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Accessibility Plan 2007 - 2008



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Introduction

In June 2005, the Ontario government took a strong stand on accessibility when it passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) into law.

The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives.

Five key areas have been identified for the first accessibility standards: customer service,

transportation, information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

The accessible customer service regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor and will come into force on January 1, 2008.

An initial proposed standard on accessible transportation has been developed by the Transportation Standards Development Committee. It was posted for public review on June 27, 2007 and will be available for public comment until September 28, 2007.

The Standards Development Committee that will draft the proposed information and communications standard was established and began meeting in April, 2007. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in the fall of 2007.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period during which government and the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.

Under the ODA, Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are required to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. These plans must be made available to the public. Accessibility planning efforts to date have developed a strong foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will mean real and effective change.

This document is the fifth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. It highlights the achievements of the 2006-07 plan and outlines the commitments for 2007-08 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province where people of all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

Message from the Minister

Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA), 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.



This year marks the second anniversary of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) – legislation that will foster the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living.

The accessible customer service regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor and will come into force on January 1, 2008.

An initial proposed standard on accessible transportation has been developed by the Transportation Standards Development Committee. It was posted for public review on June 27 and will be available for public comment until September 28, 2007.

The Standards Development Committee that will draft the proposed information and communications standard was established and began meeting in April, 2007. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in the fall of 2007.

Here at the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 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 this ministry, regardless of whether they are staff, members of the general public, or ministry stakeholders.

We are committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers, working together within our ministry, across government and with our stakeholders in key areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

This ministry continues to work to better educate staff on accessibility. Examples of this work in the past year include; providing new managers and supervisors with on-line training on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001, providing further information on accommodation for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process, and including information on accessibility requirements in the ministry's results-based planning staff training package. Other work this past year includes making accessibility improvements to the ministry's public website; implementing technology that allows users to access information in a barrier-free environment, and expanding TTY service in our local offices.

Moving forward, we are training staff on effective customer service standards for people with disabilities; our youth justice staff are looking at procedures and practices that will help support young people with special needs in facilities.

More examples are provided in the pages that follow.

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,

Hon. Mary Anne Chambers

Report on Achievements

2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) was successful in achieving/implementing planned commitments outlined in its 2006-2007 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

Customer Service

Commitment

The ministry's Human Resources Branch (HRB) will facilitate the training of ministry staff who serve the public, on providing effective customer service to people with disabilities.

Status

Completed

Action

The HRB's plan was to disseminate the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's on-line training, "May I Help You – Welcoming Customers with Disabilities", to ministry staff.

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's on-line training, "May I Help You - Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" is now available on the website of the Centre for Leadership and Learning. To disseminate information about the online-training, HRB included an advisory on its intranet website

and circulated memos to all ministry staff.

Commitment

The Human Resources branch (HRB) will develop information to assist ministry staff in providing effective services to people who use sign language interpretation (people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing) or intervener services (people who are deaf-blind).

Status

Completed

Action

The HRB's plan was to develop an information sheet on how to arrange sign language interpretation or intervener services for clients or applicants who require these services.

This information sheet was completed. HRB consulted with provincial service providers of intervener and interpreter services such as the Canadian Hearing Society and Canadian National Institute for Blind. The consultation also included the Community Services Branch in the Social Policy Development Division of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Staff can access the information sheet: "Arranging Sign Language Interpretation and Deafblind Intervenor Services for Clients and Applicants of MCYS" on the MCYS intranet website.

Commitment

Physical Plant management staff at the Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) and Thistletown Regional Centre (TRC) will attend knowledge/skills development course/public forum on barrier-free design and other accessibility measures.

Status

Ongoing

Action

Attendance at a one day training opportunity, on barrier-free design and other accessibility measures, will be included in the annual professional development plan for managers involved in building services management. Arrangements will be made for the Facility Manager to attend the training.

Commitment

Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) and Thistletown Regional Centre (TRC) customer reception staff will be provided with formal training. This will be incorporated as a job specific learning and development plan requirement. This will be mandatory for all new front line reception staff.

Status

Ongoing

Action

New reception staff will be provided with a one-hour training session on appropriate protocols for providing effective reception services to persons with disabilities.

Commitment

The Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) will implement desktop videoconferencing

(telepsychiatry) services at CPRI and network via the Ontario Telehealth Network. This will provide increased service access for persons with limited mobility in remote locations and will eliminate concerns for clinicians with mobility disabilities.

