



MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

2012-2013

Annual Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

Each year, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) sets a course to prevent, identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Every ministry participates through the preparation of its annual accessibility plan, as required under the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 \(ODA\)](#).

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) is Ontario's roadmap to becoming accessible by 2025. It requires the development of accessibility standards in five key areas of daily living:

- Customer service
- Information and communications
- Employment
- Transportation, and
- Built environment

This year, the accessibility plans must also address the [Integrated Accessibility Regulation \(IASR\)](#) under the AODA enacted in June 2011. The IASR required the OPS to develop a multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. It published the [OPS MYAP](#) on January 1, 2012. This included a statement of commitment for the OPS to demonstrate leadership for accessibility, "the OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our products, services and facilities."

Building on the OPS Statement of Commitment, the OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs' (MAA) 2011-12 accessibility plan, the current plan (2012-13) will continue moving MAA and the OPS toward the goal of demonstrating leadership in becoming an accessible province for all Ontarians.

This plan outlines the specific steps the ministry is taking to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. To view every ministry's accessibility plan visit [Ontario.ca](#).

Section One: Report on Measures to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in 2011-12

The Government of Ontario's goal is to achieve the most accessible province by 2025.

Since 2001, the OPS has complied with the obligations of the ODA and prepared an annual accessibility plan, which it has made available to the public through the Government of Ontario's public website.

In June 2007, the stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was created to replace the Ontario Secretariat of Aboriginal Affairs. This was a significant and symbolic step that reflected the importance of developing a stronger, broader partnership with Aboriginal people in Ontario.

Accessibility In Action

There have been numerous examples of accessibility-in-action at MAA over the past five years and we wish to highlight the following ones.

Ministry employees have embraced the OPS accessibility training and have integrated the OPS Inclusion Lens into their ministry culture. They continue to demonstrate a personal commitment and heightened sensitivity to accessibility issues. Staff ensures that all public forums and meetings that involve members of the public are fully accessible, where circumstances permit.

MAA has further demonstrated its commitment to accessibility through its eagerness not only to conform to the WCAG 2.0 level AA requirements for web-based information (excluding live captioning and audio descriptions) but to ensure that its web presence is beyond reproach in its compliance.

Finally, when the ministry moved into its Bloor Street location in 2008, management demonstrated their commitment to accessibility by exceeding the strict requirements under the Ontario Building Code. MAA ensured that their new work environment presented accessible signage and barrier-free meeting rooms, and was mindful of eliminating any potential barriers in common work spaces. The ministry was determined to provide a work environment that was fully accessible for its employees and visitors.

Reporting on 2011-2012 AODA Obligations

In 2011-12, the government continued to comply with the [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation](#). As well, it had begun applying initiatives to meet compliance of some of the requirements of the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) in the areas of employment, information and communications, transportation, and procurement. The government continues to implement initiatives to enhance accessibility in other areas such as the built environment.

The following is a summary of the accessibility initiatives the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs implemented last year, as a result of their [2011-2012 Annual Accessibility Plan](#).

Customer Service

In 2011-12 our ministry...

- Ensured that all new staff completed the necessary training to meet or exceed requirements specified in the Accessible Customer Service Standard (ACSS) of the AODA.
- Updated the ministry's Service Standards page on MAA's public website to include a statement on our commitment to providing a barrier-free and accessible workplace, and on our active offer to receive feedback on accessibility by clearly providing a multitude of communication channels. This change enhanced the ministry's responsiveness to feedback on accessibility-related matters.
- Ensured the ministry was ready to respond to public feedback on accessibility-related matters.
- Supported the facility's building management in implementing a service disruption protocol for employees in order to fully meet the requirements of the ACSS.
- Implemented the [OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy](#) and associated practices and procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the ACSS.
- Continued to apply the OPS Inclusion Lens to identify areas for improvement in accessibility with regard to service delivery.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs supported the broader efforts of the OPS to meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The OPS met the requirements listed below by the January 1, 2012 timeframe.

- **Accessibility policies** - The OPS developed a statement of commitment and documented OPS accessibility policies, culminating in the [OPS Accessibility public website](#) that describes the OPS commitment and policies. The ministry's Chief Administrative Officer sent a message to all staff to inform them of this commitment.
- **Accessibility plans** - The OPS created a public-facing [multi-year accessibility plan to 2025](#) that outlines our vision and how we intend to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility.
- **Procurement of goods and services** - The OPS incorporated accessibility criteria and features into its procurement process. MAA complies with the MGS directive and practices for procurement.
- **Self-service kiosks** - The OPS incorporated accessibility features into self-service kiosks it procured, designed and acquired. MAA does not have any self-service kiosks.
- **Emergency and public safety information** - OPS emergency procedures, plans and/or public safety information is made available in an accessible format, upon request, as soon as practicable.
- **New internet and intranet websites** - New or significantly refreshed internet and intranet websites, along with their content, conform to WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.0 Level AA, other than live captions and audio descriptions (pre-recorded).
- **Workplace emergency information** - The OPS provides individualized workplace emergency response information to persons with disabilities. MAA ensures that an emergency evacuation plan is in place for office employees with disabilities.

