

Accessible by Design: Ontario Public Service Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022 Annual Status Report

Learn how the Ontario Public Service continues to remove barriers to accessibility.

Message from the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Ontario Public Service

The Ontario Public Service (OPS) is committed to building an equitable, inclusive, accessible, and anti-racist public service—both for the people we serve, and those we employ. Our Accessible by Design: 2022-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessible-design-2022-2025-ops-multi-year-accessibility-plan>) charts a path to respond to and go beyond our legislated obligations (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>) to identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities, inside and outside of the OPS.

I am pleased to share OPS accomplishments in the first year of this multi-year accessibility plan as we lay the foundation to successfully deliver on all the initiatives by the end of 2025. Achieving accessibility is an ongoing and collaborative effort and all ministries within the OPS are working together to achieve our goal to make Ontario more accessible.

With progress made across several key areas, notably in inclusive employment, equitable customer service and digitally-inclusive communications, we are building on 20 years of continuous accessibility work (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility>). The OPS has taken concrete steps to streamline and integrate employment accommodation

for employees and job seekers with disabilities. Both as an employer and as a service provider, we are dedicated to embedding accessibility right from the start.

The OPS People Plan, the newly launched human resources strategy, will guide the OPS in attracting, developing, and retaining top talent that reflects Ontario's diversity. This is directly related to our ability to meet the needs and expectations of Ontarians, who want a public service that is professional, inclusive, accessible, acts with integrity, and works in modern ways to provide excellent service.

Almost a quarter of Ontarians have a disability, and any of us may deal with a temporary or permanent disability at some point during our lives. When we make our programs, services and workplaces more accessible, we achieve better results for everyone. We take pride in building a more inclusive, accessible Ontario.

Michelle DiEmanuele
Secretary of the Cabinet
Head of the Ontario Public Service

Progress update on 2022-25 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* [[AODA](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11)] (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>) requires the OPS and other organizations that fall under the jurisdiction of the Act to publish a multi-year accessibility plan. The OPS is also required to publicly report on the progress of the plan annually. For the 2022-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the OPS is also providing employees with internal progress updates that reflects the organizational culture change and leadership accountability the OPS is creating through transparency.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan – referred to as the MYAP or 'the plan' – seeks to make the OPS more accessible for employees and to deliver more accessible services to the public. The 2022 annual status report highlights the areas where meaningful progress and achievements have been made in the first year of the plan.

The Secretary of the Cabinet and all deputy ministers have signed the OPS Leadership Pledge, which includes commitments to improve the employment accommodation process, create career development programs, expand mental health resources, and remove systemic barriers in the OPS for underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities. The MYAP supports the OPS Leadership Pledge commitments to further our progress towards an accessible Ontario.

To uphold the plan's principles of being actionable, measurable and achievable, the People and Culture Division in the Centre for People, Culture and Talent in Treasury Board Secretariat established an implementation framework to guide enterprise-wide oversight of the plan. The framework includes:

- assistant deputy ministers' steering committee to guide strategic delivery of the plan by 2025
- directors' tables to coordinate the integrated implementation of the plan and to lead accelerated progress of digitally inclusive initiatives
- mission team of OPS employees with accessibility and subject matter expertise to support implementation planning with a user-centred and product development focus

The implementation of the plan is a collective effort of the organization, and this report highlights the progress that the OPS has made to become more accessible and inclusive for all.

Inclusive employment

Key outcome: Candidates and OPS employees with disabilities have the support to join, work effectively, experience career growth, and have opportunities for learning, development and progression.

Disability employment accommodation

Streamline and integrate employment accommodation in the OPS. This includes ensuring the smooth transition of accommodation plans and supports when an employee with disabilities changes jobs or ministries.

Year one achievements

The OPS is committed to fostering and sustaining a respectful workplace — one that is inclusive, diverse, equitable, accessible, anti-racist and free from workplace harassment and discrimination. This includes upholding our duty under the Ontario Human Rights Code to accommodate employees with disabilities so that they participate equitably in all aspects of work.

