

MINISTRY OF HEALTH PROMOTION

*2008-2009
Accessibility Plan*



ISSN # 1911-3617

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Introduction

Ontario is making progress toward building an accessible province by 2025. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) has laid the foundation to meet this goal. Under the act, Ontario is developing standards that will remove the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

On January 1, 2008, the first accessibility standard under the act came into force. Through the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, people of all abilities will be able to get the service they need. Public sector organizations, including the Ontario government, will need to comply with this standard by 2010. Private sector and non-profit organizations will need to comply by 2012.

Next year, more standards will be released in other important areas, including:

- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The built environment.

The Ministry of Health Promotion's third annual accessibility plan highlights 2007-2008's achievements to break down barriers for people with disabilities. It also outlines this ministry's commitments in the coming year to make programs, policies and services more accessible for all Ontarians.

This accessibility plan is unique, because it reflects our transition between the AODA and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). The ODA applies to the Ontario government and all broader public sector organizations. Under this act, the ministry develops annual accessibility plans to make its policies, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities.

Through the ODA, accessibility planning has laid a strong foundation for the Ministry of Health Promotion to build on. This ministry will continue to help make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities and a more inclusive society for all Ontarians.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available at:

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/ministries_accplans09.htm.

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service came into force on January 1, 2008. To begin to transition OPS ministries to the new regulation, this section has been added to the ODA Planning Template to highlight customer service initiatives.

All OPS ministries must comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by January 1, 2010. To assist ministries with planning and compliance, initiatives in this section should correspond to the 11 requirements under the new Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the AODA, as listed below.

NOTE: MGS is currently working on a Service Directive, corporate policies and guidelines that may be used by each ministry to satisfy some of the following requirements. Further information on what can be used/ leveraged will be provided to ministry ODA planning leads shortly.

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
2. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that your policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality and opportunity
3. Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access your goods, use your services and any other measures your organization offers (assistive devices, services, or methods) to enable them to access your goods and use your services.
4. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises you own or operate that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, use other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.
6. Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.

7. Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
8. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use your goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
9. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on your behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
10. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
11. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities and how you will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. Make the information about your feedback process readily available to the public.

NOTE: This is a summary of requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. To view the official regulation, go to www.e-laws.gov.on.ca, and click on “Current Consolidated Law” to do a keyword search for “429/07”.

Status of Customer Service Requirements 2007/2008 Achievements & 2008/2009 Commitments

Customer Service Focus Area:

Establish policies, practices, and procedures on providing goods and services to people with disabilities

Commitment #1: New

The Ministry of Health Promotion will establish a Customer Service Policy, in accordance with the requirements of the new AODA Customer Service Standards and associated practices and procedures.

Planned Action(s):

- The Ministry's Customer Service Policy will support accessibility for person's with disabilities; support standards and practices to communicate to a person with a disability, including providing alternative formats; support mechanisms for compliance, reporting and feedback; support all other requirements contained in the Customer Service Standard

Implementation Timeframe:

- Sept 2007 - Mar 2010

Results Achieved:

- Results will be reported in the Ministry's 2009/2010 plan

Commitment #2: New

- The Ministry of Health Promotion will ensure that ministry organized meetings and events at public venues provide accessibility for people with disabilities. As well, any requests concerning accessibility for people with disabilities at venues hosting public-health-related meetings and events are dealt with in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Planned Action(s):

- Information and resources will be posted on the ministry intranet that explain how to plan accessible meetings/events.

Implementation Timeframe:

- Sept 2007 - Mar 2010

Customer Service Focus Area:

Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his/her disability.

Commitment: Ongoing

1. Ministry of Health Promotion staff work with stakeholders and clients to raise awareness that, upon request, ministry documents are available in alternate formats, e.g., Braille, large print, audio cassette, computer disk, etc.
2. Where possible ask the person directly how to best communicate with them.

Planned Action(s):

- American Sign Language (ASL) and other communications options will be considered to communicate the video content of ministry websites.
- The e-Learning tool, “May I help You?” will be incorporated as part of the Ministry’s orientation program.

Implementation Timeframe:

- Sept 2007 - Mar 2010

Results Achieved:

- Accessibility information is available for staff on the Ministry intranet website.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Accessibility Improvement Initiatives to Identify, Remove or Prevent Barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

In the near future, the OPS will be obligated to comply with four new standards in the areas of transportation, information and communication, employment and the built environment. This section should focus ODA planning on readiness and preparation for these new standards currently under development. Therefore, initiatives described below to identify, remove and prevent barriers should be clearly identified by these four areas.

A “barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. Examples of methodologies to identify barriers include a policy or program review, surveys or customer feedback mechanisms, etc.

This section identifies new initiatives and provides a status report on completed or multi-year initiatives that are currently underway.

1. Identify whether initiatives have built environment, employment, transportation, or information & communication implications. Initiatives may have an impact on more than one AODA focus area.
2. Identify whether the initiative will impact or include an assessment of Acts, regulation, policies, programs, or services.
3. Report on results achieved for completed commitments. If implementation of the commitment spans multiple years identify planned activities for the next year and the results achieved in the last year.

