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Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act AODA, 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. In 2010 the government of Ontario was the first public service organization to report compliance with the first standard — Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation (Ontario Regulation 429/07).

As we await additional standards under AODA, we are guided by the Ontario Human Rights Code and obligations set out in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

Each year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans required under the ODA.

Building on last year's plan, the 2010-11 accessibility plan will continue moving the Ministry of Consumer Services towards the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

To view other ministries' Accessibility Plans please visit: Ontario.ca

Report on Accessibility Achievements for 2009-2010

Focus Area: Customer Service

Results Achieved in 2009-2010:

- The ministry reviewed and developed and / or amended its customer service practices and / or procedures to meet the requirements of O. Reg. 429/07 and the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy and communicated these changes to staff through in-house training sessions in the fall of 2009.
- The ministry provided communication to Delegated Administrative Authorities (DAA) about the Regulation. The ministry requested that DAAs have staff complete accessibility training and report completion to the ministry.
- Presentations on accessibility and the Regulation were provided upon request to the

Electrical Safety Authority and the Technical Standards and Safety Authority.

- TTY refresher training sessions were provided to main and back-up staff who manage the ministry's TTY line.
- Refresher training was delivered on O. Reg. 429/07 and associated OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy to administrative and frontline staff.
- The ministry reinforced awareness via the ministry's Senior Management Committee on the ongoing responsibilities of program areas to maintain compliance with O. Reg. 429/07 and associated OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy.
- The ministry refreshed its accessibility presence on both the staff intranet site and public-facing internet site with new and improved information.
- The ministry has offered quarterly procurement training to all staff on an as-needed basis with information about barrier-free procurement processes. The last training session took place in April 2010.
- Information on accessible procurement has been posted to the intranet.

Focus Area: Employment

Results Achieved in 2009-2010:

- The New Employee Information Session (NEIS) materials were updated in July 2009 to provide new employees with information on O. Reg. 429/07. The orientation checklists were also updated in July 2009 and posted to the ministry's intranet site in September 2009. This enhanced checklist includes a new category called "Your First Month on the Job" and identifies and prioritizes information gathering and learning opportunities for new employees in the areas of accessibility, diversity and service excellence.
- On an ongoing basis, the ministry reviews the program to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.
- The ministry has continued to work to accommodate employees with a diverse range of accessibility needs. The ministry has followed best practice of providing workplace ergonomic assessments to all staff upon request. The ministry has taken appropriate action based on all assessments made.
- In 2009/10, the Strategic Human Resources Business Unit (SHBU) monitored ongoing changes to OPS HR policies and directives and identified an opportunity to actively support two significant corporate initiatives that will positively impact employment/ human resources, specifically:

1) The OPS Wellness Strategy's Healthy Living, Safe and Healthy Workplace and Supportive Work Culture priorities, by:

- establishing a cross-functional, cross-ministry team to develop a **Bill 168 Compliance Plan**;
- establishing and chairing a **Bill 168 Task Team** to oversee the implementation of those compliance activities, to ensure the ministry meets its Workplace;
- discrimination and Harassment Prevention (WDHP) and Workplace Violence Prevention (WVP) obligations;
- establishing new **Joint Health & Safety Committees**, as required, to comply with the Occupational Health & Safety Act; and
- facilitating the identification and implementation of employee engagement initiatives that support **better work-life balance**, including compressed work week, summer hours, etc.

2) The OPS Diversity Strategic Plan, by:

- delivering an enhanced, reciprocal **Diversity Mentorship Program** within the ministry; and
- establishing and chairing a **Diversity and Inclusion Working Group** to identify and recommend a ministry strategy that will allow us to deliver excellent public service and support all employees in achieving their full potential.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Results Achieved in 2009-2010:

- The ministry participated as an Advisory Member on the Standards Development Committee for the Accessible Built Environment Standard.
- In 2009-2010 the ministry acquired and renovated key office space in Toronto for the Ontario Film Review Board. All renovations met Ontario Building Code Requirements, and met – or exceeded – Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities (2006) and / or the ORC Interim Design Standard.

Focus Area: Information & Communication

Results Achieved in 2009-2010:

- Between June and October 2009, the ministry updated and enhanced the accessibility information contained in the:
 - new Employee Information Session;
 - new Employee Orientation Checklist; and
 - dedicated web page on the ministry's staff intranet site.
- The ministry participated as an Advisory Member on the Standards Development Committee for the Accessible Information and Communication Standard.
- The "*Talk About Disabilities – Use the Right Word*" guide was included as an appendix with the in-house O. Reg. 429/07 training materials and staff were provided with illustrated examples at these mandatory sessions.
- Information and resources related to the Ontarians with Disabilities Procurement Requirements guidelines and checklist continue to be available and promoted through the ministry's staff intranet site.
- In September 2009, the ministry launched a dedicated accessibility web page on its staff intranet site. The ODA Plans were moved to this new page and highlighted as a key item.
- The ministry's internet site has a dedicated web page for the 2010 - 2011 Accessibility Plan.
- The ministry TTY lines and/or telecommunication relay services adhere to guidelines.

