



MINISTRY OF RESEARCH & INNOVATION



[ABOUT US](#) | [PROGRAMS & FUNDING](#) | [SUCCESS STORIES](#) | [NEWSROOM](#)

ABOUT US

- [Who we are](#)
- [Our partners](#)
- [MRI's Results Based Plan](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [MRI Service Pledge](#)

ACCESSIBILITY

MINISTRY OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

2009-2010

Accessibility Plan



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Table of Contents

[Introduction 1](#)

[Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements 3](#)

[Report on Other Accessibility Commitments 7](#)

[For More Information 16](#)

Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 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, beginning in January 2010 when the first standard — for customer service — comes into force.

Each year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

Building on last year's plan, the 2009-10 accessibility plans will continue moving the Ministry of Research and Innovation towards the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The Ministry of Research and Innovation's fourth annual accessibility plan highlights achievements during 2008-09 to break down access barriers. The Ministry will continue to build on its achievements by moving forward additional initiatives to make programs, policies and services more accessible for Ontarians.

The Ministry of Research and Innovation is focused on strengthening Ontario as a leading, innovation-based economy and society where innovative thinkers can flourish and innovative ideas are rewarded — an accessible Ontario is an important corner-stone in building Ontario's innovation economy.

Links to the other ministry plans are available at:
http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/ministry/accessibilityPlans/ministries_accplans10.htm

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Completed

We will ensure that all staff members are trained in welcoming and servicing clients with disabilities, and that staff engagement and awareness in relation to customer service for all clients is high.

Planned Action(s): The ministry has made mandatory 2 electronic courses in welcoming clients with disabilities and 1 additional course for managers. We continue to provide regular accessibility planning updates to Ministry Senior Management and to Branch meetings.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Oct 09

Results Achieved: Staff have been trained on “*May I Help You? and Welcoming Customers with Disabilities*”, “*May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know About Accessible Service*”. In addition Managers have been trained on “*ODA: Maximizing the Contributions of Employees with Disabilities*”.

Updates on the ODA, OPS Customer Service Policy were provided to Management Executive Committee in May & September 2009, Deputy Minister communicated the ministry’s support for the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy and mandatory staff training requirements in a memorandum to ministry staff in August 2009.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

We will continue to engage and educate incoming /new staff on accessibility issues and standards.

Planned Action(s): We are ensuring that orientation sessions for incoming / new staff include a component on accessibility. Incoming / new staff materials will include orientation materials on accessibility. We will further follow-up twice a year to ensure incoming / new staff will be trained on the mandatory e-courses “*May I Help You*”.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: The Manager's Checklist for on-boarding new staff was updated in August 2009 to include a section for accessibility and diversity training for new ministry staff to meet the requirements of O. Reg. 429/07. A few of the management staff have been trained on Diversity: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce. Ongoing progress to be reported in future year's Accessibility Plans.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

We will educate and inform third-party service providers (i.e., organizations that deliver programs funded with Ministry money) on accessibility standards for customer services.

Planned Action(s): We will review agreements and contracts with third parties at the time of renewal; or at the time of entering into any new agreements or contracts to deliver MRI programs.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: To be reported in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Completed

We will continue to improve our services by working towards providing information in an accessible, or multiple, formats.

Planned Action(s): Updates to ministry web-site, program materials on the web, as well as improvements to the information for clients accessing our services by walk-in or by phone.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Oct 09

Results Achieved: We are in the process of updating our website to meet or exceed the World Wide Web Consortium criteria. 2010 web updates will include listing of our TTY phone-numbers, and a link to provide feed-back on customer service over the web, by fax, in person, or by (TTY) phone.

TTY phone has been installed in our 11th floor reception, 56 Wellesley St. West. Reception staff will be trained in November 2009.

As part of the 2010 update of our website we are reviewing how best to make our public documents, including funding applications available in alternate formats. This item is in progress, and we will be reporting on this in next year's plan.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Creation of the Accessibility Planning Team

Planned Action(s): Committee members will be appointed and engaged from various branches and teams throughout the ministry on an on-going basis as initiatives under our Accessibility Plan are moved forward for implementation.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: Accessibility Planning Team Lead has been appointed, and the team is meeting as required. Team Lead is a member of the OPS Community of Practice on Accessibility.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: New

Updating of Ministry feed-back options to ensure that all clients can provide feedback and that feedback can be given on client service, including potential feedback on accessibility of services.