Status of Other Accessibility Commitments

2007/2008 Achievements & 2008/2009 Commitments

Commitment: Ongoing

Accessibility planning will be incorporated into the Ministry of Health Promotion's operational and results based plans (RbP).

Accessibility Focus Area:

- Other

Impact Implications:

- Program Delivery

Planned Action(s):

- The 2009/2010 RbP includes Accessibility planning.

Implementation Timeframe:

- Ongoing

Results Achieved:

- The 2008/2009 RbP included Accessibility planning.
- Newly developed operational plans reflect the ministry's commitment to continuously improve the accessibility of programs and services to people with disabilities.

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Health Promotion will continue to review policies and programs to ensure that they give due consideration to accessibility needs in the area of program access and customer service.

Accessibility Focus Area:

- Other

Impact Implications:

- Program Delivery

Planned Action(s):

- MHP will embed an ongoing culture of incorporating accessibility needs into program development.

Implementation Timeframe:

- 2007-2008

Results Achieved:

- In 2008 two programs were launched, which acknowledged accessibility needs;
 - o The proposed Child and Youth Health and Wellness (After-School) Strategy states that "addressing access/equity issues is an essential step to ensure that ...all children in Ontario will have access to safe, accessible, active and healthy after-school activities in various community settings...".
 - o Another ministry program that highlights the ministry's commitment to accessibility is the "Pedometer Challenge". The original program name, The Walking Challenge, was changed to the "Pedometer Challenge" to remove the emphasis away from walking so that all barriers to participate in the program were removed. The posters for the campaign have been shown to the Diversity Secretariat for inclusiveness and odometers will be available for wheelchairs. The Ministry of Health Promotion is also looking into pedometers that "talk" for those with visual impairments.

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Health Promotion will consider accessibility and seek to prevent barriers when drafting new acts and regulations.

Accessibility Focus Area:

- Other

Impact Implications:

- Legislative Acts & Regulations

Planned Action(s):

- The Ministry of Health Promotion will seek advice from Legal counsel when drafting new acts and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe:

- Ongoing

Results Achieved:

- Legal counsel and ministry staff reviewed acts and regulations on a case-by-case basis, as they were developed or revised, to identify and address accessibility issues. No accessibility issues were identified in ministry legislation during 2007-08.

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Health Promotion will ensure that employees are able to fully participate in employment and employees that require accommodation are fully supported.

Accessibility Focus Area:

- Employment Practices

Impact Implications:

- Service to internal customers

Implementation Time Frame:

- Ongoing

Planned Actions:

- The Ministry of Health Promotion will provide training to managers on managing illness, injury and employee accommodation.

Results Achieved:

- MHP developed an HR Guide for managers that includes processes and policies on employment accommodation, accessibility and employee assistance programs.

Commitment: Ongoing

1. The Ministry of Health Promotion will continue to make continuous improvements to the accessibility of its offices by modifying workstations to ensure accessibility.
2. The Ministry of Health Promotion will continue to identify barriers to the built environment.

Accessibility Focus Area:

- Built Environment

Impact Implications:

- Service

Planned Action(s):

- New work stations and sitting arrangements will be constructed in accordance with accessibility standards.
- When constructing new office space accessibility barriers will be minimized wherever possible.

Implementation Timeframe:

- Ongoing

Results Achieved:

- In April 2008, new office space at 777 Bay St. was constructed taking mandatory accessibility standards into consideration.
- In June 2008, automatic door openers were installed at all MHP locations.

Commitment: New

The ministry will develop a process for receiving and responding to TTY inquiries.

Accessibility Focus Area:

- Information & Communication

Impact Implications:

- Service

Planned Action(s):

- The Ministry will provide training to appropriate staff on the use of the TTY and develop a mechanism to ensure all required staff are trained.
- The Ministry will incorporate TTY training into job descriptions and performance plans.

Implementation Timeframe:

- Sept 2007 – Mar 2010

Results Achieved:

- Results will be reported in 2009/2010.

Commitment: Ongoing

The Ministry of Health Promotion will continue to ensure AODA compliance of all website properties.

Accessibility Focus Area:

- Information & Communications

Impact Implications:

- Service

Planned Action(s):

- Ensure website postings are accessible in accordance with the World Wide Web Consortium's website accessibility standards.
- Large text (which is a level two requirement) will be explored as a further

enhancement MHP's website.

Implementation Time Frame:

- April 2009

Results Achieved:

- MHP websites are compliant with all level one ODA requirements for the visually impaired.
- MHP also meets most of the non- mandatory level two requirements.

Contact Information

Should you have any questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan, please contact:

Communications Branch

416-326-4846

TTY number: 416-212-5723

Toll - Free TTY number: 1-866-263-1410

www.mhp.gov.on.ca

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

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from:

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TTY Service: 1-800-268-7095

Fax: 613-545-4223

Website: <http://www.serviceontario.ca/publications>

Queen's Printer for Ontario

ISSN #1911-3617

Ce document est disponible en français.