

(www.ola.org)

2020-2023 Accessibility plan

The Honorable Ted Arnott, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

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Introduction from the Speaker

Like all of Ontario's public sector and broader public sector organizations, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is required by law to have a multi-year accessibility plan and to make it publicly available.

The Assembly remains committed to improving accessibility by identifying, removing and preventing barriers for those visit or work in our buildings, attend our off-site committee meetings, use our websites, view or stream our televised proceeding, use our publications, or interact with us in person, online or over the phone.

I am very grateful for the work that our staff has done so far, and we are committed to building on our successes as we look for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with the Assembly, whether they be members of the general public, Members of Provincial Parliament, or staff.

If you have any comments or concerns, please send them to accessibility@ola.org ([www.ola.orgmailto:accessibility@ola.org](mailto:accessibility@ola.org)).

Sincerely,

Honourable Ted Arnott

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

AODA at the Legislative Assembly

We have worked hard at the Assembly to ensure that the work and products of the Assembly is accessible to those who visit or work in our buildings, attend our off-site committee meetings, use our websites, view or stream our televised proceedings, use our publications, or interact with us in person, online or over the phone.

Our approach is to build accessibility into our products, publications and services from the ground up. This might be in the design of renovations or changes to our building, the creation of new information products or business applications, or in thinking about how best to welcome visitors to the building and how to share the exciting history and activities of the Legislature.

Many of the projects that we have completed in the past years have become ongoing commitments, such as continually ensuring that our building and facilities, our information and websites and our customer service meet the changing needs of needs of those with disabilities.

Examples of some of our successes:

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In the past two years new internal and external resources have been designed and developed with accessibility as a key deliverable.

They include a new public-facing website, a new staff intranet site, a new online booking system for tours of the building, a new careers portal for job applicants and a new online gift shop.

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When our committees travel across the province to consult with Ontarians we ensure that our hearings meet the needs of all participants, including those with disabilities. Our meeting rooms are set up with clear lines of sight and aisles wide enough to allow the easy passage of mobility devices. Video conferencing and teleconferencing options are available to those unable to attend committee hearings in person.

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We have moved from paper to digital platforms for many of our information products and publications, with accessibility features in the design choices made. Staff have been trained in digitization processes to ensure that document requests can be delivered in accessible formats.

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We ensure that all of our staff are familiar with the needs of those with disabilities and are able to identify and proactively provide great customer support. We train our staff on making our services and our information accessible with an ongoing training available to all staff. In addition to the Access Forward videos offered to new hires, the Legislative Assembly offers an introduction to accessibility, and hands-on training in the accessibility features of Word. Additional coaching is available on making accessible pdf documents and other tools in the Microsoft suite of products. Our intranet provides “as-needed” guidance on accessibility.

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We surveyed Assembly staff in 2019 on their knowledge of accessibility requirements and their confidence in meeting the needs of people with disabilities. Most staff reported feeling confident that they could help but also knew where to call for assistance in meeting requests for accessible formats or services.

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As we have moved to more remote work we continually look for ways to support our staff with proper technology, training and information.

Report on Our Commitments for 2020

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We developed an accessible version of the print-based Chamber Seating Plan.

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The Assembly's new staff intranet for staff was designed and built with accessibility as a primary requirement.

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Electronic templates and forms used by staff have been redesigned for accessibility.

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Fully accessible educational resource documents are now available for teachers and students on the Assembly internet site. These include teacher’s kits, lesson plans, activities and student workbooks. Going forward additional resources will be made accessible.

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A feasibility study was completed to identify needed barrier-free upgrades to the Legislative Chamber.

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Barrier-Free Door Operators were installed at the East Wing Elevator Lobby (Basement B11), in the unisex washroom B20A (Centre Block Basement), and in women’s washroom N202 (North Wing Second Floor)

Commitments for 2021 to 2023

The Legislative Assembly's overall goal is to ensure that all staff are able to anticipate and respond appropriately to accommodate requests from the public, staff (or potential staff), MPPs and others.

Information and Communication

Ongoing Commitments

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The content on our public and internal websites will remain compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards. These sites will continue to include and enhance accessibility features that enable users with different browsers and devices to access information on-demand, including live streaming feeds with closed captions. All of our websites are designed with accessible content and features that are continuously upgraded and changed based on requirements and needs.

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We will have quality assurance processes and methods in place to ensure that all new content developed for the Legislative Assembly meets regulatory requirements.

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We consult with people with disabilities as we design and change our websites. In 2021 we will begin a multi-year engagement with Fable, a Canadian company which provides accessibility advice and reviews. Fable employs people with disabilities, giving us access to people with lived experience. This helps us to understand accessibility not simply as a compliance requirement, but as a best practice for all users.

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The Assembly's Accessibility Working Group will continue to educate and update Assembly staff and management on the requirements under the AODA.

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The Assembly will continue to train staff and contractors in serving customers with disabilities as part of its orientation training and will respond to feedback received.

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An appropriate space has been set aside in the Legislative Building to accommodate visitors with sensory overload requirements.

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Regular testing will continue of the Assembly's TTY telephone systems.

One-Time Commitments for 2021-2023

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A modernization of the Assembly's business applications is underway. These applications support and automate the work of the House and its committees and its publications and reports making the work of the House more available. The interfaces to these applications and the documents they help to create will be designed for a wide range of users needs and tested to ensure operability across browsers and assistive devices. The modernization will improve the ease of use, findability and accessibility of House documents.

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We are working to make our documents and information easier to understand by using plain language.

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Work is ongoing to increase the number of rooms in the Legislative Building that provide broadcast coverage of committee meetings. All forms of video from these rooms will include closed captioning, including live feeds, streaming and recording. This will improve access to the work of Legislative committees.

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Work is underway to link live streams to the Hansard written transcript of House proceedings. This will increase accessibility and availability of the work of the Legislature and allow ease of movement between print and video.

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Plans are underway for captioning of the live proceedings of travelling committees.

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The language in our purchasing contracts will be reviewed to ensure that they provide specific requirements for outside vendors to meet Assembly accessibility standards for all products and services.

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The Legislative Library and Legislative Research have moved many of their publications to a fully-accessible platform and developed accessible templates for work products. Work will continue on digitizing key documents in the collection in order to make them accessible and available on demand.

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A tactile/sensory program is being developed for public tours that will help those with disabilities to more fully explore the historic Legislative Building.

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A pilot is underway to develop more American Sign Language (ASL) capacity among staff.

Commitments: Employment Standards, 2021-2023

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Our new recruitment portal will be continually upgraded and enhanced to meet the needs of candidates and Assembly managers and staff.

Commitments: The Built Environment, 2021-2023

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A new Visitors Entrance to the Legislative Building will be opened in the Spring of 2020. Barrier-free entry and exiting improvements were made (including a snowmelt system on the exterior sidewalk and ramp.). The Visitors Entrance will be fully accessible with Legislative Protective Service officers able to proactively provide accommodation for people with disabilities.

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New interpreter/translator workstations will be built in committee rooms to accommodate staff with disabilities.

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An adult change table will be installed in the East Wing Basement Unisex Washroom (B70A)

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Accessibility upgrades will be made to ramps and platforms within the Legislative Chamber and its adjacent spaces.

Comments about the Legislative Assembly's accessibility plan are always welcome.

For more information please contact us at accessibility@ola.org (www.ola.orgmailto:accessibility@ola.org).

Website: <http://www.ola.org> ([www.ola.orghttp://www.ola.org/](http://www.ola.org)).

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