Key achievements include:

- Established a Disability Employment Accommodation Task Force with a goal of delivering on three priorities:
 - review and update the Disability Accommodation policy
 - streamline the Disability Employment Accommodation programming and processes
 - develop and launch broad training and an awareness campaign including change management with a focus on managers and their duty to accommodate
- Improved services by implementing a disability management information system that aims to configure, simplify, and automate the overall employee disability management process in the OPS. A vendor has been onboarded to implement the new system.
- Expanded service categories, and introduced a more stringent evaluation process, for Specialized Assessment Services conducted by health care professionals for employment accommodation.
 - Specialized Assessment Services help ensure that the OPS as an employer provides timely, safe and effective employment accommodation and return to work for employees with disabilities, short of undue hardship, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.
 - Services delivered on behalf of the organization include individualized ergonomic assessments, functional abilities evaluations and job coaching for employees seeking employment accommodations.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

Effective employment accommodation prevents and removes employment barriers. An OPS that provides persons with disabilities with timely, safe, appropriate accommodation supports will allow them to join and equitably participate in the organization, experience career development and growth and work effectively, resulting in a workplace with a more diverse and engaged workforce that can serve Ontarians better.

Recruitment strategies

Develop and implement recruitment strategies to help increase the representation of persons with disabilities throughout the OPS, including senior leadership diversification.

Year one achievements

The OPS provides opportunities for students and new graduates through corporate employment programs administered by Treasury Board Secretariat and decentralized programs offered by individual ministries.

These programs further the government's commitment to diversify the OPS workforce through tailored strategies and by creating accessible and barrier-free workplaces.

Changes have been made to some OPS student and recent graduate programs to attract persons with disabilities to join and advance within the organization.

- The new Ability Internship Stream (AIS) was launched under the Ontario Internship Program (<https://www.internship.gov.on.ca/mbs/sdb/intern.nsf/lkpwebcontent/epublishedhome>) (OIP). OIP is a well-established pathway for recent graduates to join and advance their careers within the OPS. The AIS:
 - provides applicants with disabilities access to enhanced supports through the recruitment process and during the internship program.
 - offers dedicated placements to AIS applicants and builds on previous program changes that expanded access to applicants with disabilities, by extending the period after graduation that they are eligible to apply for an internship from two years to five years. Applications for OIP, including this new stream, were open in November 2022 and closed in January 2023. The first AIS cohort will start in the summer of 2023.

- An Experiential Learning Diversity co-op program was launched for students from equity-seeking groups, including persons with disabilities, to gain skills in information and technology.
 - Job ads are posted at various post secondary institutions across Ontario with diversity language aimed at attracting students with disabilities to take on co-op placements within the Government Services Integration Cluster at the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery.
 - Positions in the program range from I&IT technology analysts and developers as well as business analysts and experience designers.
- The OPS has introduced outreach efforts to attract persons with disabilities to apply for positions and consider a career in the organization:
 - hosted a virtual open house in October 2022 to inform executive-level leaders with disabilities in Ontario about the OPS' culture and initiatives to be an inclusive employer, and to encourage prospective candidates to apply to the organization. Over 100 participants attended the event and contact information was collected to expand the organization's network of potential candidates.
 - generated new partnerships with disability support offices at post secondary institutions in Ontario to support promotion of OPS student and recent graduate opportunities.
 - engaged community-based partners in the education sector to plan information sessions in early 2023 for educational coordinators and other professionals who support students with disabilities. The goal was to raise the profile of OPS opportunities for students and recent graduates.
- The OPS continued to encourage job applications from people with disabilities, Indigenous, Black, and racialized individuals, as well as people from a diversity of ethnic and cultural origins, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.
 - Continued to offer employment accommodation across the recruitment process and all aspects of employment consistent with the requirements of Ontario's Human Rights Code.
- As part of its commitment to inclusive employment across Ontario, the OPS also partnered with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (<https://occ.ca/>) and Discover

Ability Network (<https://discoverability.network/>) to deliver an information session for employers to better support job seekers with disabilities.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

Inclusive recruitment strategies present opportunities to renew and diversify the OPS workforce to better reflect the population that we serve. For students and graduates with disabilities in particular, dedicated programs will provide opportunities to join, build capacity and advance their careers within the public service. An OPS that hires persons with disabilities, and directly engages them in the design of accessible and inclusive policies, programs and services, is an organization that can represent and serve Ontarians better.

Diversity Sponsorship Program

Design a sponsorship program to support career development and advancement of OPS employees from underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities.

Year one achievements

The OPS is supporting underrepresented groups to advance in their careers by implementing career development and advancement programs.

