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Ministry of Children and Youth Services 2015 Accessibility Plan

How the Ministry of Children and Youth Services identified and removed barriers in the Ontario Public Service in 2015 and future accessibility commitments for 2016.

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Executive summary

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) complies with the [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service \(ASCS\)](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_070429_e.htm) (http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_070429_e.htm) and the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_110191_e.htm#BK3) (http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_110191_e.htm#BK3). These regulations establish phased-in requirements in the following accessibility standards:

- customer service
- information and communications
- employment
- transportation
- design of public spaces

In 2012, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) released its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) entitled [Accessibility in the Ontario Public Service: Leading the Way Forward](https://dr6j45jk9xcmk.cloudfront.net/documents/105/ontarioaccessibilityplanen.pdf) (<https://dr6j45jk9xcmk.cloudfront.net/documents/105/ontarioaccessibilityplanen.pdf>). The Ministry of Children and Youth Services 2015 Accessibility Plan, celebrates the tenth anniversary of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and demonstrates how the measures taken in 2015 and proposed for 2016 support the key outcomes and deliverables of the OPS MYAP as we continue on our path to an accessible Ontario in 2025.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services was created in 2003 to support the young people of Ontario to thrive and succeed. Our commitment is to protect, nurture and support children and youth as they grow – from birth, through childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. The mandate of the ministry is twofold. The first is to work with, and through, our many partners to establish a system of services and supports that strengthen families and help Ontario's most vulnerable children and youth overcome barriers to their success and wellbeing. The second is to lead across government on issues that affect all children and youth. Since its creation, MCYS has developed considerable expertise in the area of child and youth development. This focus on positive development informs our role as a champion and catalyst for the outcomes of all children and youth in Ontario.

Many young people in Ontario live with special needs – including those with a physical or developmental disability, mental health needs, chronic conditions, a learning disability, specific disorders such as autism spectrum disorder, difficulty seeing, hearing or speaking, and with multiple disabilities. These children and youth often face barriers to accessibility and social inclusion.

We strive to embed accessibility into everything we do. In last year's plan, a commitment was made to encourage the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens. The Lens is a multi-dimensional, web-based analytical and educational tool available to all OPS staff. It supports the user in "how" to develop and deliver inclusive, equitable, accessible and responsive initiatives. In 2015, the Ministry promoted the OPS Inclusion Lens as a tool for identifying areas for improvement with regard to accessibility in event planning, policy and program design, as well as training.

This year's plan supports the importance of giving a voice to Ministry staff and encourages dialogue on accessibility barriers and opportunities to enhance the workplace environment in making it more accessible. The plan provides an opportunity for our Ministry to go beyond confirming compliance with regulated minimum requirements and truly integrate accessibility into the employee experience.

By supporting an integrated approach to organizational health and effectiveness, the Ministry will ensure accessibility is part of all aspects of corporate and regional programming. This includes gathering feedback from workplace culture leads throughout the Ministry on accessibility gaps and opportunities for enhancements. This also includes consulting with Ministry leadership on supports required to ensure accessibility is not only supported but widely promoted for all staff.

At the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, promoting accessibility awareness, removing barriers, and ensuring that all employees are able to participate fully and meaningfully in their workplace, is the responsibility of the entire organization.

Section one: report on measures taken by the ministry in 2015

Customer service

OPS MYAP key outcome:

People with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2015

The Ministry seeks feedback on accessibility

- Staff and customer feedback is sought on accessibility innovations and improvements. The Youth Justice Direct Operated Facilities Branch encourages youth to provide input on a wide range of issues. Staff have also provided feedback through the Employee Relations Committees and Health and Safety Committees. Local management of the facilities responds and implements feedback where feasible.

The OPS inclusion lens and the MCYS inclusion plan

- In the Children, Youth and Social Services J&T Cluster (CYSSC), the OPS Inclusion Lens continues to be applied in the accommodation of staff, in project planning, governance processes and architecture (in particular, the business architecture domain). In addition, Architects apply the lens as new programs and services are being described/defined – as per the J&IT Accessibility Guidebook published by the J&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence (ACOE) in late 2011.

