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Ministry of Children and Youth Services 2016 Accessibility Report

How the Ministry of Children and Youth Services identified and removed barriers in the Ontario Public Service in 2016.

ISSN: 1911-3994

Executive summary

Like all ministries, Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) complies with 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). This regulation established phased-in requirements in the following accessibility standards:

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

The general requirements are:

- procurement
- training

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://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-public-service-leading-way-forward) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-public-service-leading-way-forward>). MCYS's 2016 Accessibility Report demonstrates how the measures taken in 2016 support the key outcomes and deliverables of the 2012-2016 OPS MYAP.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services was established in 2003 to support the young people of Ontario to thrive and succeed. Our ministry's 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 children 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.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services' 2016 Accessibility Plan considers all of the accessibility obligations and builds on the ministry's accessibility commitments from last year. The ministry's commitments proposed for 2016 were guided by the key outcomes set by the OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan as the ministry continues on the path to being accessible by 2025.

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 and something we are very much committed to.

Section one: report on measures taken by the ministry in 2016

Customer service

MYAP key outcome

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

Commitments for 2016

- 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 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (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) to create 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.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2016

MCYS is committed to ensuring that its services and programs are accessible and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. Over the past year, the Ministry has continued to build on its past achievements. Specific measures included:

OPS Inclusion Lens/policies

The OPS Inclusion Lens is a multi-dimensional, web-based analytical and educational tool available to MCYS staff. It supports the user in "how" to develop and deliver inclusive, equitable, accessible and responsive

services. As a best practice, the policy and program areas use the OPS Inclusion Lens when developing strategic plans, events and documents.

Staff are encouraged to use the OPS Inclusion Lens in all aspects of policy development and analysis, and whenever possible to inform new policies, programs or services that are implemented. The OPS Inclusion Lens is also used in financial and business improvement policies, programs and practices and all managers and staff are encouraged to complete the OPS Inclusion Lens e-learning.

Many divisions or program areas within the ministry are using the Inclusion Lens to inform policy and program development. A few examples of the OPS Inclusion Lens in practice are:

- 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 Child Welfare Secretariat is considering the needs of diverse communities of LGBT2SQ children and youth, including children and youth with disabilities and racialized children and youth by applying a diversity lens and intersectional analysis
- the Children and Youth at Risk Branch used the OPS Inclusion Lens as a guide to policy development and program design work related to Indigenous youth life promotion initiatives. These initiatives are being co-designed / developed with First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous partners and the Inclusion Lens has been a valuable tool to support staff in this process
- all regions encourage the use of the OPS Inclusion Lens whenever any new policies, programs, practices and services are implemented; including signage
- Youth Justice Services Division also encourages and supports a climate free of discrimination and harassment, and the application of the OPS Inclusion Lens is part of the all policy/program and product development

Accessibility training

As part of the on boarding process during an employee's orientation, all new staff members are informed of their obligation to complete the mandatory courses for OPS employees via LearnON.

- All divisions are provided with a learning history report and reminded on a bi-annual basis to have staff complete any outstanding mandatory AODA training courses via LearnON.

Procurement/service agreements

- The Child Welfare Secretariat incorporates accessibility features into its procurement processes as appropriate (e.g. The Performance Indicator project Request for Bids includes as a Term and Condition accessibility obligations, where vendors are responsible for complying with the requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2001 and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005).
- As part of the 2017-18 Transfer Payment Budget Package, the Child Welfare Secretariat underwent a process to ensure that the service data elements, definitions, and service agreements for the Community Capacity Building, Youth-in-Transition Worker, and Alternative Dispute Resolution programs met accessibility requirements.

Information and communications

MYAP key outcome

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

Commitments 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 within the timelines that aligned with their release
 - 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 the 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.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2016

The ministry encourages and accepts feedback on accessibility through a variety of processes and at all levels of the ministry. The ministry continued to work towards making all information and communications materials accessible to all Ontarians and to promote awareness of the AODA accessible information and communications requirements. Specific measures included:

- As part of regular ministry business practices, MCYS ensures venues are fully accessible to allow for participation in workshops, town halls, forums, and other in-person or virtual sessions whether in person or through technology (e.g. WebEx, Adobe Connect, Video Conference, etc.).
- Accessibility is considered when sending communications products. Requests for documents in an alternate format are responded to in a timely manner. Plain language, font style and size and translation are all utilized to ensure requirements are met on a regular basis.

Direct Entry Pilot project

- As a commitment for 2016, the 'Direct Entry Pilot' was implemented in 15 probation offices across the province. An evaluation of this pilot will take place in August 2017.
- The Youth Justice Services Division, Staff Training and Development Unit (STDU) has integrated accessibility requirements into all learning products produced to ensure that users can interact meaningfully with learning and development materials. Quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure functionality for accessibility features and meeting standards in all learning products produced.
- A Trades and Apprenticeship eLearning series was developed by STDU in an accessible format.

