



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

2006-2007 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

**THE HONORABLE MICHAEL A. BROWN
SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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Introduction

This document is the fourth annual accessibility plan developed by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It highlights achievements of the third year plan and outlines commitments for 2006-2007, the fourth year, so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

The Legislative Assembly intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province.

Message from the Speaker

All public sector and broader public sector organizations are required by law to have an annual accessibility plan and to make it available to the public. This is the fourth year in which plans have been written and are being implemented by organizations such as ours across the province.

The Legislative Assembly is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers in key areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

Here at the Assembly we are building on the success of our previous three plans and continuing to look for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with the Assembly, regardless of whether they are staff, members of the general public or Members of the Provincial Parliament.

If you have any comments or concerns, I encourage you to send them using the contact information located at the end of this document.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Brown

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Report on Achievements

Much of the work in year three focused on planning for future improvements in communications and information, customer service and the built environment. The work in year four builds on the planning undertaken in year three and we will see changes to our internet site, improved accessibility in the Legislative building, and increased awareness of accessibility issues among our staff.

2005-2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

Communications and Information

Commitment

Increase the Assembly's Accessibility Committee's knowledge of assistive technologies.

Status

Complete.

Action

The Committee visited and toured the new CNIB building to review and learn about state-of-the-art facilities.

Commitment

Create awareness of the Assembly's Accessibility Committee by publicizing its activities within the Assembly.

Status

Complete.

Action

The Committee hosted a display on its activities at an Assembly-wide technology fair in September 2005.

Built Environment

Commitment

Implement *ORC Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* in capital and renovation projects.

Status

Complete.

Action taken

These standards were met on capital and renovation projects in 2005-2006, including the renovation of the Journals Branch in the summer of 2006.

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

Customer Service

Commitment

Widen accessibility training among Assembly staff.

Status

Ongoing.

Action

Training on accessibility was incorporated into the Assembly's "Respect in the Workforce" training program that is mandatory for all new hires.

Rationale

This is a multi-year program necessary to reach all current Assembly staff and new staff.

Communications and Information

Commitment

The redesign of the Assembly's internet website will include posting international symbols on the website to indicate accessibility, the availability of alternate formats and TTY equipment, and the use of plain language to ensure that content developed for the Assembly's website is accessible. Guidelines will be developed for both the internet and intranet sites to take into account best practices, research completed to date, and available technologies.

Status

Ongoing.

Action taken

Consideration of accessibility issues was built into the project plan for the Assembly's site redesign project, carried out during 2006.

Rationale

The new site will be launched early in 2007.

Commitment

Install a television set with closed captioning in the Speaker's Gallery.

Status

Incomplete.

Action taken

Logistics have necessitated a review of this commitment.

Built Environment

Commitment

Refitting of the platform lift behind grand staircase in Legislative building.

Status

Ongoing.

Action taken

The design for a new elevator to replace the platform lift has been completed. If funding is approved, a new elevator will be installed in 2008-2009, improving accessibility to the north wing of the Legislative building.

Rationale

This is a two-year design and construction project.

Commitment

Improve accessibility signage in all public and staff areas in the Legislative Building.

Status

Ongoing.

Action taken

Plans are being developed to review the signage and identify best new designs.

Rationale

Funding is required to plan for, design and install appropriate signage to meet the needs of the Assembly's historical building.

Commitments – Measures to Prevent New Barriers

Customer Service

Barrier

Although all managers and supervisors have completed the online accessibility training course, other Assembly staff have not been asked to complete the training. New staff members are introduced to accessibility training through “Respect in the Workforce Training”, however completion of the online course has not been monitored.

Commitment

To increase the number of non-managerial/non-supervisory staff completing accessibility training. The focus this year will be in ensuring that all new staff complete the online training module.

Responsibility

Human Resources

Timetable

Follow-through after three months of completion of “Respect in the Workplace” training to ensure that online accessibility training has been completed.

Barrier

The paper passes required for special admission to the public galleries are unavailable in alternate formats.

Commitment

To make these passes available in large print and Braille.

Responsibility

Assembly Security Service

Timetable

To be completed March 2007.

Employment

Barrier

Assembly staff have not been asked for feedback as to employment barriers that may exist in the Assembly.

Commitment

The Accessibility Committee will ask Assembly staff for their input and feedback.

Responsibility

Accessibility Committee.

Timeline

Fall 2007.

Communications and Information

Barrier

The current internet site was not developed with accessibility issues in mind, although the site complied with the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (May 1999).

Commitment

The re-design of the Assembly's internet website is underway and will launch early in 2007. At that time, the information architecture, information design, navigation, organization and all data-driven pages (including Bills and Members' information) will be developed and tested to meet WCAG 1.0 AA standards of accessibility.

Responsibility

Assembly Internet Redesign (AIR) Team

Timelines

Early 2007.

Barrier

The Accessibility Committee needs to continue to explore new technologies and new and retrofitted facilities in order to increase its knowledge of possible barriers.

Commitment

Increase the Accessibility Committee's knowledge of assistive technologies with visits to best practice institutions, e.g. University of Toronto Adaptive Technology Centre

Responsibility

Accessibility Committee

Timeline

Spring-Summer 2007.

Barrier

There needs to be greater awareness among Assembly staff of the Assembly's Accessibility Committee's activities

Commitment

Provide more information to staff on the issues around all types of barriers and the activities being taken to reduce these barriers. This would include an article in an upcoming issue of the Assembly's staff newsletter.

Responsibility

Accessibility Committee

Timeline

Spring 2007

Built Environment

Barrier

The platform behind the grand staircase that provides the only accessible means to access the north wing from the south, east and west wings is no longer functioning properly and is out-of-date. Ramps on the stairs are too steep for

proper maneuverability.

Commitment

Installation of new elevator to the North wing and removal of ramps from behind the grand staircase.

Responsibility

Precinct Properties Branch

Timeline

The design for a new elevator to replace the platform lift has been completed. If funding is approved, the tender for the new elevator will be put out in 2007-2008 a new elevator will be installed in 2008-2009.

Barrier

An intercom system is not in place in the public entrance at the accessible south basement door of the Assembly. This impedes access to the Legislative building in off-hours.

Commitment

Installation of an intercom system, so that entry to the accessible basement is available 24/7.

Responsibility

Precinct Properties Branch

Timeline

December 2007.

Barrier

The accessibility signage in the building is of low contrast and is difficult to see.

Commitment

Improve accessibility signage in all public and staff areas in the Legislative Building.

Responsibility

Precinct Properties Branch

Timelines

Plans are being developed to review the signage and identify best new designs. Completion September 2007.

Questions or comments about the Legislative Assembly's accessibility plan are always welcome.

For more information please contact:

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Website: <http://www.ontla.on.ca>

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Accessibility Ontario Web portal at: <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/indexf.html>. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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