Report on Accessible Customer Service Requirements

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

The OPS was the first public organization to file their compliance report with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in January, 2010. In order to sustain compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation, it is vital that ministries continue to look for opportunities through their accessibility planning process, and continue to embed accessibility in all areas of planning, programs and policies.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities. Policies will:

- allow persons with disabilities to use their own and ministry assistive devices to access ministry goods and services;
- allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal at the locations the ministry owns and operates; and
- allow support persons to accompany persons with disabilities when they access ministry goods and services.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to adopt the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy. This policy addresses the use of assistive devices, service animals and support persons.

In addition, the ministry will continue to develop program specific accessible customer service practices and procedures, where required, to address ministry-specific application of standards outlined in the corporate-wide policy. The policies, practices and procedures will address the provision of public ministry materials in accessible formats, internal/external feedback mechanisms, access for service

animals and access for support persons, service disruption notification processes, and framework for compliance monitoring and reporting, including performance measures and timelines and annual internal audit for ongoing improvements. This initiative is coordinated in connection with the rollout of the OPS Service Directive initiative, including communication and training.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010-October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to ensure customer service policies are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to review and update existing customer service policies in a manner that encourages interpretation consistent with the *OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy*.

The ministry will continue to consider accessibility when drafting new customer service policies.

The ministry will ensure that the Inclusion Lens developed by the OPS Diversity Office is utilized when reviewing and developing new policies, programs and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: November 10 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Continue to train all staff on:

- communicating with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account his or her disability;
- the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard;
- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the ministry's goods and services; and
- OPS policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to raise awareness through Employee Information Sessions, our Lunch & Learn series, and our staff intranet site.

New staff will also be advised of the ministry's training requirements and encouraged to complete a review of the materials and the e-learning courses within the first 30 days of employment.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will develop strategies for providing information in an accessible format to ensure compliance under the new Customer Service Standard.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to provide documents in alternative formats upon request.

The ministry will review how they will encourage staff on how to make documents accessible.

The ministry will post documents identified by the Customer Service Regulation in alternative formats

on its internet site.

The ministry will continue to update accessibility information, resources and tools to increase awareness and knowledge of how to accommodate visitors/clients/staff with disabilities to the intranet and internet.

Each program area will continue to review its programs and services on an ongoing basis to ensure they are accessible to clients and the public.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Alert third-party service providers and Delegated Administrative Authorities (DAAs) of the new accessibility standards for customer service.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to work with third parties and DAAs to ensure that the targets and timetables meet compliance for the new customer service standard and the performance of third-party compliance will also be monitored.

Accessibility compliance will be incorporated into new agreements and later versions of existing agreements with third-party service providers and Delegated Administrative Authorities (DAA).

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to provide access or use ministry goods and services are temporarily disrupted.

Planned Action(s):

Corporate-wide procedures are being developed for providing service disruption notifications to persons with disabilities who rely on those services to access ministry goods and services. When finalized, the ministry will adopt the corporate-wide procedures.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Give people with disabilities opportunity to provide the ministry with feedback on the accessibility of its goods and services. Make information about the feedback process readily available to the public.

Planned Action(s):

To date no feedback has been received that would result to a change in the process. The ministry will continue to ensure the feedback is monitored through communications through multiple channels and advertise the availability of this process through a general inquiry line, a TTY line, in-person and through a dedicated e-mail address. The ministry will be advertising the availability of this process through its website.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Make ministry events accessible to people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

Continue to communicate the importance of planning accessible events to staff. Ensure staff are given

the knowledge and tools for organizing accessible events.

The ministry will continue to provide staff in attendance with a checklist for analyzing the accessibility of a venue.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Creation of a ministry Accessibility Committee to lead the ministry to compliance with the customer service regulation and future regulations. Committee will also evaluate opportunities for new accessibility initiatives.

Planned Action(s):

The committee will meet on a regular basis to discuss and monitor regulatory requirements, new accessibility initiatives and delivery of commitments outlined in this plan.

Committee will remain current in their knowledge of accessibility-related legislation, regulations, standards and best practices and effectively apply those to our business and employment practices.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Incorporate accessibility into ministry procurement practices.

Planned Action(s):

Procurement training will continue to include information about barrier-free procurement processes.

Information of accessible procurement will be posted to the intranet as it becomes available.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Information and Communication Commitments

Information and the methods of communication are key to delivering many government programs and services to the public. It is essential that we provide the same quality and service to everyone in the province.

In anticipation of the pending standards guiding Information and Communications, the government of Ontario is continuously looking for opportunities to prevent and remove barriers to person with disabilities when creating, procuring, conveying, receiving or distributing information and communications to the public.

