

Published plans and annual reports 2021-2022: Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility

Plans for 2021-2022, and results and outcomes of all provincial programs delivered by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility in 2020-2021.

Ministry overview

Ministry's vision

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility's (MSAA) vision is an inclusive Ontario that supports the health and well-being of people with disabilities and older Ontarians. The ministry strives to improve the quality of life for older Ontarians and people with disabilities by changing perceptions and promoting the benefits of an inclusive, age-diverse, accessible Ontario where everyone is respected and able to participate. Through targeted supports, policy and program development, cross-government collaborations and strategic partnerships with businesses and not-for-profit organizations, the ministry supports older Ontarians and people with disabilities in accessing services and resources to enable them to lead independent and socially engaged lives in their communities and to fully participate in the economy as consumers and contributors. Older Ontarians and people with disabilities are as diverse as the rest of the population; their needs are equally diverse. The ministry's policies and programs reflect this reality.

The ministry has undertaken various initiatives to support older Ontarians and people with disabilities through this unprecedented and challenging COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve its vision, the ministry:

- Collaborates across government and with key partners like municipalities and community organizations to inform policies and develop and fund programs to support greater access, independence, social connection, and active living for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Helps seniors stay healthy and safe including through the prevention of elder abuse and supporting the safety of retirement home residents.
- Ensures that people with disabilities with diverse lived experience and expertise are represented and are engaged in ministry activities and legislative bodies such as the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council, and Standards Development Committees.
- Works with employers to champion the business case and economic benefits of employing seniors and people with disabilities.
- Partners with disability organizations to help connect people with disabilities with employers.
- Brings an accessibility and older Ontarians lens to government policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- Supports the development of education tools and resources.
- Administers and oversees development, implementation, and enforcement of accessibility laws as part of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

- Administers the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* (RHA), *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA), and the *Seniors Active Living Centres Act, 2017* (SALCA) and oversees the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA).
- Works with Federal/Provincial/Territorial partners and participates in policy forums and tables to discuss common challenges, share best practices, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

COVID-19 response

The top priority of the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility is the health and well-being of seniors and people with disabilities. Older adults and people with disabilities have unique vulnerabilities due to barriers that have arisen as a result of the pandemic. Congregate settings, including retirement homes, are at greater risk of COVID-19 outbreaks. The ministry works closely with partner ministries and stakeholders to develop and implement policies and programs that address the pressing needs of seniors and people with disabilities due to COVID-19, and that impact the residents and staff in licenced retirement homes.

From amendments to regulations, drafting emergency orders, and working across government to establish supports for preventing and containing outbreaks in the retirement homes sector, the ministry has been steadfast in its efforts to protect the health and safety of those living and working in the retirement homes sector. The ministry is also working across government to provide advice on ways accessibility barriers can be addressed and removed for persons with disabilities and seniors.

The ministry has also refocused existing programs, services, and activities to address the impact of the pandemic by changing how services are delivered while meeting the existing and new needs of socially isolated seniors and people with disabilities.

Ministry programs

The ministry supports, develops, and delivers policies and public services to improve the quality of life for seniors and people with disabilities. It helps seniors lead safe, engaged, active, and healthy lives and improves accessibility and employment for people with disabilities. Acting as an agent for positive change, the ministry plays a leadership role in advising on the development of government policies and programs that impact seniors and people with disabilities.

The ministry is organized into two divisions that play the following key roles:

Policy, Program, and Strategic Partnerships:

- Develops policy, programs, and strategic partnerships to help seniors and people with disabilities stay independent, active, safe, and socially connected.
- Collaborates with other ministries to ensure seniors and accessibility considerations are built into government-wide policies and programs.
- Leads policy and program development to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in retirement homes through collaboration with other ministries, the RHRA and the sector.
- Collaborates with stakeholders including accessibility and seniors' organizations, employers (including the Employers' Partnership Table), partner ministries, and the broader public sector to support evidence-based, informed policy approaches and to undertake joint initiatives.

