be monitored for effectiveness.

Commitment: Showcase Ontario Accessibility

Showcase Ontario (Showcase) is a high-profile public sector technology conference. Showcase organizers will continue removing accessibility barriers so that the show is more accessible to people with disabilities.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre was chosen as the location for Showcase because it exceeds current accessibility guidelines. The Showcase team provided sign language interpreters for educational sessions as well as closed captioning for the keynote ceremonies and awards ceremonies. The team also arranged to have customized government exhibits that are wheelchair accessible.

The Showcase website has been designed to be accessible, and each year this is reviewed as new content and features are incorporated, and technological solutions for accessibility are improved.

Sign-language interpreters and closed-captioning services were on site during all three days of the event. There were four keynote addresses, two award ceremonies and seven educational sessions that had sign-language interpreters present. The event had twenty wheelchair accessible exhibit stations in the government exhibits section. It also had twenty stations where screen readers were installed. The educational sessions included reserved seating for people with disabilities. OPS employees were recruited and trained to provide specialized guide services to visitors with disabilities.

On the showroom floor, carpet and under pad were removed to allow easier wheelchair and scooter mobility. As well, the aisle widths were increased to allow for more accessible mobility. Water stations were provided for working dogs, and power scooter recharge stations were installed on all three levels of the event. Where ramps could not be arranged to make stages accessible, the staging platforms were removed.

Accessibility awareness sessions for all government exhibitors and volunteers were offered. As well, material related to accessible customer service was provided to the staff of the private company that operated the on-site registration desks.

Accessibility guides were available to assist delegates who required assistance.

Government displays were set up to exhibit a number of accessibility technologies and tools that are available to the public and to government staff who serve the public.

Ongoing:

Showcase organizers will review the effectiveness of the 2009 accessibility features and use it as a basis to make the 2010 event even more accessible. For example the organizers will:

- Promote ,more volunteerism to increase the number of accessibility guides at the event
- Explore further use of closed-captioning TV and its compatibility with presentations and workshops that use audio-visual requirements
- Identify other resources that can be used to secure interpreters
- Review costs associated with providing accessibility and identify potential funds to help make the event more accessible
- Investigate alternative interpretation devices
- Look at ways to provide assistive devices to all computers used at the event in an economical way.

Commitment: Corporate Services Division Website Material

The corporate services division will continue to add accessibility information and tools to their intranet site. The information and tools will be available to the entire Ontario government.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

In October 2009, the division posted the MGS accessibility compliance kit, with related documents and information needed to implement the customer service regulation. This material was used across the ministry to comply with the regulation.

Ongoing:

The division will finalize and upload information and tools to conduct accessible meetings. This will include a reference library of accessibility profiles of the key meeting rooms used in the Queen's Park area. Accessibility profiles are outlines of the physical and logistical characteristics

of a room that might represent barriers to people with disabilities. For example, identifying if there are sound quality issues in the room which may be a barrier to participants with hearing loss or who are deaf.

The division will post agenda templates to make meetings more accessible and meetings and reduce the need for people with disabilities to declare their disability in advance.

Commitment: Accessibility Training

MGS will ensure that all employees are trained and educated on ongoing developments in accessibility in the workplace and throughout the province.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

Accessibility training and awareness have been hallmarks of accessibility in MGS. The ministry has a training program called the accessibility awareness experience which has been in place for several years. This program is being continually updated so that it remains relevant and fresh for ministry employees. Recent improvements include more multi-media content and technological delivery channels, such as videos and electronic presentations.

Cross-government integration of training takes place through the accessibility leads network – a committee of accessibility leads from all Ontario government ministries. This committee shares the best of the best so that all OPS employees have a constant stream of informative and inspirational content.

Ongoing:

The ministry has an accessibility training strategy to support ongoing accessibility training for staff. The strategy includes the requirements of the customer service regulation to make this kind of training an effective and integrated part of operations and provide resources to obtain accessibility training.

Commitment: Capital Projects

All new capital projects and construction for MGS will meet the design and construction requirements for barrier-free designs in Ontario government facilities.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

The ministry is in the process of ensuring all current accessibility standards for the built environment (such as the Ontario building code, and the OPS accessibility standards for government facilities) are used to review and analyze capital proposals. As well, this accessibility review and analysis framework will be updated to reflect the upcoming regulation for accessibility standards for the built environment under the AODA.

Ongoing:

All future MGS capital proposals will be reviewed and analyzed within this new framework.

Commitment: Review Legislation

MGS will review the upcoming accessibility standards regulations to ensure they are implemented in the areas for which it is responsible. The regulation for information and communication is due by the Spring of 2010. The regulations for employment, built environment, and transportation will follow.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

MGS legal counsel will review the draft accessibility standards regulation and provide advice on the ministry's compliance requirements. This will help support for the development and implementation of a compliance strategy and project.

Commitment: Ontario Public Service Diversity Office

In order to improve overall government-wide accessibility for persons with disabilities, MGS will continue supporting the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians

with Disabilities Act, 2005, and develop the Ontario Public Service accessibility leadership strategy with input from other ministries and employees. The goal of the OPS accessibility leadership strategy is to provide a framework for consistent OPS practices that identify, remove and prevent workplace barriers in: customer service; information and communications; employment and human resources; the built environment; and, transportation. This will help persons with disabilities access common government-wide initiatives such as recruitment, customer services and employee training.

Status: Ongoing

Action:

MGS provided leadership to all ministries by planning and implementing the OPS accessibility leadership strategy. MGS has taken on a leadership role in coordinating, guiding, and facilitating the development of tools, policies and practices for all ministries to ensure a consistently high level of accessibility across government. Work included:

- Meeting with areas of government to prepare an OPS-wide accessibility plan to ensure capacity and readiness to implement accessibility standards;
- Established the accessibility leadership committee of assistant deputy ministers and chief administrative officers to guide OPS accessibility;
- Working with the accessibility planning leads for each ministry to develop resources and coordinate planning with other corporate strategies and initiatives;
- Launching a pilot diversity mentoring program to provide opportunities for members of specific diversity groups, including persons with disabilities, to be matched up with a deputy minister mentor; and
- Promoting awareness and education at an OPS accessibility expo and Showcase Ontario, focusing on the new accessibility standards for customer service.

Ongoing:

MGS will continue to update its enterprise-wide, multi-year accessibility plan to steer all levels of government toward achieving the objectives of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and its regulations.

Commitment: Create a backup accessibility lead for MGS

In order to increase the continuity of ministry accessibility efforts, and continue to demonstrate leadership in accessibility, the ministry will ensure that an employee is trained and assigned responsibility to backup to the ministry's senior project consultant for accessibility.

Status: New

Action:

An individual requested the opportunity to take on this role. That individual is currently being briefed on the various aspects of the accessibility work being done in MGS. This orientation will continue so that person can manage the accessibility portfolio should the need arise.

Ongoing:

In 2010, the individual who is being oriented to be the ministry's accessibility lead backup will begin to take independent lead on various aspects of the accessibility commitments in the ministry's accessibility planning.

Commitment: Accessibility Integration

The ministry will implement a plan to make accessibility a key consideration in setting up workspaces and work tools so new employees with disabilities can begin their work with the same relative ease as any other employee. For example, all computers will have screen readers available so that a new employee who is blind can begin working upon arrival without having to wait for special accommodation.

Status: New

Action:

MGS will bring together representatives from the various corporate technology programs and employees with disabilities to establish a scope-of-requirements document. The ministry will use this document as the basis for establishing a plan and schedule for implementation.

For More Information

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are welcome.

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Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.html. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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