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Ministry of Finance 2016 Accessibility Report

How the Ministry of Finance identified and removed barriers in the Ontario Public Service in 2016.

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Executive summary

Like all ministries, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) complies with the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#). 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.](#)

MOF's 2016 Accessibility Report demonstrates how the measures taken in 2016 support the key outcomes and deliverables of the 2012-2016 OPS MYAP.

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.

Measures taken by MOF in 2016

- Senior Executives in each program area of the ministry attest that almost 100 per cent of staff has completed the mandatory Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) courses. These courses provide staff members with information on their role in providing accessible customer service, information and communications. Managers continue to follow up with staff members who have not completed the mandatory training requirements.
- The ministry continued to raise awareness on accessible procurement at the Financial Practices Forum.
- The ministry's emergency procedure, which outlines the need to accommodate staff and visitors with disabilities in the event of an emergency, was shared internally with staff.
- The ministry continued to provide assistance to managers in developing and implementing individualized workplace emergency response plans for their staff with disabilities, in accordance with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services' (MGCS) Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide. In this plan, managers can document any accommodations required for the Emergency Information and Reporting Hotline.
- The ministry continued to engage employees in inclusion-related discussions and learning through a variety of events and initiatives coordinated by the Ministry's Inclusion Committee.
- Two MOF managers completed the OPS Inclusion Continuum pilot study and the learnings have been communicated internally.
- The ministry communicated the revised OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy to staff. In addition, the ministry updated its accessible communications resources to reflect the changes to the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy.
- The ministry's Tax and Benefits Administration regional offices and the Tax Information Office in Oshawa have updated their signage in order to comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with*

Disabilities Act (AODA) and built standards regulations, resulting in additional accessible customer service for individuals and staff with disabilities. The updated bilingual signage uses universal graphic symbols, sharp contrast, raised tactile lettering and Grade 1 Braille.

- Since 2010, the ministry has had an accessible feedback process in place to respond to inquiries and suggestions from the public. [The ministry can be contacted by mail, e-mail, and telephone \(including TTY\).](#)
- Virtual pre-budget consultations allowed citizens, who may have had difficulty attending public events, to participate online. By providing an option for online participation in the budget consultation process, the ministry displayed its commitment to active accommodation.
- The ministry continued to provide additional training on accessible formats and communication to support accessible customer service. This training was made available to employees upon request.
- MOF maintains active participation on the [OPS Disability Advisory Council \(DAC\)](#). Each [DAC member](#) is appointed by their Deputy Minister. [MOF's DAC member](#) is also a member of [MOF's Inclusion Committee](#), providing advice and support for accommodation and accessibility initiatives in the ministry.

Information and communications

[MYAP key outcome](#)

Information and communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all [OPS staff](#) and customers.

Measures taken by [MOF in 2016](#)

- The ministry began working towards meeting intranet web content responsibilities for January 1, 2020 as per the requirements set out in the [IASR](#). The work plan to achieve compliance includes efforts focused on intranet platform change, internal website reconfiguration for more accessible user experience, upgrading collaborative and document repository application, influencing intranet coding-for-accessibility synchronicity with public sites, [I&IT architectural governance](#), inclusion in [I&IT procurement processes](#) and [IT project management quality control](#).
- Content on the ministry's public website continued to meet accessibility standards for people with low vision or vision impairments and is readable by screen reading devices. The '[HTML](#)' format includes a navigable heading structure, table structure and alternative text descriptions for images. As per the implementation schedule, 2012 to current content is provided at the [WCAG 2.0 AA](#) standard.
- The ministry has been re-coding over 3,500 pieces of content, including pages, documents and multi-media to comply with [IASR](#) requirements effective January 1, 2020. This effort parallels intranet migrations to a new, common, accessible platform — enhancing accessibility and user

experience. Periodic auditing will ensure continued compliance to accessibility regulations.