- Leads policy and regulatory development related to the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* and oversees the RHRA, with the aim to ensure that retirement home residents are safe, respected, and can make informed choices about their care options.
- Leads policy development related to the *Seniors Active Living Centres Act, 2017* and oversees the design, implementation, and management of the Seniors Active Living Centres Program.
- Supports hundreds of community projects that help seniors and people with disabilities through the design, implementation, and management of the Seniors Community Grant and the Inclusive Community Grants programs.
- Improves access to information about programs and services available to seniors and individuals with disabilities by supporting the development of educational resources and facilitating information-exchange with key partners and Ontarians.
- Convenes the Seniors Liaison Committee and consults with partner ministries, federal and other provincial/territorial jurisdictions to develop user-centred evidence-based policies and programs.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities:

- Leads the planning, delivery and oversight of all activities undertaken by the Minister's statutory advisory bodies including the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council, Standards Development Committees, and Legislative Reviewers.
- Leads all legislative and regulatory policy activities on the development and implementation of the AODA, new accessibility standards and the review of existing standards in Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, O.Reg. 191/11 (IASR).
- Helps ensure public, private, and not-for-profit sector organizations understand and comply with the provincial accessibility standards by providing compliance assistance, audit, and enforcement activities in alignment with the government's overall compliance objectives.
- Educates, partners with, and builds awareness among businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and the broader public sector about accessibility laws, and ensures organizations and communities understand and have the tools and supports required to comply with the AODA and to champion accessibility.
- Supports programs that educate about accessibility and support regulatory compliance; and that recognize individual Ontarians who, and organizations in Ontario that have excelled in improving and championing accessibility for people with disabilities.

COVID-19 response

Given the population base the ministry serves, all programs and activities have been refocused to address the needs of seniors and people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the ministry has developed new policies and programs to support seniors and people in the community and to support the safety and well-being of retirement home residents and staff due to the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector.

2021-22 Strategic plan

The ministry supports the government plan to build a future with a better quality of life and a higher standard of living. The ministry will contribute to a better quality of life by continuing work on creating an inclusive, barrier-free Ontario, where seniors and people with disabilities are independent, safe, active, and socially connected. It will make Ontario more accessible for everyone as well as promote the benefits of age-diverse, accessible workplaces and communities where everyone is respected and able to participate and enjoy the future they deserve.

In 2021-22, the ministry will focus on:

- Supporting older Ontarians and people with disabilities through the COVID-19 pandemic by:
 - Working with sector partners to utilize technology to address negative impacts of social isolation of seniors amid physical distancing directives.
 - Ensuring vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities have access to the essentials they need to live at home, e.g., food and medicine.
- Supporting residents of retirement homes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic by:
 - Protecting seniors in retirement homes through ongoing support for infection prevention and control (IPAC).
 - Ensuring older adults and retirement home staff, residents and essential caregivers are prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination.
 - Working with partners to identify the evolving needs of the retirement homes sector and maintaining supports to help operators continue to respond to and recover from the pandemic. This includes access to staffing, personal protective equipment and testing in retirement homes. For example, the Government has allocated \$2M over two years to support the recruitment and retention of personal support workers and nurses in retirement homes.
 - Working across government and with the RHRA to establish a coordinated response to outbreak management in retirement homes, including escalating and supporting retirement homes in crisis.
 - Working with key ministry partners and with the RHRA to develop and implement legislative and policy changes that support greater oversight, impact staffing and are responsive to the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's recommendations in the 2020 Value for Money Audit.
- Investing \$3.7M to support an initiative to remove transportation barriers so seniors and people with disabilities can get to COVID-19 vaccination locations.
- Planning to release and leverage the multi-ministry Strategy for an Aging Population to create an Ontario where older adults are respected, supported, and living well in their communities. The strategy will help seniors:
 - Remain healthy, active, and socially engaged.
 - Stay safe and secure.
 - Age at home and in communities.
 - Participate in the labour market and economy as they wish.
- Supporting seniors in the community by:
 - Continuing the Seniors Active Living Centre Program by investing an additional \$3.1M in 2021-22 for a total of \$17.2M to support nearly 300 Senior Active Living Centre programs, which provide social and recreation programs for seniors. These programs will deliver virtual initiatives to help keep seniors safe and socially connected as they continue to self-isolate;

