

**MINISTRY OF
COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

*2004-2005
Accessibility Plan*



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Introduction

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 policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

This document is the second annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. It highlights achievements of the 2003-04 plan and outlines commitments for 2004-05 so that no new barriers are created and existing ones are removed over time.

Ministries across government are increasing awareness of accessibility and integrating accessibility into daily business practices in a number of areas, including staff training, public information, facilities, and program and service delivery processes.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's efforts and commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province, where people of all abilities have a chance to fully participate and achieve their potential.

Message from Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services



Hon. Monte Kwinter

The Government of Ontario is committed to creating a province that offers full accessibility to all its citizens. There are many kinds of barriers that hinder accessibility and prevent people from fully participating in our society. The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, is helping to reduce those barriers.

As the Minister responsible for the safety of all Ontarians, I appreciate how critical it is to provide accessibility and support to all of our citizens. An estimated 1.5 million Ontarians have some form of physical, sensory, cognitive, developmental or mental disability. As our population ages, it will become even more important to ensure government programs and services are available to everyone.

In addition to the commitments outlined in our 2003-04 Accessibility Plan, the ministry recently achieved a significant milestone in addressing attitudinal barriers linked to hidden disabilities. I am pleased to announce that the ministry has developed a new resource manual to assist police in responding to incidents involving persons with mental health disabilities. The manual, which was released in May 2004, was developed in consultation with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including, police, mental health professionals and persons with mental health disabilities.

Focusing on accessibility is not a one-time effort. Understanding accessibility is not static. Our development of barrier-free law enforcement systems and environments will evolve as we continue to work with, and learn from, the people who are affected most in our communities. In the year ahead, we will continue to fulfill our legal and moral obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, and we will embrace the spirit of the law to make a safer and more accessible Ontario for all of our employees, residents and visitors. The government will introduce, this fall, measures to make the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 strong and effective.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Monte Kwinter', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Monte Kwinter
Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services

Report on Achievements of 2003-2004 Planning Commitments

In addition to moving forward on all of the commitments set out in the 2003-2004 Accessibility Plan, the ministry is pleased to report that there have been some additional and significant achievements in the delivery of service in two of its largest program areas.

First, Policing Services has developed a new resource manual to assist police in responding to incidents involving persons with mental health disabilities.

Secondly, Correctional Services has established a Working Group for Adult Offenders/Inmates with Special Needs whose mandate is to make recommendations to senior management regarding the identification, management and provision of services to adult offenders/inmates with special needs.

Commitment:

Apply any new Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) Barrier-free Guidelines to future projects and make appropriate revisions to the architectural design standards.

Status:

In progress pending the release of the new ORC Barrier-free Guidelines.

Action and Timeframe:

Until these guidelines are made available, the ministry will continued to follow the barrier-free guidelines of the Ontario Building Code and other internal architectural guidelines for all new capital construction projects. Once the new ORC Barrier-free Guidelines are released, they will be clearly communicated to the appropriate ministry staff.

Rationale:

ORC Barrier-free Guidelines are scheduled to be released in the near future.

Commitment:

Request that the ORC consistently ensure that a dedicated accessibility consultant is involved in every capital construction project.

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry works closely with the ORC to ensure that accessibility issues are considered for all capital construction projects.

Rationale:

As the mandatory common service provider, the ORC plays a key role in all ministry capital construction projects.

Commitment:

Start developing criteria to be used in assessing operating proposals put forward in the 2004-2005 business planning and capital planning submissions.

Status:

Ongoing

Action and Timeframe:

New construction/planning complied with the Ontario Building Code and addressed the existing ORC Barrier-free Guidelines.

Rationale:

Accessibility concerns are acknowledged and resolved during the planning stages of proposals.

Commitment:

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).

Status:

In progress.

Action and Timeframe:

Ongoing.

Rationale:

As a general practice, ministry staff consider accessibility issues when obtaining goods and services for the ministry. With the Government’s recent release of formal procurement guidelines, ministry processes will be formalized in 2004-05 and communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Commitment:

Provide guidance to all ministry policy and program development staff on how to include accessibility in proposals.

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

Repair and rehabilitation projects include accessibility concerns in the planning process.