Websites

As of January 1, 2016, the ministry Internet websites and web content on those websites conformed to international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. A few examples:

- a new fully accessible website ([Opportunities for Youth](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/youthopportunities/eoyap/index.aspx) (<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/youthopportunities/eoyap/index.aspx>)) was launched and tested according to AODA accessibility standards, meeting WCAG 2.0 Level AA
- in 2016, the ministry went live with a new public webpage to publicly report children's aid society performance indicators. The Child Welfare Secretariat worked with the Communications and Marketing Branch to ensure the development of accessible text and other accessibility features

Accessible documents

Accessibility is considered when developing communication materials and documents. Plain language, font style and size are utilized to ensure requirements are met on a regular basis. When sending internal and external correspondence, documents are provided in alternate formats for both correspondence and meetings when required. For example:

- the Autism Parent Resource Kit (APRK) was translated into 12 languages with plans for a total of 15. English and French languages have been developed into a fully accessible PDF on our website.
- Youth Justice Services Division integrated accessibility requirements into all learning products produced to ensure that users can interact meaningfully with learning and development materials
- the Ministry implemented revised Ontario Child Protection Standards and Tools in June 2016. Child Welfare Secretariat worked with Communications and Marketing Branch to ensure these documents were made into accessible formats and posted publicly on the MCYS website
- Children and Youth at Risk Branch worked with the Child and Youth Residential Services Review Expert Panel to convert their final report, *Because Young People Matter*, into an accessible PDF as well as HTML (for screen readers) in both official languages. The Panel report was released publicly on May 19, 2016

Employment

MYAP key outcome

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

Commitments for 2016

- 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.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2016

MCYS is committed to fair and accessible employment practices and has various employment-related achievements with a vision to create a diverse, accessible and inclusive organization that delivers excellent services and supports employees to reach their full potential.

Employee orientation/training

- Accessibility standards and mandatory training, resources and awareness is promoted regularly in unit meetings and is included in all onboarding of new staff.
- Local health and safety committee's address matters related to accessibility.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committees have been established in each of the six Direct Operated facilities in YJSD. The purpose of the EDI Committee is to support the MCYS commitment of developing, supporting and promoting a diverse and inclusive environment for staff members and youth.
- The Ministry Accessibility Lead worked with the Workplace Culture Committee and the Manager's Community of Practice, to promote awareness of accessibility. Both forums provide staff and managers an opportunity to hear best practices, discuss issues and ask questions regarding a variety of issues around accessibility.

Workplace accommodations

- Regions encourage ongoing staff dialogue at meetings on matters pertaining to accessibility.
- Management continues to promote a climate of lifelong learning including accessing training via the Centre for Leadership and Learning (CFL).
- Divisions work closely with Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS), Disability Accommodation Specialist - HR Service Delivery Division, Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness for employee accommodation and return to work situations.
- Youth Justice Services Division utilize the Health and Productivity Program which aims to accommodate staff returning to work from illness or injury.

Accommodation requests

- Employees are encouraged to identify and discuss any potential employment accommodation needs at the time of assignment or at any time thereafter. Employees' needs are met in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.
- Accessibility considerations are given during the recruitment process and accommodations are offered to candidates/panel members.
- Managers encourage ongoing staff dialogue pertaining to accessibility at team meetings, which provide an opportunity for discussion and learning and development by discussing articles, announcements, communications released by the Ministry/OPS.
- Managers continue supporting employment accommodations (i.e. Return to Work, mental health in the workplace, flexible work arrangements, etc.) and provide information to staff on the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) during orientation sessions and when needed.

Performance plans

- Accessibility, diversity and inclusion are incorporated into manager's annual performance plans.
- Managers key performance commitments for 2016/17 include the following: Inclusion and Diversity – cultivate an organization that includes and engages everyone and that is free from discrimination and harassment, actively builds inclusive and accessible policies, programs and public services for all Ontarians, and achieves OPS inclusion and accessibility commitments and obligations (identified in Inclusion Now!, the 5-year HR Plan, the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, Inclusion-related Action Plans including the Anti-Racism Action Plan and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*).

Transportation

MYAP key outcome

The OPS continues to support the development of transportation services for the people of Ontario that are barrier-free.

In 2016, MCYS where possible, made access to transportation and its related services more accessible, affordable, convenient, and safe for its clients and staff.

Measures taken by MCYS in 2016

- The ministry supported staff with disabilities and offered accessible transportation (i.e. taxis) as required to events and meetings.

Design of public spaces

MYAP key outcome

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

Commitments for 2016

- 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 standards, 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

Measures taken by MCYS in 2016

The Infrastructure Planning and Delivery Unit (IPDU) continues to address accessibility in owned and leased spaces. Current direction from the Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) and Infrastructure Ontario (IO) is that work be carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities. The Capital Planning and Delivery Branch (CPDB) applies these standards for all space planning projects to ensure that all MCYS owned and leased spaces meet and/or exceed current AODA requirements.