- Providing Seniors Community Grants to not-for-profit organizations, local services board and Indigenous groups to develop programs to protect the needs of seniors and ensuring they receive support. The ministry will be investing up to \$5M to support hundreds of diverse community projects. This year's funding focuses on helping older adults stay connected with their communities while self-isolating from the safety of their home during the pandemic;
 - Providing information through public education to support healthy aging;
 - Recognizing seniors' contributions; and
 - Improving access to information about programs and services available to seniors.
- Helping keep older Ontarians safe and secure by:
 - Supporting elder abuse prevention and increasing awareness of seniors' safety as well as enhancing security for individuals who may experience vulnerabilities due to abuse;
 - Educating caregivers and supporting older adults in addressing cognitive and physical challenges faced when aging;
 - Overseeing the administration of the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* and overseeing the RHRA;
 - Responding to the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's audit recommendations for the ministry to work across government and with sector partners to modernize retirement homes and enhance the oversight role with the RHRA.
 - Initiating a review of the retirement homes regulatory framework to identify opportunities to strengthen the regulatory regime and examine the role of the retirement homes sector within the continuum of care for seniors in Ontario, including its intersection with Long-Term Care and other emerging housing models.
 - Responding to the challenges posed by the pandemic addressing the key issues identified concerning the welfare of Ontario's seniors who are in communities and in congregate care settings.
- Strengthening communities and providing local opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities through the Inclusive Community Grants Program. This program funds the development of community supports that promote healthy and active aging, supporting the social engagement of older adults and people with disabilities, helping them to be safe and secure at home and in the community, as well as participate in the labour force. Municipalities and local organizations can use the funding towards projects such as:
 - Undertaking local needs assessments to determine gaps in existing supports for seniors and people with disabilities;
 - Developing action plans and implementing virtual programs;
 - Retrofitting buildings with ramps and accessible washrooms; and
 - Installing self-serve kiosks with software that people with vision or hearing loss can use.
- Promoting Age-Friendly Communities to make communities more inclusive and accessible for all older adults and people with disabilities.
- Investing an additional \$5M in 2021-22 to the Ontario Community Support Program to ensure that eligible low-income older adults and people with disabilities can continue to get meals and other essential supplies delivered to their homes.
- Administering the EnAbling Change Program that provides funding to not-for-profit organizations, industry organizations, and professional associations to educate their stakeholders about accessibility,

drive cultural awareness about the value and benefits of accessibility, and support regulatory compliance.

- Supporting the administration of the David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility program which recognizes individual Ontarians, and organizations in Ontario that have gone above and beyond to improve and champion accessibility for people with disabilities. Continuing to work with partner ministries, stakeholders, and businesses to make it easier for businesses to be accessible and inclusive based on key inputs from reviews and to comply with the law through simplified messaging and processes.
- Increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities by working with industry leaders, government and stakeholders to make it easier for businesses to be accessible and inclusive. Some of this work includes leading initiatives and supporting partner ministry-led initiatives in:
 - Modernizing and improving employment services;
 - Providing funding and supports to help employees with disabilities and employers thrive;
 - Enhancing employment opportunities for youth with disabilities; and
 - Investing in businesses and services to help them be more accessible to attract more customers and employees.
- Working across government to help ensure government information and communications on COVID-19 is available in accessible formats and that other unique needs of people with disabilities are considered in the development of COVID-19 initiatives.
- Continuing to support the vaccination of seniors and people with disabilities by participating in and providing accessibility expertise to the Province's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force.
- Working with partners to support Ontarians with disabilities during the self-isolation period by finding ways to ensure that assistance and support is available by:
 - Encouraging volunteerism and providing support for our partners in the disability community.
 - Encouraging businesses and other organizations to consider the unique needs of people with disabilities in the delivery of goods and services.
- Providing oversight on the transfer payment agreement with the Rick Hansen Foundation to administer the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program in select communities across the province to determine ways to remove identified barriers in the built environment for people with visible and invisible disabilities. Organizations can apply to receive complimentary accessibility rating of their building.
- Leveraging partnerships to educate the public and businesses on the economic benefits of accessibility, break down myths and address the stigma about people with disabilities.
- Ensuring the policy development, implementation and enforcement of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation O.Reg. 191/11 and the continuing work on proposed new standards in the areas of healthcare and publicly funded education.
- **Expected outcomes** include:
 - Retirement home residents and staff are kept informed, safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - People with disabilities including seniors with mobility issues who require transport support to get to/from a COVID-19 vaccination site have received such support.