- The development of the OPS-wide corporate Diversity Sponsorship Program (the “DSP”) accelerates the diversification of senior leadership in the OPS through retaining, developing and advancing employees from underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities.
 - Treasury Board Secretariat consulted and engaged with stakeholders such as corporate partners and employee networks across the OPS to finalize program development and prepare for the program launch in February 2023.
 - The DSP formalizes what is often an informal relationship between a sponsor and employee participant.
 - To be eligible for the program, sponsors and participants must be registered together as a pair. Participants must be from an underrepresented group which includes persons with disabilities. Sponsors must be in a senior leadership role.

- The program's framework is action-oriented with a focus on leveraging the participant's skills and the sponsor's networks to raise the profile of the participant and provide opportunities for executive endorsement.
- As a part of their local inclusion efforts, ministries launched customized career development programs targeted towards underrepresented groups, including employees with disabilities.
 - A new Pilot Career Development Program was created by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to provide job seeking support to OPS employees seeking career progression who identify as Indigenous, Black, and/or racialized, including employees with disabilities. The program offers job searching supports in three areas: resume and cover letter assistance, interview preparation and job shadowing opportunities.
 - The Ministry of Attorney General's Mentoring for Career and Inclusion Program offers its employees opportunities to engage in career development conversations. An integral part of the program is reciprocal mentoring where employees with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups share their lived experiences to strengthen awareness of diversity and inclusion.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

Inclusive career development programs remove progression barriers for employees with disabilities. Programs that help create career pathways and strengthen relationships with leaders offer employees with disabilities opportunities to be successful within the organization. An OPS that implements accessible career development and advancement programs creates a workplace with a diverse and more engaged workforce that can serve Ontarians better.

Mental health resources and services

Expand mental health resources and services, including for OPS employees with disabilities.

Year one achievements

To improve mental health outcomes for all employees, the OPS acquired more services to support its employees while individual ministries expanded ministry-specific mental health services.

- Launched a new program to address burnout for OPS employees through AbilitiCBT, an external internet-based cognitive behavioral therapy program.
- To continue expanding capacity, two new cohorts of OPS facilitators trained to offer Mental Health First Aid training to OPS employees.
- Under the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Healthy Workplace Strategy and Action Plan, the Ministry of the Solicitor General implemented the Occupational Medicine Program to strengthen mental health services available to OPP employees and their families.
 - The program was developed to address challenges regarding the return-to-work process following physical or psychologically impactful events and accommodation process, through a person-centred approach.
 - Focusing on the person and what they can do, and not their medical condition or disability, the program engages external occupational health professionals with expertise in disability management to review medical documentation. Only occupationally relevant information is then communicated to the manager and the employee through the occupational doctor.
 - Removing private health information to respect employees' rights to privacy creates opportunities for the manager and employee to have open, compassionate and respectful discussions for mutual decision-making.
 - Over 500 cases were handled as part of the organizational rollout in 2022 and consultations of the program which resulted in either initiating a return-to-work plan or back to full duty function.
 - The program aligns with OPP values of building on the principles of respect, dignity, inclusion, individualization, as well as helping to eliminate workplace factors that could adversely impact employee mental health.
- The Ministry of the Attorney General developed a mental health strategy and action plan to support ministry efforts in ensuring the mental health and wellbeing of its employees. A designated Mental Health Coordinator:
 - enables the ministry to address mental health concerns and ensures the wellbeing of employees regardless of where they are on the mental health continuum. The coordinator also targets programs to groups that need immediate mental health supports.

- identifies opportunities to explore the intersection of mental health, anti-racism and accessibility. The coordinator also promotes a more inclusive workplace by providing resources for people with various disabilities and other equity-deserving groups. Targeted initiatives support employees at all levels of the ministry.

While work is underway to further expand mental health resources and supports for OPS employees, the organization has also created resources and services for Ontarians.