- The ministry has been proactively making changes to internet content to better align with a migration to Ontario.ca scheduled to begin in 2017. Since 2016, new documents on the MOF public website have been posted in AODA compliant HTML code. The ministry has also replaced PDF content with accessible HTML, hyperlinked phrases with Ontario.ca keyword links and direct-linked PDFs on the Central Forms Repository with links to the Ontario.ca interim page. These efforts will facilitate a successful migration process to the common Ontario.ca platform in 2017.
- The ministry continues to perform an annual accessibility audit on its public website. Accessibility shortfalls are identified through this process and corrected.
- The ministry will continue to monitor the web accessibility implementation schedule to ensure internet and intranet compliance with IASR standards.
- Accessibility-related knowledge transfer is continually provided to web staff from multiple sources, as well as through internal and external training and peer-to-peer work performance review.
- The ministry, as part of its intranet and internet migrations, has actively championed and enhanced education regarding document and website accessibility requirements to all client groups. The ministry provides accessibility resources through its internal sites and provides accessibility training notification when available.
- The ministry's accessible formats guide was provided to all employees through MOF's intranet site and reflects the current process for arranging alternate formats. Communications Services Branch provides ministry staff with the knowledge to make documents accessible, and helps them to find accessible solutions for content that is more complicated.
- The ministry works with our partners to ensure that new web platforms meet or exceed accessibility requirements.
- Ministry staff are aware of their responsibilities under the IASR and AODA.
- Accessibility considerations have been integrated into pre-budget consultations. These include:
 - all invitations to public events included a statement offering to accommodate persons with disabilities: "Please advise when you register if you require any accommodation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*"
 - if requested, sign language interpreters were arranged for the Toronto pre-budget consultation
 - seating arrangements were arranged to allow for easier mobility by persons with disabilities

Employment

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures taken by MOF in 2016

- The ministry continued to offer accommodations for employees with disabilities with the support of the Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness.
- All divisions in the ministry attested to compliance with the IASR requirement to arrange for documented employee accommodation plans when needed as part of the 2016 AODA attestation process.
- All MOF executive recruitment was completed through the Centre for Leadership and Learning which uses the OPS Executive Recruitment Lens.
- The OPS Recruitment Centre provided managers with resources on barrier-free recruitment. In addition, the following statement was included in all Ministry of Finance job advertisements: "The Ontario Public Service is an inclusive employer. Accommodation is available under the Ontario Human Rights Code."
- The ministry promoted continuous learning on diversity, inclusion and accessibility. For example, the "May I Help You" e-learning course is mandatory for all employees. In addition, the MOF Inclusion Committee and the MOF Health & Wellness Committee coordinated a number of learning activities for employees through the year, including sessions on accessibility-related topics.
- The ministry continued to offer alternative accessible versions of online training courses and promote the Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN) Conference. Members of the MOF Inclusion Committee attended the conference as well as the JOIN Webinar Series on the topics of "Inclusive Meetings" and "Employees with Mental Health Disabilities".
- A standard template for a documented individual accommodation plan was shared with MOF executives through the 2016 AODA attestation process.
- The Ministry of Finance continued to provide assistance to managers in developing and implementing individualized workplace emergency response plans for staff with disabilities in accordance with the MGCS Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide. Managers were reminded to share the appropriate information with the site-specific Emergency Building Lead, with the employee's consent.
- Emergency Building Leads developed site-specific emergency procedures, including designated waiting areas and a buddy system to assist those unable to evacuate on their own.
- Ministry leaders were encouraged to participate as mentors in the 2016-17 Inclusion Mentoring Program in order to increase their cultural competencies and awareness of bias. A key objective of the program is to support the learning of 38 volunteer executives in their efforts to build a more inclusive workplace, which includes accommodating staff.
- MOF maintains active participation on the OPS Disability Advisory Council (DAC). Each DAC

member is appointed by their Deputy Minister. MOF's DAC member is also a member of MOF's Inclusion Committee, providing advice and support for accommodation and accessibility initiatives in the ministry.