Focus Area: Information & Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to embed accessibility into all areas of planning, including Results-based Planning, Contingency Planning, Emergency Planning. Planning will take the varied needs of people with disabilities into account at all levels of planning and response activities.

Planned Action(s):

Planning leads will continue to be encouraged to embed accessibility into their planning process. The OPS Inclusion Lens (which considers accessibility) will be shared with staff and incorporated into ministry planning processes. Incorporate recommendations and advice from the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs into updates of the ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan.

The ministry will raise awareness of people with disabilities of what they can do to prepare for their own safety and survival during times of evacuation through in-house fire warden training offered annually.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Information & Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will embed accessibility into its internet and intranet websites.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry internet and intranet sites will continue to be compliant with the Government of Ontario Public Web Standard.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Information & Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will communicate accessibility planning to staff.

Planned Action(s):

The Accessibility Plan will remain on the ministry internet and intranet site.

Communication will be provided on the ministry internet and intranet sites regarding the Accessibility Plan and the ministry's commitments within the plan. Communications will include contacts who can answer questions about the plan and its commitments.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Other Accessibility Commitments

Accessibility improvement initiatives to identify, remove or prevent barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

In anticipation of the upcoming standards the Government of Ontario has planned several corporate initiatives in the following areas: Transportation, Employment, Built Environment and others. The goal of these focus areas is to make it easier for people with disabilities to travel in Ontario, ensure accessibility for people with disabilities across all stages of the employment life cycle and break down barriers in buildings. Many of the corporate initiatives identified for 2010-2011 aim to support ministries in their journey towards compliance with the upcoming standards.

To review a list of corporate initiatives please refer to the Ministry of Government Services 2010-2011 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will explore opportunities to hire employees with a diverse range of abilities.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to promote the AbilityEdge internship program to managers. The AbilityEdge program is an internship program managers can use to hire employees with a disability for a period of six months.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will work to accommodate employees with a diverse range of accessibility needs.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to promote staff awareness of the Employment Accommodation and Return to Work operating policy and assess opportunities to remove/prevent barriers as they are identified.

The ministry will continue its best practice of providing workplace ergonomic assessments to all staff upon request. The ministry will take appropriate action based on all assessments made.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

Prevent, identify and remove barriers in the hiring process.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to work with our Strategic Human Resources Business Unit (SHRBU) team, OPS Recruitment Centres and OPS Executive Services to ensure the ministry is providing accessibility requirements for the hiring process which includes the following:

- The ministry will continue to give applicants opportunity to identify accessibility needs during the recruitment process.
- The ministry will continue to accommodate people in all employment activities, including the recruitment process, based on the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g. disability, religion, etc.).
- The ministry will continue to accommodate employees in a timely matter and management will work with employees to identify and remove any barriers that will keep an employee, or prospective employee, from participating equally in all aspects of employment.
- During the recruitment process, people with disabilities will continue to be provided with: alternate formats for written materials, physical adjustments (chairs, workstations, keyboards, etc.) and technical aids/assistive devices.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy and Programs

Commitment: Ongoing

All newly built or renovated spaces will meet or exceed the Ontario Building Code and “Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities” October 2004.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry will continue to ensure that all new and renovated spaces will continue to meet these standards. The Ontario Realty Corporation will be updating the current ORC barrier-free design standards. These standards are expected to meet or exceed the new Built Environment Standard. Further review will be undertaken once the new Built Environment Standard comes into force. The Corporate Services Division will play an active role in the development of the new Built Environment Standard and participate in the Built Environment – Standards Development Committee (BE-SDC).

The ministry will continue to assess opportunities to remove physical barriers in areas that are not scheduled for renovation as they arise.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Act(s), Regulation(s), Policy(s) Being Reviewed to Prevent Barriers to Persons with Disabilities

In support of the commitment to remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities, the Government of Ontario will continue to review all new legislation, and policies under development to identify and remove barriers.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will review any new Act(s) and or Regulation(s) or Policy(s) that are being developed to identify and remove any barriers to persons with disabilities.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry will ensure that the Inclusion Lens developed by the OPS Diversity Office is utilized when reviewing and developing new policies, programs and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

Additional Information:

Your ministries Accessibility Plans should contain plain language. However if there is a need to use acronyms or government terminology you should be providing definitions and or descriptions in this section of the plan.

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

OPS – Ontario Public Service

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act

DAA - Delegated Administrative Authorities

SHRBU – Strategic Human Resources Business Unit

ORC – Ontario Realty Corporation

NEIS - New Employee Information Session

IAR – Integrated Accessibility Regulation

For More Information

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

General inquiry number: 416-327-8300
1-800 general inquiry number: 1-877-665-0662
TTY number: 1-877-666-6545 or 416-229-6086
E-mail: infomcs@ontario.ca

Ministry website address: www.ontario.ca/ConsumerServices

Visit the **[Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario](#)** web portal. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario accessible province for everyone.

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