- Seniors and people with disabilities who require meals, foods and other essentials during the COVID-19 pandemic period have received such supports.
- Increased digital literacy amongst seniors to ensure older Ontarians can access greater services and information from home as well as combat social isolation risks.
- Older Ontarians remain in the community, reducing demand on acute and long-term care.
- More older adults are connected and engaged, reducing social isolation and leading to wellness and better health.
- Ontarians are less at risk for abuse and fraud, and their rights and dignity are protected.
- More older adults are employed and volunteering, achieving greater financial security.
- More businesses engaged in employing people with disabilities and helping to grow the economy.
- People with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of daily life, reducing social and economic isolation as well as leading to overall improved health.
- Barriers faced by people with disabilities and older Ontarians are prevented and removed to the extent possible in all areas of daily life.

Ministry Planned Expenditures 2021-22 (\$M)	
Expenditure	Amount
COVID-19 Response	6.0
Regular Business	75.6
Capital	0.0
Total	81.7

Detailed financial information

Combined Operating and Capital Summary by Vote

Operating Expense						
Votes/Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from Estimates 2020-21 \$	% ****	Estimates 2020-21 [1] (#foot-1) \$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 [1] (#foot-1) \$	Actuals 2019-20 [1] (#foot-1) \$
Ministry Administration Program	3,775,200	(113,600)	(2.9)	3,888,800	3,724,600	5,058,724
Total Including Consolidation & Other Adjustments	81,650,514	(74,781,600)	(47.8)	156,432,114	208,735,814	50,350,293

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from Estimates 2020-21 \$	% ***	Estimates 2020-21 ^[1] (#foot-1) \$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 ^[1] (#foot-1) \$	Actuals 2019-20 ^[1] (#foot-1) \$
Policy, Program and Strategic Partnerships	62,683,900	(73,889,000)	54.1	136,572,900	189,270,600	32,492,320
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities	15,125,400	(929,000)	(5.8)	16,054,400	15,660,400	14,685,302
Total Operating Expense to be Voted	81,584,500	(74,931,600)	(47.9)	156,516,100	208,655,600	52,236,346
Statutory Appropriations	66,014	N/A *****	N/A *****	66,014	66,014	62,033
Ministry Total Operating Expense	81,650,514	(74,931,600)	(47.9)	156,582,114	208,721,614	52,298,379
Consolidation Adjustment - General Real Estate Portfolio	N/A *****	150,000	(100.0)	(150,000)	14,200	(1,848,086)
Consolidation Adjustment - Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	(100,000)
Total Including Consolidation & Other Adjustments	81,650,514	(74,781,600)	(47.8)	156,432,114	208,735,814	50,350,293

Operating Assets

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from Estimates 2020-21 \$	% ****	Estimates 2020-21 ^[1] (#foot-1) \$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 ^[1] (#foot-1) \$	Actuals 2019- 20 ^[1] (#foot-1) \$
Ministry Administration Program	1,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	1,000	1,000	N/A *****
Total Operating Assets to be Voted	1,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	1,000	1,000	N/A *****
Statutory Appropriations	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****
Ministry Total Operating Assets	1,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	1,000	1,000	N/A *****

Capital Expense

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from Estimates 2020- 21 \$	% ****	Estimates 2020-21 [1] (#foot-1) \$	Interim Actuals 2020- 21 [1](#foot-1) \$	Actuals 2019-20 [1] (#foot-1) \$
Ministry Administration Program	1,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	1,000	1,000	N/A *****
Policy, Program and Strategic Partnerships	1,000	(1,000)	(50.0)	2,000	2,000	1,991,019
Total Capital Expense to be Voted	2,000	(1,000)	(33.3)	3,000	3,000	1,991,019
Statutory Appropriations	2,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	2,000	2,000	N/A *****
Ministry Total Capital Expense	4,000	(1,000)	(20.0)	5,000	5,000	1,991,019
Total Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments	4,000	(1,000)	(20.0)	5,000	5,000	1,991,019