Owned/leased space

- Direct Operated (DO) facilities ensure accessible parking spaces are clearly marked with visual identifiers to improve visibility of the parking spaces. In 2016 one facility had their accessible parking spots re-painted. An additional facility is scheduled to have their accessible parking spots re-painted in the summer of 2017.
- Changes to physical layout of office space in the Ministry of Community and Social Services / Ministry of Children and Youth Services North Region offices Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Timmins have resulted in accessible washrooms, accessible interview rooms, wheelchair accessible floor space, and braille signage. Additionally, as part of employee accommodation in the Thunder Bay office, a strobe light is now in place as an alert to staff.
- The work of *Positioning Probation for the Future* (Probation Strategy) engaged and consulted with staff on the programs and services delivered by probation officers that will determine a standardized continuum

of probation services in the areas of prevention, diversion and with sentenced youth. Design planning for program requirements will be a key consideration of the Probation Strategy in 2017.

Transfer payment agencies

- A Children and Youth Mental Health transfer payment agency that provides a residential treatment program: Toronto Region facilitated funding through Capital Planning and Delivery Branch (CPDB) for an accessible washroom to accommodate a client with physical disabilities.
- Transfer payment agency that delivers program to individuals involved with Youth Justice as well as Developmental disabilities: Toronto Region facilitated funding through CPDB for a new kitchen to offer better accessibility for clients.

Meeting facilities

Accessibility is considered when scheduling staff meetings, and for all public engagements active offers for accommodations are included in the invitations.

- Central Region considers accessibility requirements when choosing meeting venues to ensure those with specific needs are accommodated. Recent accommodation changes in Central Region offices located in Mississauga and Newmarket all included, considered and planned for individual employee accommodation needs.
- Meeting facilities where the public is invited to participate are accessible. Any interaction with members of the public are conducted with high standards of customer service (e.g. during working groups) and effort is made to take accessibility issues into consideration.
- The Staff Training and Development Unit in the Youth Justice Service Division has created an accommodation process to ensure all requests for dietary needs or physical requirements are addressed.
- Team meetings/materials are accessible through video conferencing; teleconference and the accessibility needs of staff have been supported through formal assessment including desk and chair enhancements.

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.

Commitments for 2016

- 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

Measures taken by MCYS in 2016

OPS Inclusion Lens

Staff are encouraged to use the OPS Inclusion Lens in all aspects of policy development and analysis, and whenever possible to any new policies, programs or services that are implemented. The OPS inclusion lens is also used in financial and business improvement policies, programs and practices and all managers and staff are encouraged to complete the OPS Inclusion Lens e-learning.

MCYS, promoted the OPS Anti-Racism Action Plan to staff, while continuing to actively implement the existing MCYS Inclusion Plan, which champions an accessible and healthy workplace, free from harassment and discrimination.

We look forward to implementing new initiatives to support and advance diversity in our ministry.

Section two: addressing the identification of barriers in legislation and implementation frameworks

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.

As a result of this review, the government made changes to 11 statutes spread across seven ministries to ensure that Ontario laws better reflect accessibility considerations. The changes to the 11 statutes were included in the government's 2016 Budget bill, which received Royal Assent on April 19, 2016.

Each ministry continues to be responsible for identifying and addressing barriers in their legislation and the policies and programs through which that legislation is implemented, and for reporting on results through its accessibility report.

Our Ministry remains committed to the goal of ensuring that Ontario legislation and implementation frameworks do not create barriers to persons with disabilities.

Measures in place in 2016

STRIDE (Supporting a Toronto Region that is Inclusive, Diverse, and Equitable) is a working group that has been established to serve as an advisory body to all regional staff. Its main purpose is to support and promote the principles of diversity, inclusion, equity and cultural competence throughout MCYS/MCSS Toronto Region Office (TRO).

- STRIDE activities promote a safe, healthy and inclusive workplace and provide education and awareness of issues affecting diverse populations.
- In 2016/17 STRIDE activities included:
 - hosting Mental Health 101 Workshop for regional staff, facilitated by Centre for Mental Health and Addiction
 - unconscious bias workshop for regional staff, facilitated by external trainer
 - Toronto Region Child Welfare/Violence Against Women (CAS/VAW) Forum provided training to children's aid society staff and ministry staff by a world-renowned substance-use expert, on the topic of addictions and accessible service delivery

Actions taken in the past year

In 2016, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services reviewed its Acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services and the ministry took the following actions to reduce accessibility barriers:

- as part of the Ministry of the Attorney General's review of regulations in 2016, S. 49 of Regulation 70, General, made under the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA), RRO 1990, is scheduled to proceed to the Legislation and Regulations Committee (LRC) on May 1, 2017. This regulation provides the list of

what are approved psychotropic drugs for the purposes of the CESA. The amendment to the regulation will eliminate a table and provide the information in paragraph form.

Updated: June 29, 2018

Published: November 17, 2017

Related

[All 2016 ministry accessibility reports \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-plans-2016\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-plans-2016)

[2012-2016 Ontario Public Service Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
\(https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-public-service-leading-way-forward\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-public-service-leading-way-forward)

[A guide to accessibility directives and policies in the Ontario Public Service
\(https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-service-policies-make-accessibility-work\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-service-policies-make-accessibility-work)