

**MINISTRY OF
COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

2003-2004

Accessibility Plan



Table of Contents

- Table of Contents 2
- Introduction 3
- Report on Achievements 4
- Commitments and Strategies for 2003-2004 6
 - Statement of Commitment..... 6
 - Strategies 6
 - Methods to prevent new barriers 7
 - Business areas to be reviewed 8
 - Specific actions to identify, prevent and remove barriers 9
- For more information 10

Introduction

In 2001, there were an estimated 1.5 million people in Ontario with self-disclosed disabilities. This number is expected to increase as the population ages.

In December 2001, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) was passed into law. Its purpose is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

One of the requirements under the ODA is that Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities, and public transportation organizations develop annual accessibility plans to make programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

In the Speech from the Throne, delivered on November 20, 2003, the Ontario government confirmed its commitment to working with Ontarians with disabilities on meaningful legislation that will allow them to fully participate in building a stronger province.

This document is the first annual accessibility plan for the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The plan describes improvements to accessibility that the ministry has made to date and its commitments for the balance of the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

Report on Achievements

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is committed to ensuring that Ontario's communities are supported and protected by safe, secure, effective, efficient and accountable law enforcement and community safety systems. The ministry has taken significant steps to support and protect all individuals across Ontario and worked to eliminate accessibility barriers faced by current and potential employees of the ministry.

The ministry recognized the need to incorporate accessibility planning in all capital construction projects in order to address physical and architectural barriers. As a result, all newly constructed buildings are accessible in accordance with the *Ontario Building Code* and current Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) Guidelines.

The ministry promotes staff understanding of accessibility issues by providing ongoing ministry training. As of June 3, 2003, 576 managers completed training on the purpose and requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*. The ministry also delivers staff training on the subjects of workplace discrimination and harassment and employment accommodation for employees with disabilities.

Another ministry initiative, *The Promise of the OPP*, reinforces the commitment to protect the rights of all people. *The Promise* is a commitment undertaken by all Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) employees and volunteers to protect the fundamental rights of all people in Ontario by reflecting a belief in the value of accountability, respectful relationships, fairness, courage and caring, continuous learning and diversity.

The ministry has also addressed information and communication barriers in a variety of ways. Toll-free, 24-hour access text telephone (TTY) numbers have been established to allow Ontarians with hearing impairments the ability to access services provided by the ministry, including the Ontario Provincial Police. Alternate format signage (i.e., large print and Braille) is present in many ministry buildings, including areas only accessible to employees. All ministry websites have also been revised to maximize accessibility.

In community corrections, disabled offenders are provided with options to better enable them to meet their reporting terms and conditions.

Technological barriers encountered by employees are continually addressed as they are identified. Solutions have included modified workstations and equipment and, in some cases, the provision of personal support.

The ministry's efforts even reach prospective employees. The ministry provides job applicants with the opportunity to self-identify any accommodation or accessibility needs they may have when participating in employment competitions. The ministry has also started a review of the standardized testing for correctional officer applicants to ensure that the testing does not create any unnecessary barriers.

The Ontario Public Service has strict policies on accessibility: the *Employment Accommodation for People with Disabilities Operating Policy*, the *Return to Work and Employment Accommodation Program* and the *Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Program Policy*. As a clear example of the success of these policies, the ministry was accommodating 508 Correctional Services employees with disabilities as of December 31, 2002. This represents 6.3 per cent of the total Correctional Services workforce.

In our continuing efforts to identify barriers and meet the diverse accessibility needs of Ontarians, the ministry has established a working group with broad representation from all ministry program areas.

Commitments and Strategies for 2003-2004

Statement of Commitment

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is committed to ensuring that Ontarians and visitors to Ontario are protected by law enforcement and community safety systems that are accessible to all persons who are protected by, supervised under, or involved in the delivery of those systems. To that end, the ministry will continue to:

- seek to understand and provide service accessibility consistent with the needs, expectations and priorities of Ontarians;
- create and sustain an accessible working environment in which all employees have equal opportunity to fulfill their potential within the ministry;
- protect the rights of all people in an equal and consistent manner to enable them to maintain their dignity, even in the face of adversity;
- seek out the experience, knowledge and skills of others in the community in identifying barriers to accessibility; and,
- respect the individual dignity and strengths of all people by working towards the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to accessibility.