Capital Assets

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from Estimates 2020- 21 \$	% ****	Estimates 2020-21 [1] (#foot-1) \$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 [1](#foot-1) \$	Actuals 2019-20 [1] (#foot-1) \$
Ministry Administration Program	1,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	1,000	1,000	N/A *****
Policy, Program and Strategic Partnerships	1,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	1,000	1,000	N/A *****
Total Capital Assets to be Voted	2,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	2,000	2,000	N/A *****
Statutory Appropriations	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****	N/A *****
Ministry Total Capital Assets	2,000	N/A *****	N/A *****	2,000	2,000	N/A *****

Ministry Total Operating and Capital Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including Assets)

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from Estimates 2020-21 \$	% ****	Estimates 2020-21 [1] (#foot-1) \$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 [1](#foot-1) \$	Actuals 2019- 20 [1](#foot-1) \$

Votes/Programs	Estimates 2021-22 \$	Changes from Estimates 2020-21 \$	% ***	Estimates 2020-21 [1] (\$foot-1) \$	Interim Actuals 2020-21 [1](\$foot-1) \$	Actuals 2019- 20 [1](\$foot-1) \$
Ministry total	81,654,514	(74,782,600)	(47.8)	156,437,114	208,740,814	52,341,312

Historic trend

Historic Trend Table				
Historic Trend Analysis Data	Actuals 2018-19 [2] (#foot-2) \$	Actuals 2019-20 [2] (#foot-2) \$	Estimates 2020-21 [2] (#foot-2) \$	Estimates 2021-22 \$
Ministry Total Operating and Capital Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including Assets)	50,785,449	52,341,312	156,437,114	81,654,514
Percent change	N/A *****	3%	199%	-48%

For additional financial information, see:

- [Expenditure Estimates \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/expenditure-estimates\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/expenditure-estimates)
- [Public Accounts of Ontario: past editions \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/public-accounts-ontario-past-editions\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/public-accounts-ontario-past-editions)
- [2021 Ontario Budget — Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and Our Economy \(https://budget.ontario.ca/2021/contents.html\)](https://budget.ontario.ca/2021/contents.html)

Agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs)

Accessibility Standards Advisory Council

The statutory Accessibility Standards Advisory Council is responsible for providing strategic advice to the Minister responsible for the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* on the process and progress on accessibility standards, matters related to the implementation of this legislation and other accessibility matters.

Regulatory authority

Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority

The ministry is responsible for policy and regulatory development related to the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* (RHA) and for managing the government's accountability relationship with the RHRA. The RHRA is an independent regulatory body created by the RHA to administer and enforce the RHA and its regulations on behalf of the government. The RHA provides a framework for the regulation of retirement homes in Ontario and establishes a requirement for a memorandum of understanding

between the ministry and the RHRA setting out the requirements related to the governance of the RHRA, the requirements with which the RHRA shall comply in connection with its administration of the RHA and in carrying out its other objects under the RHA.

The RHRA is responsible for licensing retirement homes, educating licensees, and conducting inspections, investigations and enforcement activities. It also handles consumer complaints about retirement homes, provides consumers with information about retirement homes, and maintains a public register of retirement homes in Ontario.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the RHRA has played a key role in communicating with retirement homes and supporting them by providing necessary resources and guidelines on infection prevention and control based on directives of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, as well as connecting them to relevant contacts and authorities for additional information and supply of staffing and personal protective equipment. The RHRA also monitors and supports homes in outbreak and provides daily outbreak reports to the ministry and ongoing updates with respect to status of specific homes.

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario completed a Value for Money Audit on the RHRA in 2020 with key recommendations to strengthen their oversight role and ensure the health and safety of residents. The RHRA and ministry will work together on the implementation of the 26 audit recommendations over the next two years.