Accessibility continues to be a component of the ministry’s annual capital plan and is considered a significant part of best practices.

Rationale:

Staff awareness is key in ensuring accessibility issues are addressed.

Commitment:

Work towards having all existing and new managers complete the ODA Online Training Module.

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

As of October 2003, 589 ministry managers had completed the training.

All new and existing managers attending information or training sessions on employment accommodation are reminded of the importance of completing the ODA Online Training. Since September 2003, this represents approximately 200 additional front line managers.

Rationale:

Since the focus of the online training module is improving accessibility for employees and job applicants, employment accommodation information and training sessions have proven to be a good venue to promote the training module.

Commitment:

The ministry will review 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.

Status:

Completed

Commitment:

Ministry Human Resources staff will be reviewing processes for employment competitions to identify areas for improvement in quality of service and accommodation for people with disabilities.

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

Human Resources best practices continue to be utilized during the competitive process. The ministry is also examining several position-specific and assignment-specific testing requirements that are part of the competitive process to ensure that the requirements do not create any unnecessary barriers.

Rationale:

Changes to work processes and technological advances constantly affect the demands of work duties, which in turn impacts on the criteria used in competitions.

Commitment:

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

Status:

Complete.

Commitment:

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

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry will include a learning component of accessibility in all future performance development plan templates that are developed.

Rationale:

Incorporation into performance development plan templates will help to reach more staff and promotes consistency in accessibility learning.

Commitment:

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

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

The ministry has put in place a centralized TTY number for non-emergency contact with the ministry (emergency contact TTY numbers are already in place). If the need for a program specific TTY number arises, it will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Rationale:

The centralized TTY number can be accessed, toll-free, by all Ontarians. It does not require callers to have a detailed knowledge of which service is provided by which program area.

Commitment:

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

Status:

A memorandum to all staff is currently in approvals process.

Action and Timeframe:

Guidelines on how to respond to requests for publications in alternate formats will be provided to all staff, including front line staff once approved.

Rationale:

Front line staff are often those most likely to become aware of a need to make a publication available in an alternate and more appropriate format.

Commitment:

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

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

The Ministry has ensured the Ontario Building Code and the existing ORC Barrier-free Guidelines were adhered to for all new capital construction projects. Revised ORC Barrier-free Guidelines will be clearly communicated within the ministry, when provided.

Rationale:

The Ontario Building Code and the ORC Barrier-free Guidelines reflect accessibility needs; compliance would ensure that accessibility issues are addressed.

Commitment:

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

Status:

A memorandum to all staff is currently in approvals.

Action and Timeframe:

All staff, including front line staff, will be directed to bring any accessibility concerns to the attention of the Accessibility Planning Working Group on an ongoing basis.

Rationale:

Front line staff are the most likely to become aware of accessibility concerns affecting employees and members of the public. A process to bring those concerns to the attention of the Working Group assists in prioritizing future actions and commitments.

Commitment:

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.

Status:

A memorandum to all staff is currently in the approvals process.

Action and Timeframe:

Direction on how to ensure that public meetings are accessible will be being provided to all staff, including front line staff, once approved.

Rationale:

Front line staff are those most likely to become aware of general accessibility concerns regarding meeting venues and are in the best position to respond to requests for specific accessibility aids.

Commitment:

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.

Status:

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe:

All current posted materials are accessible and all new materials are tested prior to posting.

Rationale:

This is addressed on an ongoing basis as technology and web design are constantly evolving.

Commitment:

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

Status:

In progress.

Action and Timeframe:

Webmasters are being consulted on the specific training needs.

Rationale:

Webmasters have the technical knowledge and expertise to best identify what learning opportunities would be most beneficial.

Commitments and Strategies for 2004-2005

Legislative Requirements

Commitment:

The ministry is committed to working with disabled employees through the promotion of return-to-work and employment accommodation practices that focus on making the most of the capabilities of all employees by providing meaningful work wherever possible.

Action:

The ministry will continue to promote best practices in employment accommodation by providing training and information sessions for managers, supervisors and human resources professionals responsible for developing employment accommodation plans.