- To better serve Ontario farmers, resources and services have been created in partnership with key stakeholders and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs including:
 - the Farmers Wellness Initiative, an external program for Ontario farmers that provides a 24/7 hotline that matches individuals with a mental health professional to provide free counselling services and support tailored to all Ontario farmers and their families.
 - the Guardian Network, a volunteer suicide prevention network built to support Ontario's farming community and connect farmers and their families with mental health and crisis supports/resources.
 - "Opening up about mental health (<https://youtu.be/p1R3yygsx-M>) ," a Canadian Farm Writers' Federation Awards winning video discussing the pressures farmers face and the importance of seeking support for mental health.
- Through the Indigenous Institutes Accessibility Fund for Learners, accessibility funding by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities has supported Indigenous Institutes in:
 - providing access to a Language Tool and text-to-speech tool to over 400 students, in addition to embedding the tool into some of their Learning Management Systems.
 - developing an inventory of accessible technology to service 30 additional students with a variety of needs.
 - providing access to student mentors, who at one Institute, provided one-on-one counselling to over 160 students.
 - purchasing assistive technology software, which offers text-to-speech and speech-to-text to support learners with reading and writing generation. This

technology is auto-installed on school laptops, and access is also linked through a virtual platform for students on personal systems.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

Increasing and diversifying mental health supports improves the psychological safety of the organization. An OPS that implements supports that are culturally responsive and developed with awareness of the mental health needs of different equity-seeking groups is a workplace that prioritizes the wellbeing of its employees and the public we serve.

Addressing systemic employment barriers policy and program

Proactively identify and address systemic employment barriers with a focus on recruitment, promotion and career development, including for OPS employees with disabilities.

Year one achievements

Systemic employment barriers are workplace rules and practices that unfairly advantage some groups of employees and disadvantage others. They lead to inequities in our workplaces and in employment and disadvantage some groups of employees, including people with disabilities, in succeeding and advancing in their careers.

Policy updates and a new program were developed to identify and remove systemic employment barriers.

- The OPS has updated its Policy on Preventing Barriers in Employment to designate an accountable program area to lead the process for barrier identification and new accountabilities for Human Resources areas and ministries to remove them. In line with the policy updates, this work will undertake an ongoing, proactive process to identify and remove barriers. The updated policy and new initiative are expected to launch in spring 2023.
- In 2022, Treasury Board Secretariat completed extensive engagements and research to inform updates to the policy and program design. This included consulting with a broad range of corporate partners, equity advisors, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, bargaining agents and employees of all abilities from across the OPS.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

Programs for career development and advancement will promote career mobility and advancement for persons with disabilities, as well as improving employee experience and career growth opportunities.

Equitable customer service

Key outcome: Clients of all abilities receive seamless, dignified and equitable access to barrier-free services from well-equipped front-line OPS employees.

Strategies to enhance accessible customer service

Develop and implement strategies to support OPS front-line employees in providing accessible customer service. This includes developing new tools that equip employees to render accessibility services through all delivery channels.

Year one achievements

To support front-line staff in delivering equitable customer service, the OPS implemented new digital features that increase and expedite access to essential services to better serve Ontarians.

- ServiceOntario expanded from offering from 49 to more than 55 services online to make it easier, safer and more accessible to connect Ontarians to vital and time-critical front-line services. Some services offered online by ServiceOntario include:
 - digital reminders and renewals for licence plates, driver's licence and health card.
 - ServiceOntario also expanded the health card online renewal eligibility to Ontarians without a driver's licence. Ontarians, including persons with disabilities, can now renew their health cards online using their Ontario Photo Card.
- In 2022, 236,000 Accessible Parking Permits were issued or renewed as a result of the online renewal tool that provides a simpler, faster and more accessible service for permit holders.

- A ServiceOntario virtual pilot was launched to allow eligible Ontarians to renew their health card remotely. Ontarians with a medical exemption or 80 years of age or older are eligible for this service. The new service, that resembles the in-person renewal experience, was designed in response to accessibility advocates' request for an alternative service choice for individuals who prefer the in-person experience but have difficulty attending in-person.
 - ServiceOntario designed the pilot with user feedback and testing to meet service design standards and principles.
 - Virtual appointments (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/serviceontario-virtual-appointments>) for remote health card renewal for people with a medical exemption or over 80 years old can be booked by contact centre.
 - An accessibility escalation path was created and communicated to ensure all front-line staff were empowered to help customers with accessibility accommodation requests receive the service they are seeking. If front-line staff are not able to provide the accommodation requested, they are able to escalate through the escalation path, so no customer is unserved.
- ServiceOntario launched an enhanced appointment booking system at 64 of its busiest centres, with options to identify accessibility needs ahead of the appointment so service can be adapted to meet individual user needs.
- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) provided greater access for almost 275,000 social assistance recipients through MyBenefits, an online service that saw a 45% increase from last year. MyBenefits increased access to services by reducing the need for clients to travel to local offices.
- The Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism launched a modernized Ontario Honours and Awards Case Management System. In 2022:
 - public access to various programs that were previously paper-based were available online for the first time. The public facing Ontario Nomination Portal is accessible across all digital platforms, aligning with the government's Digital First approach and removing barriers for Ontarians who wish to apply for these programs.
 - the Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat successfully trained approximately 30 members of the Advisory Councils and Selection Committees

on the nomination portal and received over 3,500 nominations since the portal's inception.