Legislation

The ministry administers the following legislation:

- *Seniors Active Living Centres Act, 2017*
- *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*

Ministry organization chart

April 2021



ADM, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities - Mary Bartolomucci (A)

Director, Public Education and Outreach - Kathleen Henschel (A)

Director, AODA Policy and Standards - Vena Persaud (A)

Director, AODA Compliance and Enforcement - Neera Shukla (A)

ADM, Seniors and Accessibility Policy, Programs and Strategic Partnerships - Jacqueline Cureton

Director, Public Education and Outreach - Kathleen Henschel (A)

Director, Planning and Programs - Kathleen Henschel

Director, Policy and Partnerships - Don Embuldeniya

Director, Pandemic Response and Recovery - Marsha Pinto (A)

Director, Retirement Homes Modernization - Harriett Grant (A)

ADM/CAO, Regional and Corporate Services [3] [4] [5] - Melody Robinson

Director, Human Resources [4] [5] - Jennifer Stewart

Director, Corporate Finance [5] - Nadia Eid

Director, Regional Services and Corporate Support [5] - Marie Campbell

Director, Strategic Policy Development and Planning [5] - Kristina Lauesen

Director, Communications [6] - Murray Leaning

Director, Legal Branch [7] - Cheryl Carson (A)

Chief Information Officer, Government Services Integration Cluster [8] - Manish Agarwal

Annual report

The ministry strives to improve the lives of older adults and people with disabilities across Ontario to support them to live active, healthy, safe and socially connected lives.

Below are results the ministry achieved in 2020-21:

- Invested \$11M in the Ontario Community Support Program. Since its launch in April 2020, the program has completed 800,000 deliveries of food, medicines and other essentials to older adults and people with disabilities across the province.
- Provided \$85.4M in temporary pandemic pay to over 34,000 eligible frontline employees in 759 licensed retirement homes across Ontario during COVID-19. The temporary wage increase recognized the efforts of frontline staff and assisted homes to increase their staffing levels. Over 800 staff vacancies were filled during the 16-week eligibility period between April 24, 2020 and August 13, 2020.
- Provided more than \$60M to be used for increased infection prevention and control measures to protect approximately 58,000 seniors in 768 licensed retirement homes.
- Prioritized retirement home residents, staff and essential caregivers for COVID-19 testing and vaccinations and early distribution of the flu vaccine. As of March 31, 2021, all retirement home residents had been offered vaccinations, with almost 100% uptake, including 86% having received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Established supports for retirement homes in collaboration with government and sector partners to help keep retirement home staff and residents safe, including access to:
 - Personal protective equipment. As of March 29, 2021, 631 (82%) of retirement homes have accessed 10.6M items.
 - N95 Fit Testing. As of March 11, 2021, 28 retirement homes had requested fit testing to respirators for their staff.
 - Health human resources through the Canadian Red Cross. As of March 31, 2021, five retirement homes received Canadian Red Cross deployments for infection prevention and control and non-clinic staffing supports.
 - Rapid antigen testing. As of March 31, 2021, approximately 320 retirement homes are participating in the Provincial Antigen Screening Program.
 - Infection prevention and control hubs for all licensed retirement homes.
- Supported regulation amendments to make it easier for home and community care and hospital staff to be deployed to retirement homes.
- Supported amendments to Ontario Regulation 166/11 (General), under the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* to require all retirement homes in Ontario to follow any guidance, advice or recommendations given to retirement homes by the provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and to require all retirement homes to take all reasonable steps to follow any directive respecting COVID-19 issued to long-term care homes and any guidance, advice or recommendation respecting COVID-19 given to long-term care homes.
- Supported the government in establishing emergency orders to:
 - Provide retirement homes with more flexibility to recruit and reassign staff to address the impacts of this new virus and to focus more resources toward implementing the protocols and procedures put in place to keep residents safe;