Timeframe:

Formal training will be provided to front-line Ontario Provincial Police and Correctional Services Managers as part of scheduled supervisor training throughout the 2004-2005 fiscal year. Additional employment accommodation training will be provided to Correctional Services managers as part of annual attendance management training.

Commitment:

Ministry staff continue to consider accessibility as part of the procurement process. Formal processes will be communicated to staff responsible for the procurement of goods and services to ensure compliance and consistency.

Action:

Ministry processes will be formalized and communicated to staff.

Timeframe:

Within the 2004-05 fiscal year.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

Ensure that pending changes to the Fire Code Regulation under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act are consistent with the ministry's commitment to accessibility.

Action:

Pending changes are currently under review. The review will include accessibility as a consideration.

Timeframe:

Changes are reviewed on an ongoing basis as they are developed. This includes posting for public review, a review by a committee of stakeholders, and a review by a member of the Accessibility Planning Working Group.

Policies

Commitment:

The ministry is committed to eliminating unnecessary barriers to ensure that Ontarians have access to all employment positions in the ministry where they are able to carry out the essential duties of the job.

Action:

The ministry is reviewing testing requirements for the hiring of Correctional Officers as well as testing requirements used to select the members of some specialized Ontario Provincial Police duty assignments.

Timeframe:

The initial reviews will be completed within the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

Commitment:

The ministry will ensure continued compliance with existing and new government guidelines for accessibility, by incorporating these requirements into all facilities standards as they are revised or developed.

Action:

The ministry will continue to monitor the progress of the development of the new guidelines through ongoing communication with the ORC, and will adapt its standards to the new guidelines.

New construction/planning on capital projects will continue to comply with the existing Ontario Building Code and address current barrier-free requirements.

Timeframe:

2004-05 project planning and project implementation.

Commitment:

Continued application of the Lease Activity Request template to incorporate accessibility issues.

Action:

Accessibility requirements will be reviewed for all new leases through mandatory building requirements and ORC lease schedules requiring barrier free access. Accessibility requirements will also be included in lease renewals and where possible, negotiated into the renewal agreements.

Timeframe:

Ongoing activity.

Commitment:

Request that the ORC consistently ensure accessibility issues are considered for every capital construction project.

Action:

The ministry will continue to work in close partnership with the ORC to ensure accessibility issues are considered in capital construction projects.

Timeframe:

Ongoing activity.

Commitment:

Continue to consider accessibility concerns in assessing proposals put forward in the 2005-2006 Results-Based Plan and Infrastructure Plan submissions.

Action:

Planning will comply with the *Ontario Building Code* and address the existing ORC Barrier-free Guidelines.

Timeframe:

2005-06 project planning cycle.

Commitment:

Provide guidance to all ministry policy and program development staff on how to include accessibility requirements in infrastructure proposals.

Action:

Guidance will be provided to ensure accessibility continues to be considered as part of the annual and in-year capital planning and operating planning processes.

Timeframe:

2005-06 project planning cycle.

Programs and Services

Commitment:

The ministry is committed to meeting the requirements of those offenders/inmates with special needs who are supervised by Correctional Services.

Action:

Correctional Services has established a Working Group for Adult Offenders/Inmates with Special Needs whose mandate is to make recommendations to senior management regarding the identification, management and provision of appropriate services. A key objective of the working group is the development of a consistent operational definition of 'special needs'.

Timeframe:

An operational definition of 'special needs' has recently been finalized and distributed to Correctional Services staff. Additional recommendations are being developed.

Practices

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to identify and prioritize accessibility concerns.

Action:

All ministry employees are invited to forward accessibility concerns to the Accessibility Planning Working Group on an ongoing basis.

Timeframe:

Ongoing activity.

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to consult with appropriate stakeholders on accessibility issues.

Action:

The Accessibility Planning Working Group has identified a list of stakeholders who may be consulted on accessibility issues and will continue to update and add to this list as needed. Managers are able to consult with the working group to identify appropriate stakeholders for consultation.

Timeframe:

Ongoing activity.

For more information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: Toronto local – 416-326-5000

Toll free – 1-866-517-0571

TTY number: Toronto local – 416-326-5511

Toll free – 1-866-517-0572

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

Ministry website address: <http://www.mpss.jus.gov.on.ca>

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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