Information and Communications

In 2011-12 our ministry...

- Continued to improve accessibility in MAA through its communication and information products. For example, videos posted on the ministry's internet site included closed captioning and new documents posted online were fully accessible.
- Worked with I & IT enterprise areas to plan for the conformity of any new internet and intranet websites and web content in accordance with the Web Content

Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, which excludes live captions and audio descriptions.

- Promoted the use of OPS e-learning videos on how to create accessible PDF and Word documents and other subjects related to IASR. For example, every manager in the ministry is sent a list of 'MAA Learning Opportunities' for themselves and their staff; the OPS Mission Possible series, comprising six modules on accessibility topics, is featured on the list as 'strongly recommended' learning for all staff.
- MAA's Communications Branch considered accessibility as part of their communications planning and preparation of materials.
- Updated the accessibility page on the MAA internal website to ensure staff can easily locate relevant information, guidelines and tools.
- Complied with the guidelines and procedures for meeting public requests for publications in accessible formats.

Employment

In 2011-12 our ministry...

- Advised the public that accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request (e.g., active offer of accommodation for job interviews).
- Reviewed job descriptions to identify and remove barriers to accessibility.
- Having previously identified and eliminated any barriers to accessibility in our employment practices, we continued to ensure that we utilized barrier-free practices, processes and tools.

Built Environment

In 2011-12 our ministry...

- Contributed as a member of the OPS inter-ministerial committee associated with the Built Environment proposed standards.
- As tenants of 160 Bloor Street in Toronto, we consulted with the facility's property management on any alterations to ensure they were designed and implemented in a manner that provided barrier-free access according to the Ontario Building Code.

Procurement

- In 2011-12 our ministry's procurement practices were consistent with the [Management Board of Cabinet Procurement Directive \(2011\)](#) and MGS' Guidelines for Meeting Accessibility Obligations in Procurement.
- We considered accessibility for persons with disabilities regarding all goods or services purchased through the procurement process, whether for use by the ministry, its employees or the public. For example, in planning the annual OPS Aboriginal Forum, we ensured the day-long event was accessible to persons with disabilities and offered alternate meals due to dietary restrictions, as part of the registration process. Also, the ministry extended the active offer for accommodation to its employees when attending ministry meetings. In addition, MAA subject matter experts worked closely with developers of a new public information tool (not yet launched) to ensure it meets current accessibility standards for web.

Section Two: Measures Planned for 2012-13

Our Statement of Commitment

The OPS endeavours to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in Ontario. Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve through our products, services and facilities.

This year, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs Accessibility Plan focuses on **seven** key areas including:

1. Customer Service
2. Employment
3. Information & Communications
4. Built Environment
5. Procurement
6. Accessibility Training
7. Accessibility Feedback

In an effort to demonstrate leadership in accessibility, our ministry plans to undertake a number of initiatives that support compliance with the existing Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the AODA. The activities will also strengthen employee accessibility awareness within all areas of the ministry.

Customer Service

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities receive accessible goods and services. This means they will receive goods and services with the same high quality and timeliness as others do.

In 2012-13 our ministry intends to...

- Continue to ensure all new regular and fixed-term staff will complete the necessary training to meet or exceed the requirements specified in the ACSS. In addition to the online modules for staff, the training will also be offered in alternate formats as necessary, such as providing a paper copy, CD, or by telephone.
- Periodically review and update the client feedback feature on the ministry's public web presence as required in an effort to remain responsive to accessibility-related matters.
- Respond appropriately to feedback received on accessibility-related matters. MAA's Communications Branch remains committed to responding in a timely manner to all feedback received.
- Continue its collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources (Natural Resource Information Centre) to ensure that TTY service is provided on behalf of MAA.
- Continue to implement a service disruption protocol to fully meet the requirements of the ACSS.
- Implement the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy as well as the associated practices and procedures in accordance with the requirements of the ACSS. MAA's Accessibility Lead will continue to advise program areas on the effective design of programs, services and processes, ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities are considered up front.

Information and Communications

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is committed to making government information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the manner in which we communicate it are key to delivering programs and services to the public.

In 2012-13 our ministry intends to:

- Continue to identify areas for improvement in accessibility within the ministry's communication and information products. For example, MAA intends to distribute its electronic staff newsletter *The Footprint* using an accessible email format and will post the document on the internal website in both HTML and accessible PDF formats.

- Work with I & IT enterprise areas to plan for the conformity of new internet and intranet websites and their content, following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, which exclude live captions and audio descriptions.
- Continue to update the accessibility section on the MAA internal website to assist staff in locating new information, guidelines and tools, for ensuring documents and other materials are accessible. The website will be reviewed to ensure up-to-date content that keeps pace with OPS initiatives.
- Continue to promote e-learning videos and other resources as provided through the OPS Accessibility@Source information campaign, on how to create accessible documents and other subjects related to the IASR. The information will also be posted on the ministry's internal website, called The Footprint, and communicated directly to staff through memo.
- MAA's Communications Branch will ensure that accessibility is considered early in the planning phase for the preparation of communication materials, as described in the OPS Inclusion Lens.
- Continue to respond to public requests for publications in accessible formats according to the OPS guidelines. Seek expertise when necessary in meeting the requirement for providing alternate formats that best address client needs.
- Continue to support staff in considering accessibility for persons with disabilities when planning for public meetings; MAA will post best practices for organizing accessible meetings on the ministry's internal website.