Status

In Progress

Action

- Policy, implementation, education and evaluation strategy is under development
- Procurement and implementation of video-conferencing equipment and development of service protocols is underway

Commitment

Management Support Branch (MSB) will undertake several initiatives to continue increasing staff knowledge of accessibility.

Status

Completed

Action

Three Accessibility Awareness Training sessions were conducted by Accessibility Directorate of Ontario for MSB staff. The training included discussions on accessibility issues and customer service. Staff were provided with periodic updates to increase awareness of accessibility and its importance.

Commitment

Management Support Branch (MSB) will offer training in sign language to interested reception or program staff.

Status

Completed

Action

Interested staff members were trained in basic Sign Language skills.

Commitment

The ministry's Youth Justice Services Division (YJSD) will review its practices and procedures for assessing and identifying young people with special needs in youth justice facilities.

Status

In Progress

Action

The YJSD will:

- Determine whether current practices and procedures should extend to all youth justice programming; and
- Develop a standardized comprehensive intake assessment tool for all direct operated and transfer payment facilities.

As needed, direct operated and transfer payment agencies will develop program descriptions and interventions that address specific disabilities, including learning disabilities. Intake assessment tool is complete and will be in effect July 1, 2007

Commitment

The ministry will provide training for approximately 350 resource teachers and home visitors on how to support children with autism spectrum disorders in a child care setting.

Status

In Progress

Action

The ministry will continue to contract with the Geneva Centre for Autism to provide training activities. To date, 283 Resource teachers/home visitors were trained by the Geneva Centre for Autism in 06/07. This is the first year of a three-year initiative.

Commitment

Corporate Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs Branch (CPIA) will continue to consider the accessibility needs of Ontarians with disabilities in federal/provincial/territorial relations.

Status

In progress

Action

CPIA will continue to pursue initiatives for persons with disabilities as the co-chair of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Benefits and Services for Persons with Disabilities Working Group.

The Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities was extended to March 31, 2008. This Agreement helps to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

Discussions on the proposed federal National Disability Act are ongoing and could help establish federal accessibility standards.

Commitment

Front-line reception staff with the Youth Justice Services Division will be provided with training on how to effectively communicate with people who are deaf, hard-of hearing and/or visually impaired. This training will be mandatory for all new front-line reception staff.

Status

Deferred

Action

Training sessions will focus on appropriate protocols when providing reception services to person with disabilities. New reception staff will be provided with this training in their orientation.

Employment Accommodation

Commitment

The Human Resources Branch (HRB) in consultation with the Youth Justice Services Division (YJSD) will investigate methods to improve the provision of employment accommodation to staff in YJSD regional offices and facilities.

Status

Completed

Action

A pilot Disability Management Model was launched at the Brookside Youth Center.

Communications and Information

Commitment

HRB will support ministry offices in improving TTY services. A best practice guideline on answering TTY calls will be incorporated into the existing TTY Services Guide.

Status

Completed

Action

In October 2006, HRB developed a best practice guide for answering TTY calls. The best practice guide is incorporated into the "Guide to Effective TTY Services" which is accessible through the MCSS/MCYS' intranet website.

Commitment

YJSD will review barriers to access on the YJSD pages of the ministry intranet websites. It will also develop a process to accommodate unique information and requests for relevant published material.

Status

In progress

Action

YJSD will consult with the Communication and Marketing Branch (CMB) to determine if any barriers continue to exist on the YJ pages of the ministry intranet website. YJSD will develop a process that enables timely access to relevant published material.

Commitment

Management Support Branch will develop and conduct a survey of stakeholders to help identify accessibility issues in policy, programs or services.

Status

In progress

Actions

MSB developed a Stakeholder Accessibility Survey with input from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and Human Resources Branch. The Stakeholder Accessibility Survey will be administered electronically to corporate and regional stakeholders through a webpage on the MCSS and MCYS intranet. The webpage is being developed.

Built Environment

Commitment

Continue to renovate residential homes, buildings and walkways at Thistletown Regional Centre (TRC) and Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) to eliminate access/mobility barriers as a

regular component to the capital planning initiatives.

Status

Completed

Action

TRC and CPRI's plan was to submit barrier-free renovation initiatives for the buildings in the capital plan for priority funding approvals. House # 21 is now wheelchair accessible. Barrier-free renovation initiatives have been submitted to the accommodations branch for building # 15 of the SAFET-T program.

Commitment

CPRI will ensure persons with disabilities have a mechanism that alerts them to life safety events (i. e. fire alarms, hazardous situation announcements, etc).