- The Policy Development and Program Design Division considered the OPS Inclusion Lens dimensions of diversity and potential barriers related to the implementation of the Child and Youth Mental Health Directory. The launch of the Directory through a social media public marketing campaign has been identified as a potential barrier and as a result, print collateral material will be produced to ensure information reaches a more inclusive proportion of Ontarians.
- In the development of new policies and programs, the Child Welfare Secretariat (CWS) considers accessibility issues and the needs of young people with disabilities. For example, in developing a resource guide and training materials to increase the capacity of children's aid societies and caregivers to serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, queer and questioning (LGBT2SQ) young people, the CWS is also considering the needs of children and youth with disabilities.
- The 2013-2016 MCYS Inclusion Plan, a three-year action plan to strengthen diversity and inclusiveness, was implemented throughout the Ministry. The Youth Justice Services Division provided diversity and inclusion awareness training and community based training workshops to Youth Justice staff to increase awareness of diverse populations (e.g., gender specific training, Aboriginal awareness). All Youth Justice secure facilities have groups that look at any disability/accessibility issues.

Embedding awareness

- Managers were encouraged to incorporate and support accessibility and inclusion leadership commitments in their Performance Development Plans.
- The Ministry continued to exceed the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by requiring all staff complete the two online May I Help You training modules on providing accessible customer service. As part of the onboarding process, new staff are advised that these two modules are mandatory and all employees are encouraged to complete the accessibility related training found in the OPS Learning and Development Catalogue.

Information and communications

MYAP key outcome

Information and Communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2015

Accessible internal and external communications

- Accessibility was considered when developing internal and external communications, websites, technology solutions and documents. On January 1, 2016, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the AODA requires that all ministry internet websites and web content conform with the WCAG 2.0 level AA standard. The requirements related to accessible websites and web content have been completed.
- In March 2015, the Ministry went live with a new webpage to publicly report children's aid society performance indicators. Website development included "alternative text". The text can be read by accessibility devices and describes the data that is being presented visually in a chart format.
- In October 2015, the Ministry launched a public education campaign to inform the general public of its duty to report if a child is or may be at risk of abuse or neglect. The redesign of the "duty to report" web pages were developed in compliance with AODA guidelines.
- The Child Welfare Secretariat purchased "Articulate Storyline" software to develop a series of e-learning modules to assist in the implementation of revised Child Protection Standards, anticipated to take effect in the spring of 2016. The e-learning modules provide an overview of the revised standards, as well as a more detailed orientation to the requirements contained within each standard. The software used to

develop the e-learning modules is consistent with accessibility standards (e.g. it includes voice recording/narration functionality), and is a software product recommended by the OPS Distance Learning Community of Practice for the development of e-learning.

- The Strategic Information and Business Intelligence Branch (SIBI) invited the Diversity Office to clarify AODA requirements under the Information and Communications Standard. Throughout the expansion of the Ministry's Open Data Initiative, SIBI has worked to ensure that datasets are presented in the most accessible and understandable formats.
- Accessibility of communications, documents and I&IT solutions is one of the key factors considered in the design and architecture of I&IT solutions in the Children, Youth and Social Services I&IT Cluster. The I&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence (ACOE) continued to provide OPS staff with resources for creating and enhancing the accessibility of their websites, web applications and web content.
- ACOE launched the Cluster Compliance Initiative in 2015, to help support web compliance efforts across the Clusters in preparation for the January 1, 2016, regulatory deadline. A Cluster Web Accessibility Compliance Lead was appointed in each Cluster to coordinate and support web compliance efforts. ACOE provided specialized guidance to support compliance efforts including, but not limited to:
 - guidance with accessibility testing methodology and tools;
 - alignment in accessibility reporting processes;
 - six accessibility testing videos to help assist Cluster Tester Resources in their testing efforts;
 - participation on Cluster Compliance Task Forces.