Planned Action(s): We will update our description of the Ministry feed-back process to clarify that feedback can be provided over email, in person, by fax, or by (TTY) phone. We will further post a document that describes the feedback process, and will make available in our reception a feed-back form that will include a question regarding customer service and accessibility.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: The Ministry is designing its feedback mechanism to be accessible through multiple channels, including phone, TTY line, online, in-person, and through a dedicated email address. The feedback process will be outlined in a separate document that will be made available to the public on the ministry web-site.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Making our main phone-line TTY feasible

Planned Action(s): We have installed a TTY phone in our reception at 56 Wellesley St. West, 11th floor. Reception staff will be trained in November 2009.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: A TTY phone has been installed. The Ministry TTY phone number is 416-325-9275; toll-free 877-408-3414. Training of reception staff is underway - results on training to be reported in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Focus Area: Employment and Recruitment

Impact: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

We will provide all possible opportunities for persons with disabilities to have equal access to succeed in the ministry hiring process.

Planned Action(s): We will work with our Human Resources, OPS Recruitment Centres and OPS Executive Services to ensure the ministry is meeting all accessibility requirements for the hiring process, including the following:

- Accommodate people in all employment activities, including the recruitment process, based on the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g.; disability, religion etc.)
- During the recruitment process, alternate formats for written materials will be made available and physical adjustments (chairs, workstations, keyboards etc.); as well as technical assistive devices will be made available as required.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: In order to accommodate people with a broad range of disabilities, the ministry's Human Resources Branch shared interview questions with all candidates before interviews. Candidates were also asked prior to the interview if they required additional accommodation.

The Manager's Checklist for on-boarding new staff was updated in August 2009 to include a section for accessibility and diversity training for new ministry staff to meet the requirements of O. Reg. 429/07. A few of the management staff have been trained on Diversity: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce.

Focus Area: Employment and Built Environment, and Accommodation

Impact: Employment, Policy & Program

Commitment: Ongoing

We will continue to review on an ongoing basis our facilities, policies and practices in order to work towards preventing, identifying and removing employment barriers, and further to accommodate employees with a wide range of disabilities and/or functional limitations.

Planned Action(s): The Accessibility Planning Team will ensure on-going representation from our Human Resources to assist in preventing and identifying employment barriers. Further review will be undertaken once the new Employment Accommodation Standard comes into force.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: Managers have worked with Human Resources Practitioners to eliminate employment barriers for staff in the ministry. This is an ongoing practice in the Ministry. New results to be reported in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Future Manager Procurement Training/learning programs will include information about barrier-free accessibility in procurement activities.

Planned Action(s): Training/learning programs will continue to include information about barrier-free accessibility and procurement activities.

Additional sessions for new managers and staff will be scheduled January 2009 – March 2010.

Implementation Timeline: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved

2007 – 2008 Procurement sessions for managers, supervisors and staff were held.

2008-09 This is an ongoing item in the ministry.

Focus Area: Employment Accommodation

Impact: Employment

Commitment: Ongoing

Planned Action(s): We will continue our practice of providing workplace ergonomic assessments to all staff upon request. Our service provider is sensitive to the ergonomic needs of employees with impairments.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: Full ergonomic assessments were done for staff and appropriate action was taken. This item is ongoing.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Employment and Program, Communication and Information

Commitment: Ongoing

We will continue to engage and educate our employees on all aspects of the AODA in relation to their employment, and working with co-workers.

Planned Action(s):

- Update ministry intranet site as required to include dedicated information on accessibility.
- In 2009 the Accessibility Planning Team will develop a learning component regarding accessibility for all divisional conferences and annual training events.
- All ministry managers will be trained on a mandatory Train-The-Trainer session on O. Reg. 429/07, Results to be reported in next year's Accessibility Plan. The OPS New Managers Foundation Training sessions include sessions on accessibility and diversity requirements for new managers.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: We have updated our intranet site and set aside a dedicated link for "accessibility" related information and resources so that all staff can easily access information on AODA, accessibility standards and specific ministry initiatives, including the Ministry Accessibility Plan.

In December 2009 we will be undertaking accessibility training as part of an all-staff, mandatory attendance, corporate event.

Further review on this commitment will be undertaken once the new Communications and Information Standard comes into force.

Focus Area: Communication and Information

Impact: Service

We will continue to work towards being able to provide all Ministry publications in alternate formats upon request.

Commitment: Ongoing

Planned Action(s): The Ministry will work with Publications Ontario in providing ministry publications in alternate formats. The Ministry will track the number of publication requests provided in alternate formats.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved: The ministry's key public documents will be made available in alternate formats upon request. No requests were received for alternate formats in 2008-09.

Focus Area: Communications and Information

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

MRI will provide on-going subject matter expertise, quality assurance measures and consultation to ministry staff on AODA issues associated with Information and Information Technology (I&IT).