Status

Completed

Action

- Persons with hearing disabilities were provided with vibrating pagers to alert them to life safety events.
- Persons with other auditory or visual impairments are linked with a "buddy system" for life safety support.

Commitment

CPRI will install motion sensors in all washrooms and common rooms that will illuminate on entry.

Status

Completed

Action

Motion sensor/controlled timer lighting was installed in common rooms.

Commitment

The Human Resources Branch (HRB) will provide information to managers in order to facilitate the use of ministry meeting rooms for persons with disabilities.

Status

Completed

Action

The Occupational Health and Safety Unit of HRB developed and disseminated to management, best practices for boardroom/furniture utilization from an accessibility perspective.

In June 2007, HRB developed a best practice guide for management on boardroom/furniture utilization from an accessibility perspective. The guide is included on the manager's section of MCSS/ MCYS intranet website.

Commitment

The ministry will continue to improve the accessibility of their facilities and offices where and whenever possible.

Status

In progress

Action

New leases and lease renewals will continue to be negotiated to address the elimination of any barriers to staff, clients or the public with disabilities

During 2006/07, the 15th floor of 56 Wellesley Street was fully renovated to enhance accessibility. This included the provision of ergonomic furniture, wheelchair accessible quarters, and automatic door openers on selected doors.

Commitment

Through the year, accommodation projects will continue to be required to meet, at minimum, the barrier-free design standards of the 1997 Ontario Building Code.

Status

In progress

Action

Where feasible and appropriate, the Capital and Accommodation Services Branch (CASB) will continue to apply the most effective barrier-free design principles for the situation, rather than meet minimum standards of accessibility.

This process continues through CASB to review Ontario Building Code and current Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) requirements to prepare a recommended set of guidelines.

Commitment

MCYS will establish two (2) youth centres that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Status

In progress

Action

- Planning for renovations and/or construction of the Donald Doucet Youth Facility in Sault Ste Marie and the Roy McMurtry Youth Facility in Brampton, as well as for programming, will include consideration of the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.
 - For example, consideration will be given to the need for accessible washrooms, showers and bedroom areas and all common areas open to public access (multi-year project to 2008).

Acts and Regulations

Commitment

YJSD will ensure that all programs and services reflect any revisions in provincial acts and regulations that would impact young person and employees.

Status

Ongoing

Action

- In respect to youth oriented material, consideration is given to youth's reading ability and level of understanding:
- Senior management and staff working with acts and regulations will continue to be advised, through the results-based planning process and the accessibility planning process, to consider acts and regulations and conduct a review for barriers to people with disabilities in work they undertake.
- YJSD will review acts and regulations for language (e.g. legislation referring to a "handicapped" person instead of a "person with a disability").
- YJSD will review policies and procedures that may have an adverse impact on people with disabilities such as filling out complicated forms.

Commitment

The ministry will review new acts and regulations for barriers to accessibility.

Status

Completed

Action

- Policy Development and Program Design Division review of Bill 210 has been completed.
- The Strategic Policy and Planning Division staff will review for barriers to people with disabilities in revising O.Reg. 262 under the Day Nurseries Act.

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services was successful in achieving its commitments described in the accessibility plans it issued before 2006 - 2007. This section provides a status report.

Customer Service

Commitment

The ministry's policy encourages the inclusion of children with special needs into community child care services with their peers.

Status

Ongoing

Action

Special Needs Resourcing funds are used to purchase the services of resource teachers, specialized toys and equipment for children with special needs attending day nurseries and private-home day care.

Employment Accommodation

Commitment

The ministry will continue to strengthen its commitment to employment accommodation.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The ministry will continue to accommodate employees and applicants with disabilities, for work-related barriers, by implementing the Ontario Public Service policies on employment accommodation and workplace discrimination and harassment prevention.

Commitment

The South West Region is committed to being proactive in the area of ergonomics. Staff is supported through on site assessments or further information is gathered by outside professionals.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The SWR has an excellent success rate in providing staff with necessary, prescribed equipment. It is also committed to staff education and training on accessibility issues and has a Regional process in place to address concerns.

The emergency evacuation of disabled staff in a multi-storied building is an issue. The SWR purchased an emergency evacuation chair with the assistance of the Employment Accommodation Fund. An emergency evacuation chair would be used to evacuate an employee during an emergency from one of the offices in the SWR.

Built Environment

Commitment

Improve the accessibility of youth probation offices where possible.