Employment

MYAP key outcome

OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2015

Accessibility at work

- The Human Resources Strategic Business Unit continues to work with clients and management to support employment accommodation and return to work by addressing employment barriers in a timely and responsive manner.
- The Youth Justice Services Division works closely with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Disability Accommodation Specialist - HR Service Delivery Division Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness for employee accommodation and return to work situations. Facilities and probation utilize the Youth Justice Services Division's Health and Productivity Program which aims to accommodate staff returning to work from illness or injury.
- Divisions and Regions were encouraged to take a deep dive approach to analyzing the 2014 OPS Employee Survey results and select workplace culture priorities to focus on for enhancement. Performance Barriers was a commonly identified priority for most Divisions and Regions. Divisions and Regions who selected Performance Barriers as a priority were encouraged by the Corporate Services Branch to consult with staff on how they can be supported to reduce any existing barriers. Leaders were encouraged to do everything possible to remove any barriers, including accessibility barriers that separate people from the real work they need to do. Tips provided include:
 - consider what managers can do to make workplace policies and practices that could impede staff's performance more effective in work units; and,
 - ensure that staff's accessibility requirements are addressed so that they can better deliver results.

Emergency management in the ministry

- Business unit emergency management plans outline the requirement to make emergency plan information available in an accessible format upon request.
- Business unit emergency management plans include an updated “accessibility impact statement” that outlines the Ministry’s commitment to deliver services to people with disabilities as they relate to:
- non-emergency events whereby people with disabilities may be affected as a result of a disruption to normal business processes; and,
- emergency events whereby an alternative service delivery location is utilized to ensure the continuity of business service is maintained.
- All Ministry approved business unit Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) include an updated accessibility statement.
- The Emergency Management Unit developed an Accessibility Checklist for assessing Alternate Service Delivery Locations.

Accessibility awareness

- The Ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, holds a Manager’s Community of Practice (MCoP) which provides managers with an opportunity to hear best practices, discuss issues and ask questions regarding Employment Accommodation. Managers across both Ministries completed a survey to inform the topics and frequency preference for the meetings of this MCoP. Survey results indicated that accommodating mental health in the workplace was the topic most managers were interested in. Based on the feedback received, the Corporate Services Branch held a session on this topic.
- The Ministry participated in the OPS Continuum Pilot project in 2014, and the Inclusion Reference Group which was formed in 2015, to continue and deepen the learning from the pilot. In March 2015, a “Courageous Conversations” training session was offered to provide members with additional communication and emotional literacy skills to navigate conflict.

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

There is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2015

Capital planning

- Through strategic planning of the MCYS capital fiscal plan, the Capital Planning and Delivery Branch (CPDB) has moved forward with the implementation of the “Design of Public Spaces” and the updated barrier-free design requirements of the Ontario Building Code for service delivery and offices. CPDB also continues to address the current Infrastructure barriers and develop strategies to ensure its compliance to the “Design of Public Spaces” and AODA requirements as identified in the Infrastructure Ontario (IO) Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities and Building Code.
- Accessibility requirements have been encompassed into the Probation Office Guidelines while ensuring the safety of youth and staff is maintained in areas of high interaction with youth. The areas that serve public and staff have been developed in compliance with AODA requirements as identified in the IO Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities and Building Code.
- The Ministry continued to address accessibility in all its owned and leased spaces through design compliance to current AODA Building Code requirements, “Design of Public Spaces” and applicable IO Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.

- All CPDB decision-making and planning identifies and addresses AODA compliance through Infrastructure Ontario and their service providers/vendors of records when designing new or renovating existing Ministry office locations. Current practice also includes procurement of ergonomic furniture, fixtures and equipment, stemming from workstations, private office suites and file systems necessary to support staff with physical accommodation needs and making the office environment accessible.
- Throughout all facilities on the property, the Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) has lowered all fire alarm pull and key stations to meet the height requirements of the Accessibility Standards.

Public and staff engagement

- Diversity, accessibility and inclusion were important guiding principles in the 2015 Review of the *Child and Family Services Act* and in engagement with partners on the Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy. Access to meeting spaces and accessibility of all presentation materials was considered as part of planning, regardless of whether a request for accommodation was made, including physical, dietary, and other needs.
- The Ministry ensured that meeting facilities used for public engagements were accessible and continued to actively offer physical accommodations for staff engagements. When planning ministry-wide events for staff, the Corporate Services Branch applies the OPS Inclusion Lens. Through the use of the Lens, the Corporate Services Branch is able to consider a more thorough approach to accessibility when planning events. Some examples of this approach include:
 - conducting a site visit to check a location's accessible features;
 - inspecting meeting rooms to ensure they are large enough to provide circulation and seating for participants who use wheelchairs, scooters, guide dogs or other mobility aids;
 - briefing volunteers on the location of the elevators, accessible washrooms and accessible fire exits; and,
 - giving participants an opportunity to indicate any accommodation or dietary needs ahead of time.
- Accessibility in the built environment was the newest requirement of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. Though training for this requirement is open to all staff, the Ministry determined a target audience, based on the following definition, “employees identified as having duties that are impacted by the requirements for accessibility in the built environment”. Identified employees were required and have completed the online course “Accessible Built Environment in the OPS”. As of December 31, 2015, a total of 146 MCYS and Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) employees completed the online course “Accessible Built Environment in the OPS”. General outcomes

