



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

2007-2008 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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

ISSN 1710-5625

Introduction

This document is the fifth annual accessibility plan developed by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It highlights achievements of the fourth year plan and outlines commitments for 2007-2008 to ensure 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 make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province where people of all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

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 fifth 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 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 four focused on planning for future improvements in communications and information, customer service and the built environment. As a result of the planning undertaken in year three, we have seen changes to our internet site, improved accessibility in the Legislative building, and increased awareness of accessibility issues among our staff.

2006-2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

Commitment

To make the paper passes required for special admission to the public galleries in the Chamber available in alternate formats (large print and Braille).

Status

Complete.

Commitment

Gather feedback from staff on employment barriers that exist in the Assembly.

Status

In progress.

Timeframe

Expected completion date November 2007.

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.

Status

In progress.

Timeframe

An article will be published in Fall 2007 in the Assembly staff newsletter.

Commitment

Installation of a new elevator to the north wing of the Legislative Building and the removal of the ramps from behind the grand staircase.

Status

In progress.

Timeframe

Expected completion date January 2008.

Commitment

Installation of an intercom system at the entrance to the south basement.

Status

In progress.

Timeframe

Expected completion November 2007.

Commitment

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

Status

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

Timetable

Expected completion Spring 2008.

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

Commitment

To increase the number of non-managerial/non-supervisory staff completing accessibility training. Focus is on ensuring that all new staff members have completed the online training module.

Status Ongoing. The commitment has been broadened, with all staff now required to complete the online accessibility training module. All new staff will also be required to take this training.

Commitment

Increase the Accessibility Committee's knowledge of assistive technologies with visits to best practice institutions. For example, a site visit is planned to the University of Toronto Centre for Adaptive Technologies in September 2007.

Status Ongoing

Commitment

Review of the content of the Assembly's internet site to meet accessibility standards. The information architecture, information design, navigation, organization and all data-driven pages has been completed and the new site was launched in February 2007. Work continues on content improvements.

Status: Ongoing.

Commitments – Measures to Prevent New Barriers

Customer Service

We will require all Legislative Assembly staff to undertake the Accessibility Directorate's training module on customer service for people with disabilities.

Employment

We will continue to provide training to all new staff and all management staff on accommodating employees and job applicants who have disabilities.

Communications and Information

We will continue to improve access to legislative committee meetings (on and off-site) for people with disabilities.

We will continue to make available alternative communication systems, e.g. TTYs, closed captioning, alternate formats, to facilitate access to the Legislature's services and its activities.

Built Environment

We will continue to review the Legislative Building to identify areas that restrict access to people with disabilities. Every reasonable effort will be made to remove the barriers to ensure premises comply with the requirements of the new Barrier-Free Guidelines.

Commitments – Barriers to be Addressed

Customer Service

Barrier

Barriers may exist for those who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing when telephoning the Legislative Assembly

Commitment

Additional training will be given to all staff manning TTY and VCO telephones to ensure that a high quality of service is being provided to callers of these lines

Responsibility

Telecommunications staff

Timetable

November 2007.

Employment

Barrier

Barriers may exist for people with disabilities working in the Legislature.

Commitment

The staff will be surveyed in the Fall of 2007 to identify any barriers. Comments and concerns will be evaluated and considered.

Responsibility

Accessibility Working Group and Human Resources.

Timeline

Spring 2008.

Built Environment

Barrier

The Lieutenant-Governor's suite will be upgraded as required to meet current accessibility standards.

Commitment

Needed improvements will be made based on the requirements of the Office.

Responsibility

Precinct Properties Branch

Timeline

Expected completion Summer 2008 pending any funding approval needed.

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

For more information please contact:

Vicki Whitmell, MLS
Executive Director
Legislative Library
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

416-325-3939
vicki_whitmell@ontla.ola.org

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

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Accessibility Ontario Web portal at: <http://www.mciss.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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Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2007
ISSN 1710-5625
Ce document est disponible en français