Status

In progress

Action

As part of disentanglement from adult services, all probation offices will be relocated or renovated and will meet barrier free design standards. Currently 29 are complete and of the remaining 19, 11 are under construction. All offices should be compliant within the fiscal year. Continuing, a number of projects were implemented for new sites which will promote accessibility (i.e., Orillia, Bracebridge, Newmarket, Mississauga, Halton, Pembroke, Hawkesbury, Cambridge, Guelph, Sarnia, Hamilton, Huntsville).

Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed

A review of the ministry's program and services was conducted to identify barriers to accessibility. The ministry is committed to addressing these barriers over the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

Barrier

There may be barriers to persons with disabilities who are interested in careers in the children's services sector.

Commitment and Responsibility

As the Labour Market Policy Unit develops within the Strategic Planning Branch (SPB), the unit will consider how best to support the participation of service providers with disabilities, including youth with disabilities who may be interested in careers in the children's services sector.

As part of its efforts to understand the demographic make-up of the staff in MCYS funded agencies, the extent of participation of persons with disabilities will be included.

Timeline

If an agency survey on demographics is completed in 2007-08, this question will be included.

Barrier

There may be barriers to child care for children and youth with disabilities.

Commitment and Responsibility

Strategic Planning Branch (SPB) is undertaking a research initiative, *Ontario's Growth Chart*, that will report on the success and well-being of children and youth using a number of indicators in the domains of health, education, social inclusion and economic opportunity. The status of children and youth with disabilities will be tracked to inform policy development to improve services and outcomes where these lag behind the general child and youth population.

SPB will develop a Profile of Ontario's Children and Youth in Fall 2007 that will include the status of children with disabilities. Initiatives that could improve outcomes for this group will be considered once the profile has been developed.

Timeline

2007/08

Barrier

Program descriptions and interventions for youth to address specific disabilities/needs

Commitment and Responsibility

The ministry's Youth Justice Services Division (YJSD) will review the Youth Admission Interview Tool implemented in July 2007 across the province in both open and secure youth justice residential services, which may support early identification and subsequent planning of care for clients with disabilities/needs.

YJSD will communicate CFSA and Ministry requirements for service provider responsiveness to provision of appropriate services for clients with specific disabilities/needs through contract Service Description Schedules and Standards in the Youth Justice Services Manual.

Timeline

April 200

Barrier

There are some barriers in providing effective customer service to clients with disabilities.

Commitment and Responsibility

YJSD reception staff will receive the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's on-line training, "May I Help You - Welcoming Customers with Disabilities" which is available on the website of the Centre for Leadership and Learning.

Consideration will be given to installing signs about service provision to people with disabilities.

Thistletown Regional Centre will also facilitate the training of all staff on providing effective customer service to people with disabilities.

Timeline

April 2008

Employment accommodation

Barrier

Lack of knowledge of the OPS Employment Accommodation & Return to Work Policy (EA & RTW) requiring the provision of resources and ongoing support for implementation of best practices in this field.

Commitment and Responsibility

Toronto Region will commit to the following activities:

- Develop checklists and other resources for managers related to managing employee accommodation and return to work, and will provide a full day of customized training for all managers on the policy and the tools.
- Deliver regular ongoing training for all managers through a quarterly Managers' Forum to build on the intensive training noted above.

All new employees (management, staff, classified and unclassified) are to receive a mandatory orientation shortly upon hire, which includes an overview of the EA & RTW policy. The Manager will provide the employee with the orientation reading material during the first week of hire.

The Human Resources Branch (HRB) in consultation with the Youth Justice Services Division (YJSD) will also continue to support managers to appropriately apply the OPS policies and processes related to employment accommodation of staff in regional offices and dedicated youth facilities. The health and productivity project is looking at developing a best practice approach in this area. Session(s) delivered by HR may be considered.

Timeline

Spring 2008 and ongoing

Barrier

Address accessibility needs which could present barriers to employment for people with disabilities

Commitment and Responsibility

The ministry will continue to accommodate employees and applicants with disabilities, for work-related barriers, by implementing the Ontario Public Service policies on employment accommodation and workplace discrimination and harassment prevention.

Toronto Region will build on its current practice of using assistive software (e.g. JAWS) and devices to accommodate candidates in the recruitment process, (e.g. pre-employment testing).

The Research and Outcome Measurement Branch will continue to accommodate staff and future applicants with disabilities by following the principles outlined in the ODA as well as the OPS policies on employee accommodation and Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Policy (WDHP). The Branch does not create any accommodation barriers for new or existing employees.