- Provide the RHRA with authority to issue an order to a retirement home to comply with recommendations from public health, supporting hospitals and appointed managers to limit and manage the spread of COVID-19;
 - Provide the RHRA with the authority to issue a mandatory management order to a retirement home in need and quickly assign a manager chosen by the RHRA to oversee aspects of the home;
 - Address potential labour relations implications associated with the homes temporarily taking in hospital patients and potentially requiring care and staff beyond what is provided in the current retirement homes context; and
 - Limit retirement home staff from working in more than one retirement home or in a long-term care home or other health care setting to reduce the risk of transmission between care settings.
- Invested \$1.3M with the Rick Hansen Foundation to launch the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program in Ontario as part of a three-year commitment continuing into 2021-22.
- The ministry's Seniors Community Grant Program was launched to support grassroots, local organizations in their efforts to support isolated seniors stay engaged in their communities.
 - The program received almost 550 applications and the ministry moved forward with funding for over 180 projects totalling an investment of over \$4M.
- The ministry launched the new Inclusive Community Grant Program, a two year investment of up to \$3.5M where municipalities and local organizations across Ontario can receive up to \$60,000 for projects that foster inclusive community involvement for older adults and people of all abilities, using the province's age-friendly community planning guide that promotes the international Age-Friendly Communities model.
 - The program received 350 applications and the ministry has moved forward with funding 55 projects.
- MSAA continued to support the province's almost 300 Seniors Active Living Centre Programs across Ontario by investing \$14.3M into the program for 2020-21.
 - These programs filled an integral role this year in offering a diverse range of virtual activities and initiatives that promoted wellness, social interaction, and education to help isolated seniors stay active, independent and engaged with their communities.
- The ministry invested almost a half million dollars with the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) to offer a microgrant program to provide seniors' centres funding towards the delivery of "Seniors' Centre Without Walls" (SCWW) telephone-based programing.
 - Through this program, OACAO is funding non-profit and Indigenous organizations across the province as they connect isolated seniors in their regions through group phone-based programs.
 - As of February 2021, over 100 organizations are running SCWW programs across Ontario.
- The ministry also supported OACAO as it released its "COVID-19 Resource Handbook" for older adult centres. This handbook was developed with the Public Services Health & Safety Association and provides seniors' centres recommendations on health control measures and best practices related to safely operating their programs with the public during COVID-19.
- The Seniors Safety Line provides information and referral, and emotional support services to seniors and their caregivers who are dealing with elder abuse issues.
 - Over the last six months during the COVID-19 pandemic, this 24/7 helpline has handled an average of 850 incoming calls a month.

- In light of this, the ministry worked with both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Children, Community and Social Services to secure \$130,000 of additional in-year support to ensure the helpline has sufficient operational staff to answer this high volume of calls from seniors in distress.
- The ministry invested \$800,000 to support Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario (EAPO) in delivering activities that raise public awareness of recognizing elder abuse and where to seek help, as well as providing service provider training for service providers who have regular contact with seniors.
 - This year, EAPO has reached over 3,500 public participants, and 9,300 service providers.
- The ministry provided over \$500,000 to the Alzheimer Society of Ontario to support the delivery of the Finding Your Way (FYW) program which provides people with dementia, their families, care partners, and service providers, with information and support needed to live safely with dementia in the community.
 - Through this program, 28 local Alzheimer Societies have been granted a total of \$360,000 to support the FYW program.
- The ministry invested \$165,000 with Queen's University on the Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program, which has introduced a new Community of Interest on Social Isolation and Loneliness to support social inclusion and healthy living for older adults.
 - The program shares best practices to mitigate the negative effects of social isolation among community-dwelling older adults during and post pandemic, through a regular e-newsletter that's shared with its nearly 200 participants.
- Through a partnership with the Ministry of Health, the ministry is working with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) on a project to develop new resources for organizations and facilitators to help them support the mental health of older adults during the pandemic.
 - This year CAMH developed and distributed nine separate fact sheets for older adults and health service providers, and three capacity building webinars for professionals.
 - Also, as part of an Ontario government initiative to expand programs that support the mental health and well-being across the province during the COVID-19 pandemic, additional funding of up to \$164,000 was provided to CAMH through the Ministry of Health and MSA to support CAMH's Wellbeing in Later-Life education and awareness program for seniors.
 - This was to provide training for health care and support staff working within retirement homes and long-term care homes to increase their understanding and awareness of mental health challenges and unique needs of older adults for whom they care. The program will also integrate anti-racism, anti-oppression and inclusive principles into facilitator training and workshop materials to ensure a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment.
- Reduced barriers for people with disabilities under the four key areas of the Advancing Accessibility in Ontario Framework:
 - Breaking down barriers in the built environment.
 - Government leading by example in its role as a policy maker, service provider and employer.
 - Increasing participation in the economy for people with disabilities.
 - Improving understanding and awareness about accessibility.
- Worked across government to help ensure government information and communications on COVID-19 is available in accessible formats and that other unique needs of people with disabilities are considered in the development of COVID-19 initiatives.