Strategies

The ministry has identified strategies that are expected to help us to continue to meet this commitment. These strategies include both reactive and proactive steps that can be taken during the coming year to increase accessibility. They are broken down into the following three areas:

- Methods to prevent new barriers.
- Business areas to be reviewed.
- Specific actions to identify, prevent and remove barriers.

Methods to prevent new barriers

During the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the ministry will undertake the following activities to ensure that proposals for new facilities, acts, regulations, policies, programs and services are assessed with respect to their effect on people with disabilities:

- apply any new ORC Guidelines to future projects and make appropriate revisions to the Architectural Design Standards;
- request that the ORC consistently ensure that a dedicated accessibility consultant is involved in every capital construction project;
- start developing criteria to be used in assessing operating proposals put forward in the 2004-2005 business planning and capital planning submissions;
- provide all ministry staff with responsibility for procurement of goods and services with the “Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act” (once it is available from Management Board Secretariat);
- provide guidance to all ministry policy and program development staff on how to include accessibility in proposals; and,
- work towards having all existing and new managers complete the ODA Online Training Module.

Business areas to be reviewed

Acts and Regulations

The ministry will begin internal reviews of the *Police Services Act* and regulations as well as the *Ministry of Correctional Services Act* and regulations to identify any inappropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities.

Policies and Programs

Ministry human resources staff will start reviewing processes for employment competitions to identify areas for improvement in quality of service and accommodation for people with disabilities.

Ministry leasing administration will be updated to ensure accessibility concerns are incorporated.

Practices and Services

The ministry will conduct an internal review of human resources performance management practices with a view to including a learning component on accessibility issues by staff in performance agreements.

The ministry will examine all ministry services where public telephone access is necessary to identify where TTY numbers may be required.

Ministry staff will be provided with guidelines for responding to requests for publications in alternate formats.

Facilities

All new construction/planning will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the *Ontario Building Code* and the ORC Guidelines.

Specific actions to identify, prevent and remove barriers

Barrier identification and prevention

The ministry will issue a directive requesting that the Accessibility Planning Working Group be made aware of all public and employee concerns regarding accessibility.

The New Lease Project Requirements survey will incorporate accessibility concerns. Each time a lease renewal/new lease is reviewed, accessibility requirements will be considered and communicated to the ORC.

Minor capital repair and rehabilitation projects will include a survey in the planning process to ensure accessibility concerns are addressed.

Revised ORC barrier-free guidelines will be clearly communicated throughout the ministry.

Improved accessibility in communications

The ministry will issue a directive requiring all public meetings to be fully accessible. This includes logistics, physical space and communications. When requested, aids such as sign language interpreters and real-time captioning will be available.

A key contact person will be identified to support this directive.

Improved accessibility of facilities

New construction/planning will continue to comply with the *Ontario Building Code* and address existing ORC barrier-free guidelines. New guidelines will be followed once they are established.

Accessibility will continue to be a component of the ministry's annual capital plan and considered a significant part of best practices.

Improved accessibility in technology

All new material posted to the ministry's Internet site is tested for usability by people with disabilities, reflecting the broad definition of 'disability' under the *ODA*.

Learning opportunities for webmasters regarding adaptive technologies and accessible website design will be identified.

For more information

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are always welcome. Please telephone:

General inquiry: Toronto local - 416-326-5000

Toll free - 1-866-517-0571

TTY: Toronto local - 416-326-5511

Toll free - 1-866-517-0572

E-mail: jus.g.sgcs.webmaster@jus.gov.on.ca

Website: <http://www.mpss.jus.gov.on.ca>

Visit the Accessibility Ontario website at <http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility>. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on making Ontario a barrier-free province.

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from:

Publications Ontario

880 Bay Street, Toronto, ON M7A 1N8. Tel: (416) 326-5300

Out of town customers, except Ottawa call: 1-800-668-9938

In Ottawa, call (613) 238-3630 or toll-free: 1-800-268-8758

TTY Service: 1-800-268-7095

© Queens Printer for Ontario

ISSN 1710-0550

Ce document est disponible en français.