Employment

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees including those who have a disability. The ministry intends to support OPS employees who have a disability in ensuring they are well informed and encouraged to participate fully in all employment services and processes. Consistent with the broader OPS, the ministry is committed to meeting the requirements specified in the Employment Standards of the IASR.

In 2012-13 our ministry intends to ensure that as an employer, the accessibility requirements are met in the following areas:

- In its recruitment processes
- In employee accommodation and supports
- In the accommodation for employees returning to work after an extended absence
- In accommodating employees relative to performance management, career development and redeployment

- In ensuring all mandatory training is observed by staff, including the upcoming OPS training pertaining to the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Built Environment

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is committed to greater accessibility within and around the buildings and public spaces it occupies.

In 2012-13 our ministry ...

- Intends to continue with the Accessibility Lead's contribution to the OPS inter-ministerial committee associated with the proposed Built Environment Standards.
- As tenants of 160 Bloor Street in Toronto, the ministry will continue to consult with the facility's property management on any alterations to ensure they are designed and implemented in a manner that provides barrier-free access according to the Ontario Building Code.

Procurement

The ministry is committed to employing modern procurement practices that meet or exceed the [Management Board of Cabinet Procurement Directive \(2011\)](#).

Supported by the tools and templates provided by MGS, our ministry intends to...

- Continue to include accessibility considerations in its procurement and evaluation practices that are consistent with the MGS [Guidelines for Meeting Accessibility Obligations in Procurement](#).
- Continue to incorporate accessibility considerations in procurement planning and to include accessibility criteria when developing procurement documentation.
- Continue to consider accessibility for persons with disabilities in all goods or services purchased for the use of the ministry, its employees or the public, for example, in arranging for facilities to hold public meetings or consultation sessions, where practicable.

Accessibility Training

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is committed to fulfilling training requirements as specified in the AODA regulation. Our ministry will ensure that all regular and fixed-term

staff is provided with the required training on how to plan for and provide accessible products and services.

For 2012-13 our ministry intends to:

- Fulfill the training requirements as specified in the Accessible Customer Service Standard (ACSS) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).
- Encourage all staff to complete additional learning and awareness training as provided by the OPS Diversity Office, including the Accessibility@Source tools and learning supports.

Accessible Feedback

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is responsive to feedback received on accessibility.

For 2012-13 our ministry intends to continue providing feedback mechanisms for the public through a range of communication channels including:

- Electronic contact through the MAA internet site.
- Telephone contact in partnership with MNR, through the Natural Resource Information Centre (NRIC), including TTY.
- Contact by correspondence through postal services.
- Contact by correspondence through facsimile.
- Encouraging feedback from clients and participants of consultation sessions and workshops.

Ministry employees will continue to respond in a timely and respectful manner to feedback received on accessibility matters.

Section Three: Review of Acts, Regulations and Policies

In support of the OPS commitment to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, the Ontario Public Service will continue to review government initiatives, including legislation and policies, to identify potential barriers that need to be removed.

MAA staff regularly makes use of the OPS Inclusion Lens to ensure their policies, programs and processes are free of barriers for persons with disabilities.

The OPS Diversity Office and the Ministry of the Attorney General are working together to support a coordinated approach to legislative review across government.

Acts, Regulations and Policies Reviewed

Currently, there is no legislation or regulation mandated to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

Identifying, Removing and Preventing Barriers with the OPS Inclusion Lens

In 2011, the Ontario Public Service launched the OPS Inclusion Lens. This is an analytical tool that helps staff incorporate elements of inclusion into their work through an enhanced understanding of diversity and accessibility. The OPS Inclusion Lens can be used when initiating a project or reviewing policies, programs, legislation, guidelines and procedures, and can assist in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility as well as other dimensions of diversity.

In 2012-13 our ministry intends to continue to use the OPS Inclusion Lens as a tool to identify potential barriers. Actions may include...

- Continue to encourage staff to use the OPS Inclusion Lens as part of their normal business when reviewing or developing legislation, policies, programs, practices or services.
- Require all staff to include in their annual learning plans the OPS Inclusion Lens on-line course, available through the OPS' Centre for Leadership and Learning.

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

ACSS – Accessible Customer Service Standard (within the AODA)

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

IASR – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

MAA – Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

MYAP – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

OPS – Ontario Public Service

WCAG – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

For More Information

Questions or comments about the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs accessibility plan are always welcome.

Please contact the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs at:

Telephone – Toll free: 1-866-381-5337 (Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, except statutory holidays)

TTY number: 1-866-686-6072

Fax: 1-416-326-4017

E-mail: public.maa@ontario.ca

Ministry website address: www.ontario.ca/aboriginal

Visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario](http://www.ontario.ca/aboriginal) web portal. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario an accessible province for everyone.

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