- Led the ongoing stewardship and oversight of the Minister's advisory bodies including:
 - Re-establishment of the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council.
 - Three Standards Development Committees in the completion of their initial recommendation reports on proposed accessibility standards, namely health care; Kindergarten to Grade 12 education; and post-secondary education. The reports were submitted to the Minister for the purposes of public posting and feedback.
 - In addition to their regular mandate, all advisory bodies considered the profound challenges for people with disabilities in their sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Launched the 2021-22 Enabling Change Program, a program that provides funding to not-for-profit organizations, industry organizations, and professional associations to educate their stakeholders about accessibility, drive cultural awareness about the value and benefits of accessibility, and support regulatory compliance.
- In 2020-21, worked with a number of planned projects with non-profit organizations to address challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, including:
 - **Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre (MNJCC):** Moved their highly successful ReelAbilities Toronto Film Festival featuring films about disability online in 2020 and hosted daily virtual events online, including free entry to all screenings followed by events for educators. 3,222 students and 158 educators were reached virtually.
 - **Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA):** The "[hospitalitystaystrong.ca](https://www.hospitalitystaystrong.ca/) (<https://www.hospitalitystaystrong.ca/>)" portal was created to provide informational materials and support to the foodservice industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. The portal includes links to various mental health tools and resources. They also partnered with Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to produce a series of webinars directed to workplace mental health and increasing resilience.
- Recognizing the difficulties and challenges faced by businesses across Ontario, due to COVID-19, extended the 2020 accessibility compliance reporting deadline for all businesses with 20 or more employees from December 31, 2020 to June 30, 2021.
- Provided accessibility expertise to the Province's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force. The ministry's role in supporting vaccination for seniors and people with disabilities focused on ensuring that they, their family members, and caregivers have the information needed to help them:
 - Receive vaccines in ways that consider their accessibility needs;
 - Make informed decisions about immunizations; and
 - Know what to do prior to and following vaccinations. Engaged with ministry partners to provide policy advice, coordination and connections related to socio-economic data collection for the framework sub-prioritization group.
- Brought forward an amendment to Ontario Regulation 82/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 1 under the *Reopening Ontario Act (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* to permit indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities to open solely for use by people with disabilities, giving them access to therapy services they need during the pandemic, under certain circumstances.
- Developed accessibility best practices in partnership with Ministry of Health to support accessible COVID-19 vaccine sites for people with disabilities and seniors. These resources were shared with sites delivering the COVID-19 vaccine across the province.

Type of expenditure	Ministry Interim Actual Expenditures (\$M) 2020-21 ^{[9](#foot-9)}
COVID-19 Response	26.0
Regular Business	182.7
Capital	0.0
Staff Strength ^{[10](#foot-10)} (as of March 31, 2021)	150.0

Footnotes

- [1] [^] ([#ref-1](#)) Estimates, Interim Actuals and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure. Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the March 2021 Budget.
- [2] [^] ([#ref-2](#)) Estimates and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure.
- [3] [^] ([#ref-3](#)) Administratively reports to Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.
- [4] [^] ([#ref-4](#)) Also reports to ADM, HR Service Delivery, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services.
- [5] [^] ([#ref-5](#)) Also provides services to ADM/CAO of Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries and ADM/CAO of Ministry of Francophone Affairs.
- [6] [^] ([#ref-6](#)) Also reports to DM, Communications.
- [7] [^] ([#ref-7](#)) Also reports to DM of Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries and ADAG, Ministry of the Attorney General.
- [8] [^] ([#ref-8](#)) Also Reports to Corporate Chief Information and Information Technology Officer, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services.
- [9] [^] ([#ref-9](#)) Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the 2021 Ontario Budget.
- [10] [^] ([#ref-10](#)) Ontario Public Service Full-Time Equivalent positions.

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