The Hamilton Niagara Regional Management Team will allot time on meeting agendas to discuss employment of individuals with disabilities, and what accommodations it can provide. Meetings will include general information on some disabilities from the individual's perspective.

The South West Region will continue to provide accommodation supports to staff with work space that is free of barriers. The Region will implement the recommendations received as a result of the review conducted by the Ontario March of Dimes in January 2007 at 217 York Street, London.

Timeline

April 2008

Communications and information

Barrier

Communications materials may not always be accessible to the public.

Commitment and Responsibility

- Strategic Planning Branch
- Communications Branch

Communications materials for the Ontario Child Benefit will be available in alternate formats (e.g. Braille).

Timeline

2007/08

Barrier

Signage in Regional offices needs to be updated and improved.

Commitment and Responsibility

Both South West and Hamilton-Niagara Regional Offices are committed to improving signage across the Region. This includes improved signage for the visually impaired.

Timeline

Spring 2008

Barrier

TTY machines are beginning to deteriorate.

Commitment and Responsibility

North East Region will upgrade TTY machines in the South Porcupine Office to improve communications for hard of hearing clients.

Timeline

August 2007

Barrier

The ministry's Youth Justice Services Division's pages on the ministry Intranet website may not be completely accessible for Youth Justice Services Division staff with disabilities.

Commitment and Responsibility

YJSD Integration Branch will consult with the Communication and Marketing Branch (CMB) to determine if any barriers exist on the YJSD pages of the ministry intranet website.

Timeline

April 2008

Built environment

Barrier

Some of the ministry's locations may not be completely accessible to staff and clients with disabilities

Commitment and Responsibility

- Child Parent Resource Institute will continue to renovate residential homes, buildings and walkways to eliminate access/mobility barriers as a regular component to the capital planning initiatives.

CPRI will also submit barrier-free renovation initiatives for the buildings in the capital plan for priority funding approvals. Accessibility planning identification and mitigation to be added to the Environmental Management Accreditation Team (EMAT) work plan as a primary agenda item

- Hamilton/Niagara Regional Office (HNR) will continue to work with CASB to improve the accessibility of offices for clients and employees. (King Street 7th floor Hamilton; Brantford, Simcoe and St. Catharines local offices).

Four of eight offices in the Southwest Region (SWR) have been either constructed or renovated in the past five years. Locating the four offices in single storey buildings has substantially removed barriers and improved accessibility. The remaining four offices including the London office are being reviewed for renovation or relocation in the next few years. While in the process of this work, the SWR continues to remove barriers and upgrade our space.

Thistletown Regional Centre (TRC) will continue to renovate residential homes, buildings, and walkways to eliminate access/mobility barriers as a regular component to the capital planning initiatives.

Eastern Region was informed by the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), its landlord, that the new office building will be fully accessible and ODA compliant. The OC Transpo buses serving the new office location (Preston St. area) are not all accessible – OC Transpo schedules and phone information lines are available for persons in need of accessible buses to help them with trip planning. A pedestrian-activated signal crossing in front of the ODSP entrance will be provided by the City of Ottawa, as well as handicapped parking spots on Preston St. and a drop-off space for Para Transpo. Upcoming installation of video conferencing at the new office location for Eastern Region could be considered for this Plan.

- Youth Justice Services in partnership with the Capital and Accommodation Services Branch, will work to improve the accessibility of current probation offices through renovations or relocation (multi-year project 2004-2008), where possible.
- YJSD will also disseminate to management, best practices for boardroom/furniture utilization from an accessibility perspective.

Timeline

2007-08 and ongoing

Barrier

YJSD youth facilities are not fully compliant with the ODA.

Commitment and Responsibility

Capital and Accommodation Services Branch and YJSD Northern and Central Region will plan for the construction of three new youth centres as well as for programming that will include consideration of the accessibility needs of people with disabilities and will be compliant with the ODA.

Timeline

April 2009

Barrier

Improvements need to be made to the Children's Treatment Centres so that the facilities will be more accessible.

Commitment and Responsibility

Specialized Services and Supports Branch, Policy Development and Program Design Division will continue to work with Children's Treatment Centres to identify their facility needs and plan for infrastructure update, including improvements to accessibility as needed.

Timeline

2007-2008 and ongoing

For More Information

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

Please phone: Alex Rnic 416-327-4775

General inquiry number: 416-212-7432

TTY number: 1-800-387-5559

1-800 number: 1-888-789-4199

E-mail: mcsinfo@mcys.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address: www.children.gov.on.ca

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.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

ISSN [1708-3222]

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Last Modified: July 26, 2007