Planned Action(s):

	Ministry to schedule accessibility information lunch and learn sessions for staff. The ministry will strive to acquire and include accessible information technology for ministry meetings/events and report back on ministry progress. Implementation Timeframe: Sept 07 – March 10 Results Achieved: <u>2007-08</u> Ministry co-hosted a lunch and learn session on “Accessibility in our Communities and within our Workplaces”, which included information to increase staff awareness and understanding on the importance of making events/meetings accessible and provided participants with information about support systems for different disabilities in our communities. Progress to be reported on in next year’s Accessibility Plan. <u>2008-09</u> Staff have been trained on “<i>May I Help You? and “May I Help You – Welcoming Customers with Disabilities”, “May I Help You? Supplementary: Ten Things You Need to Know About Accessible Service”</i>. In addition Managers have been trained on “<i>ODA: Maximizing the Contributions of Employee with Disabilities</i>”. Focus Area: Communications and Information Impact: Service Communications to staff regarding accessibility planning. Commitment: Ongoing Annual accessibility Plan is posted on the ministry website. Also, the Accessibility Team will work closely with the Webmaster to organize the intranet site containing useful information, frequently asked questions, and a contact name and telephone number. Planned Action(s): Accessibility Team Lead and Webmaster work jointly to accomplish commitments. Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11 Results Achieved: <u>2007-08</u> Accessibility Team Lead and Webmaster are working together to organize the intranet site with Accessibility information. The Accessibility Lead contact information will be included as the ministry accessibility contact on the new ministry intranet webpage. <u>2008-09</u> Accessibility plans posted on the ministry website. Accessibility Lead and team communicated to staff in the ministry. Focus Area: Built Environment Impact: Policy and Programs Commitment: Ongoing To ensure that all ministry locations are accessible to staff, clients and the people, including persons with disabilities, 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 renovated spaces will continue to meet theses 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).
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Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved:

2007-08

The ministry completed renovation on the 18th floor, 56 Wellesley Street West, in Toronto. Accessibility was included as a key design and construction priority in this location.

2008-09

Accessible buttons installed on the accessible washrooms on the 11th floor at 56 Wellesley Street West in Toronto. Notice posted on the 7th & 18th Floors at 56 Wellesley in Toronto to direct visitors and staff to the accessible washrooms on the 11th floors.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Employment; Policy & Program; and Service

Commitment: Completed

The Ministry is ensuring that emergency evacuation plans will take into account the varied needs of people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s): The ministry Accessibility Planning Team is working with the Ministry Emergency Management Coordinator to ensure that the emergency evacuation planning:

- At all levels of the emergency planning and response activities, consider the varied needs of people with disabilities
- Actively involves employees and others with disabilities in this planning
- Raise the awareness of people with disabilities with respect to what they can do to prepare for their own safety and survival during times of evacuation.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of changes to built environment standards and communicate these changes to appropriate ministry staff.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – Oct 09

Results Achieved: The Ministry is working with corporate, OPS contacts on the implementation of this item. Results to be reported on in next year's Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Acts and Regulations

Impact: Acts and Regulations

Commitment: Ongoing

The impact, if any, of new and amended acts or regulations on our facilities, policies, programs, practices and services will be tracked and reported on throughout the year.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry Legal Branch will continue to support accessibility during the review and development of ministry acts and regulations. The ministry Legal Branch will appoint a counsel to periodically advise program staff responsible for accessibility (as identified by corporate services) changes to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved:

This is an ongoing practice. The ministry Legal Branch will continue to ensure that ministry acts or regulations currently under review or going forward include accessibility as part of the review process.

Focus Area: Acts and Regulations

Impact: Acts and Regulations

Commitment: Ongoing

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

Planned Action(s):

The ministry Legal Branch will continue to support accessibility during the review and development of ministry acts and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved:

The ministry Legal Branch will continue to ensure that ministry acts or regulations currently under review, or going forward, include accessibility as part of the review process.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy & Service

Commitments: New

To ensure the ministry delivers on new and ongoing accessibility commitments, the ministry will develop an accessibility tracking system to track yearly progress on ministry commitments.

Planned Action (s):

The ministry Accessibility Planning Team will develop an online tracking system and provide quarterly updates/reports to senior management to keep them apprised of our progress on meeting the accessibility commitments.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 – March 11

Results Achieved:

Updates provided to Management Executive Committee in May and Sept 2009.

Monthly Compliance O. Reg. 429/07 reports are provided to the Diversity Office

For More Information

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

General inquiry number: 416-325-5181 (in Toronto); Toll-free: 866-446-5216

General inquiry TTY number: 416-325-9275; Toll free TTY: 877-408-3414

Fax: 416-325-3877

E-mail: info@mri.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address: www.ontario.ca/innovation

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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 a barrier-free province.

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

ServiceOntario Publications

Phone: 1-800-668-9938
TTY: 1-800-268-7095

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