- The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) implemented a new process to allow health care professionals to complete a Disability Determination Package for applicants online upon their request with their permission.
 - With this feature, health care professionals can submit the online package and additional medical information on behalf of their patients.
 - The online tool helps people applying for ODSP avoid unnecessary travel, additional wait times and having to manage the process themselves.
 - Ministry employees are able to process applications faster, since the online tool checks documentation for completeness before submission.
- The Building Code Commission (BCC) of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) began accepting electronic applications and holding remote hearings to provide accessible, uninterrupted service during COVID-19.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

Implementing the use of digital tools and processes for the provision of government services prevents and removes access barriers for persons with disabilities. An OPS that strengthens the capacity of employees to facilitate services that are seamless and accessible by design is an OPS that centres equitable access for Ontarians with disabilities.

Next key milestones

Planning and implementation are underway for the remaining equitable customer service initiatives for which progress will be included in future annual status reports on the plan:

- Renew and enhance mandatory OPS training on AODA accessibility standards and develop a supplementary role-based module on accessible customer service.
- Review and update the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy to be more inclusive and promote the delivery of accessible customer service.

Digitally-inclusive communications

Key outcome: Members of the public and OPS employees of all abilities are provided with equitable access to OPS digital information, products, and services that meet accessibility requirements.

Web accessibility literacy strategy

Create and implement the OPS Web Accessibility Literacy Strategy to build digital accessibility expertise in the OPS. This will include the creation of new trainings, resources and tools to ensure better integration of accessibility requirements into various digital formats.

Year one achievements

Various resources were created and enhanced that will be incorporated in the OPS Web Accessibility Literacy Strategy, including:

- The OPS implemented a new toolkit to easily integrate accessibility requirements for videos, including captions for live videos and audio descriptions for pre-recorded videos.
 - Developed by Cabinet Office, the toolkit is complemented by an internal inventory of all OPS YouTube videos to track accessibility features and determine appropriate course of action to meet requirements.
 - With this toolkit, OPS employees making videos for the public will be equipped to make accessible content that persons with disabilities have seamless access to government digital information.
- The OPS I&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence (ACOE) in partnership with the I&IT Assistive Technology Support Service (Infrastructure Technology Services in the Ministry of Public Business and Service Delivery) developed the Digital Accessibility Testing Toolkits, to provide OPS employees with a suite of tools and resources to test their websites, web applications, and documents for accessibility. The toolkits increase the knowledge and skills of OPS staff by providing them with the necessary tools and instruction to support their accessibility testing needs.
- The ACOE also launched:

- a new developer accessibility training for technical staff.
 - the Digital Accessibility IT Project Checklist to support OPS staff through their IT projects. This checklist is a quick and simple resource that can be used by OPS staff who are working on IT projects, moving through an IT governance process, or are procuring a new digital IT solution. It provides information on accessibility requirements, testing, procurement, next steps and more.
 - a new automated web accessibility assessment tool, along with training resources to support the use of the tool to assist OPS employees with testing their web products.
 - monthly Developer Accessibility Community of Practice meetings, which bring together developers and other technical staff from across the OPS to share digital accessibility related experiences, knowledge and more.
 - an interactive Web Accessibility Testing Scavenger Hunt as a training exercise for OPS employees to strengthen their knowledge and skills of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and the use of web accessibility testing tools.
- The ACOE continues to offer Document Accessibility Training to OPS employees to help build knowledge and skills to create and test documents for accessibility.
 - Ontario GeoHub (<https://geohub.lio.gov.on.ca/>) implemented efforts to create an AODA-compliant online application, including testing by sighted and non-sighted users, that set a new standard within Land Information Ontario.
(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/land-information-ontario>)
 - The Ontario Digital Service Experience Design (ODS XD) Lab conducted user research on behalf of 18 ministries to help them build accessible, user-friendly digital services. The public service delivered over 360 user research sessions that helped shape the delivery of government services.
 - Best practices have been established by individual ministries to increase the capacity of OPS employees in creating accessible documents, including:
 - The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry created an Accessible Document Policy and guide to active offers of assistance that describe what ministry employees need to know and consider before creating digital content, including documents and applications for the public, stakeholders, government partners and colleagues.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

As part of a comprehensive digital literacy strategy, tools, training, resources and new courses will prepare OPS employees at all levels on how to create digital products that incorporate accessibility from the start. An OPS that prioritizes organizational capacity development in digital accessibility is an organization that serves Ontarians effectively by providing access to digitally-inclusive information.