MYAP key outcome

OPS staff are able to identify barriers to accessibility, in OPS policies, programs, services and facilities, and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them on a continuing basis throughout the organization.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2015

Accessibility continues to be an organizational commitment for the Ministry

- Accessibility requirements have been embedded in procurement policies and tools in order to support customer service objectives.
- Ministry Delegates attended the Ontario Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN) Annual Conference and heard from leaders in the field of accessibility who are building accessible workplaces and are part of the successful realization of an inclusive Ontario.
- The Youth Equity Lens (YEL) is available to all OPS staff on the MCYS intranet site. The YEL fosters mindfulness in relation to the barriers and opportunities associated with at-risk youth in all government initiatives and prompts users to consider appropriate mitigations and enhancements to support positive

youth outcomes. Youth with Disabilities or Special Needs are one of the specific sub-populations identified as needing additional supports to benefit from government programs/services and are a focus of these resources. There is a population profile on Youth with Disabilities or Special Needs available for download that provides definition, key issues and stakeholder details. In a one year period (November 2014-November 2015), there were over 800 page views of the intranet pages containing YEL materials.

Section two: report on measures proposed by the ministry for 2016

Customer service

MYAP key outcome

People with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

Measures proposed by MCYS for 2016

The ministry will:

- focus on the priorities set out in the Ministry's multi-year Diversity and Inclusion Plan and support the OPS vision of being a diverse and inclusive organization.
- Require that staff complete the mandatory online training modules related to the AODA and the IASR and promote the complete range of accessibility-related training including the OPS Inclusion Lens e-learning.
- encourage the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens for new policies, programs, practices and services. Inclusion and accessibility are important guiding principles for the Ministry's work on the Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy and with potential legislative changes to the *Child and Family Services Act*, from the planning and policy development stage to consultation and engagement and communications.
- the Child Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) is creating a Client and Family Centred Care and Family Advisory Committee. These groups will be formed and fully functional in 2016. The AODA and the OPS Inclusion Lens will be applied in the work with these groups. This will include the development of policies, procedures, and service standards.

Information and communications

MYAP key outcome

Information and Communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

Measures proposed by MCYS for 2016

- The Youth Justice Services Division (YJSD) as a pilot project is in the process of developing software for a probation youth experience survey. Currently youth complete paper based surveys, which are then manually inputted by staff into a database. YJSD aims to digitize the survey with the use of a programmed tablet device (iPad), and youth will directly enter their responses into the survey using the iPad. This software will include text-to-speech functionality to enable youth to hear the survey questions read out loud and to allow youth to record their responses. Once the pilot is complete, and if successful and viable, it is the Division's intent to roll it out across the province in 2017.
- As Ministries prepare to implement the Open Data Directive, the Strategic Policy and Planning Division will provide support on how to:
- Ensure datasets are accessible in timelines aligned with their release; and,

- Ensure comprehension and clarity of documents by removing government jargon wherever possible from open data and metadata, or alternatively, provide sufficient explanation for terms or jargon, where necessary to ensure full accessibility and understanding of government data.
- The Ministry will continue to provide documents in an accessible format, and upon request, provide alternate formats to requesters' needs in a timely manner in order for them to participate fully and meaningfully.
- All learning and development products created by the Youth Justice Services Division's Staff Training and Development Unit will continue to be developed in accordance with OPS Accessibility Standards.
- In the Policy Development and Program Design Division, the System Transition Team and the Communications and Marketing Branch will continue to ensure that all files on the Moving on Mental Health website are fully accessible.