Design of public spaces

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures taken by MOF in 2016

- The ministry attested to compliance with the 2016 IASR requirement for the design of public spaces and the updated barrier-free design requirements of the Ontario Building Code. All redesigns were consistent with the accessibility requirements under the Built Environment Standards reflected in the OPS Guidelines for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities. Examples of this include:
 - entrances received power door actuators with multi-level controls
 - corridor widths were increased for easier mobility
 - barrier-free fixtures were used in new washrooms and kitchenettes
 - boardrooms and common use spaces were intentionally located in common corridors to allow for easier access by employees
- The ministry's Tax and Benefits Administration regional offices and the Tax Information Office in Oshawa updated signage to comply with the AODA and Built Environment Standards regulations, resulting in additional accessible customer service for individuals and staff with disabilities. The updated bilingual signage uses universal graphic symbols, sharp contrast, raised tactile lettering and Grade 1 Braille.
- The ministry continues to work diligently with service providers, Infrastructure Ontario and building management to remove and prevent barriers.

General outcomes

MYAP key outcome

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

Measures taken by MOF in 2016

- The ministry continued to strengthen the links between inclusion, diversity, mental health, employee engagement and accessibility in an effort to create a more inclusive organization. The ministry's Inclusion Plan 2014-2017 continues to be implemented through a variety of initiatives and activities,

many of which are focused on supporting the ministry to be an organization that is accessible and healthy for employees and clients.

- As highlighted in the Information and Communications section, the ministry continued to integrate accessibility and accommodation considerations into pre-budget consultations.
- The ministry hosted Inclusion Week which involved executives and employees from across the ministry's 13 locations, delivering and participating in sessions focused on creating a more inclusive and accessible workplace.
- The ministry's Health & Wellness Committee continues to deliver sessions that garner great interest and attendance. Topics included mental health, nutrition, managing stress and healthy habits.
- All divisions in the ministry attested to compliance with the accessibility requirements for procurement in the 2016 Certificate of Assurance process.
- The ministry continued to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, facilities, except where it is not practicable. If it is not practicable, an explanation is documented in the procurement file.
- The ministry continued to actively offer accommodations to all vendors with disabilities, upon request, to ensure that the RFP process itself does not create barriers for vendors with disabilities.
- The ministry continued to include the standard accessibility language which has been provided by Supply Chain Management on their website, under Tools and Templates – Accessibility.
- The ministry continued to recognize excellence in inclusion and accessibility as part of its internal employee awards.

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.

The Ministry of Finance 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

In support of our commitment to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, MOF will continue to consult and collaborate with the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) to review government initiatives, including acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services for the purposes of identifying and removing barriers.

Actions taken in the past year

The Ministry of Finance recognizes the importance of addressing accessibility barriers in laws that have a high impact on members of the public and persons with disabilities. MOF continues to work with OPS legislative partners regarding the review of high impact legislation through the:

1. Development of a standardized process and tools for identifying and addressing accessibility barriers
2. Review of statutes administered by MOF that meet the following criteria:
 - a. Statutes that affect persons with disabilities directly
 - b. Statutes that provide for the delivery of widely applicable services or programs
 - c. Statutes that provide benefits or protections
 - d. Statutes that affect a democratic or civic right or duty
3. Review procedural rules, policies and guidelines for select high-impact legislation, where necessary.

The *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act* was identified as a statute to be reviewed because it is anticipated that changes in this area will have the highest impact on Ontarians who have accessibility needs. The review process used the OPS Inclusion Lens to help identify barriers to persons with disabilities.

Through the review process of the *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act*, potential barriers and mitigating strategies were identified. This information was provided to MAG and MGCS in an effort to coordinate pursuant actions.

Upcoming plans for review

As a result of the review of the *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act*, MOF drafted legislated amendments to remove barriers in the legislation. In addition, MOF continues the review of statutes administered by MOF.

MOF will continue to review its statutes and make the appropriate recommendations to the Ministry of the Attorney General. MOF, with other OPS legislative partners, will attend the Legislative Counsel regarding the MOF portion of the omnibus legislation, an amendment particular to making the *Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income Act* more accessible.

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Related

- [All 2016 ministry accessibility reports](#)
- [2012-2016 Ontario Public Service Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#)
- [A guide to accessibility directives and policies in the Ontario Public Service](#)

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Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance performs a variety of roles, all focused on supporting a strong economic, fiscal and investment climate for Ontario, while ensuring accountability with respect to the use of

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