Next key milestones

Planning and implementation are underway for the remaining digitally-inclusive communications initiatives:

- Develop an OPS Digital Accessibility Standard to provide clear corporate guidance on digital accessibility requirements.
- Implement the OPS Web Compliance Plan to meet accessibility requirements.

A detailed framework for an OPS Web Compliance Plan has been developed and is being implemented over the next two years with the outcome of removing the remaining areas of digital non-compliance. Progress will be included in future annual status reports on the plan.

Barrier-free government facilities

Key outcome: Clients and OPS employees of all abilities feel welcome in OPS facilities that incorporate inclusive design practices and technologies.

Inclusive design resources

Develop resources to build OPS expertise around inclusive design, including collaborating with knowledgeable organizations and stakeholders.

Year one achievements

In collaboration with the Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD University, the Treasury Board Secretariat developed resources on inclusive design of the built environment. The resources will inform and enhance the knowledge of and the thinking

about inclusive design principles at all stages of project development. Topics covered in the resources include inclusive design of washrooms, wayfinding, parking and passenger loading zones.

The resources will be available to all OPS employees in 2023, including employees and partners working on the design of government facility projects.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

As OPS employees develop expertise in inclusive design as it pertains to government, barriers for persons with disabilities will be eliminated as accessibility is considered from the start of government facilities projects moving forward.

Accessible OPS workplace standards

Develop OPS workspace standards that include accessibility and create an implementation plan for applying these standards to new office infrastructure projects.

Year one achievements

The ongoing Macdonald Block Reconstruction Project (MBRP) continues to integrate accessibility requirements, standards and best practices throughout the design and construction process in consultation with government partners and internal accessibility stakeholders, such as a second Passenger Loading Zone (closer to the main entrance of the Complex) and wider paths of travel featuring non-slip finishes with textural differences to alert users to upcoming changes in terrain.

MBRP will inform the development of enterprise-wide workspace standards, the OPS Modern Office Space. These will enable future OPS office infrastructure projects to be barrier-free by design.

Initiative impact for persons with disabilities

An accessible workspace prevents and removes barriers for employees with disabilities. An OPS that provides persons with disabilities with an accessible and inclusive physical office environment will allow them to join and fully contribute to the organization, resulting in a more engaged and diverse workforce that can serve Ontarians better.

Next key milestones

Planning and implementation are underway for the remaining barrier-free government facilities initiatives:

- Review and recommend updates to the Guidelines for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario (<https://www.infrastructureontario.ca/Standards-and-Guidelines/>) Government Facilities (<https://www.infrastructureontario.ca/Standards-and-Guidelines/>) that align with best accessibility practices.

Progress will be included in future annual status reports on the plan.

Accessible procurement and transfer payments

Key outcome: Accessibility is effectively integrated at each stage of OPS procurement and transfer payment processes to ensure no public dollars are spent in creating barriers for persons with disabilities.

Next key milestones

Planning and implementation are underway for the accessible procurement and transfer payment initiatives:

- Create an Accessibility in Procurement Toolkit to build OPS employee and vendor expertise.
- Assess OPS transfer payment rules and embed accessibility requirements.

Action on the transfer payment initiative include a comprehensive review of the transfer payment rules. Further progress will be included in future annual status reports on the plan.

Additional accessibility accomplishment

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) scaled up audit activity and increased the number of audits completed to assure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) in 2022. 1,650 audits were conducted to ensure organizations

filed compliant accessibility reports and to verify that accessibility requirements were being followed. This was a significant increase compared to the 479 audits completed in 2021 and resulted in more organizations being compliant with the AODA and will increase accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Contact us

For more information on this plan or to request an alternative format, please contact the OPS Accessibility Office at MYAP@ontario.ca (mailto:MYAP@ontario.ca)

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