Employment

MYAP key outcome

OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

Measures proposed by MCYS for 2016

The ministry will:

- encourage ongoing staff dialogue at a variety of meetings on matters pertaining to accessibility
- ensure that training related to accessibility standards is included in onboarding of new employees. The new Ministry orientation portal will include a link to mandatory courses
- advise managers to include a performance commitment regarding accessibility in their performance plan
- continue to provide, through the Manager's Community of Practice, a forum for managers to raise questions and to learn and discuss issues, challenges and solutions to providing employee accommodation, while raising awareness of disability issues through guest speakers
- in addition, the Ministry's Accessibility Lead will attend Workplace Culture Committee meetings to provide relevant accessibility information and seek feedback from staff across the Ministry on accessibility opportunities for improvement and ongoing successes.

Built environment

MYAP key outcome

There is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

Measures proposed by MCYS for 2016

The ministry will:

- ensure that meeting facilities used for public engagements are accessible.
- address accessibility in Ministry owned and leased space which continues to be a key focus of ministry accommodation planning. Accessibility standards are included in Probation office renovations occurring at the Thunder Bay, Ottawa West, and Chatham offices. Current direction from the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure (MEDEI) and Infrastructure Ontario (IO) is that work is carried out in accordance with the IO Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities. These standards are used for all space planning projects

- undertake a refresh of its current Probation Guidelines to address all program needs and accessibility as it pertains to the clients they service. The Probation Guideline development will encompass AODA compliance, changes to the building code and accessibility best practices
- continue to actively offer physical accommodations for staff engagements
- in at least two Youth Justice Facilities, the accessible parking spaces will be repainted in 2016 to improve visibility.

General outcomes

MYAP key outcome

OPS staff are able to identify barriers to accessibility in OPS policies, programs, services and facilities, and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them on a continuing basis throughout the organization.

Measures proposed by MCYS for 2016

The ministry will:

- offer training to staff on how to use the OPS Inclusion Lens to encourage an even broader use of the tool in the development, implementation or evaluation of a policy, program or service
- continue to be more diverse, inclusive and accessible by promoting the OPS Anti-Racism Action Plan throughout the organization and increasing awareness and understanding of racism and its impacts.

Section three: addressing the identification of barriers in legislation

Introduction

In 2005, the government introduced the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, with the goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025. In support of this goal, the government subsequently committed to review Ontario legislation to identify and address accessibility barriers, and undertook a coordinated review of 51 statutes considered to have a high impact on persons with disabilities. This review has now been completed.

Our Ministry remains committed to the goal of ensuring that Ontario legislation does not create barriers to persons with disabilities. We will continue to report through our accessibility plan, the actions taken to identify and remove barriers in Ministry Acts, regulations, policies, programs and services. The findings of the coordinated review of high impact statutes will inform our Ministry's approach to carry out this work.

Measures currently in place

The following measure is in place to assess our Ministry's proposals for new Acts, regulations, policies and programs and services to determine their effect on persons with disabilities:

- diversity, accessibility and inclusion will continue to be important guiding principles as part of work on potential legislative changes to the Child and Family Services Act and in engagement with partners on the Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy.
- at CPRI, an Accessibility Audit will identify any areas of concern on compliance and any recommendations will be implemented in 2016.

Actions taken in the past year

In 2015, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services took the following actions to address barriers in its Acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services in response to identified barriers:

- as part of the 2015 Review of the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*, Ontarians were invited to make written submissions and provide feedback on the CFSA, which governs many of the province's programs and services for children and youth, at public engagement sessions with families and services providers across the province. The Review allowed for input in multiple formats/media in order to promote accessibility, with a focus on outcomes and improvement that provided space to hear about innovations that could also improve accessibility in the child and family services sector.
- as a result of an annual review of Ontario Fire and Building Code and OPS Guidelines for Barrier-free Design in Ontario Government Facilities, CPRI installed a new accessible ramp at the main public entrance and completed a rebuild of the public washroom in the Crombie main floor, meeting all legislated Accessibility Standards in the same facility.

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Related

Multi-year accessibility plan for the Ontario Public Service

[Ontario's accessible customer service policy \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-customer-service-policy\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-customer-service-policy)

[Services and supports for people with developmental disabilities \(http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/developmental/index.aspx?utm_source=shortlinks&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=q2r\)](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/developmental/index.aspx?utm_source=shortlinks&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=q2r)

[How to make websites accessible \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-websites-accessible\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-websites-accessible)