

**MINISTRY OF  
COMMUNITY SAFETY  
AND  
CORRECTIONAL  
SERVICES**

*Accessibility Plan  
2005-2006*



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# Introduction

The recent passage of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, marks a new era of accessibility in Ontario. This legislation will make Ontario one of the world leaders in improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

While the government is moving forward to implement the new legislation, there will be a transition period during which government and parts of the broader public sector will continue to have planning and other obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.

Under the ODA, Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are required to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. These plans must be made available to the public. Accessibility planning efforts to date have developed a strong foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will ensure real and effective change.

This document is the third annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. It highlights achievements of the 2004-05 plan and outlines commitments for 2005-06 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

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 the Minister



Hon. Monte Kwinter

Last year, the Ontario government committed to introducing measures to make the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, strong and effective. I am very pleased to say that we have surpassed that commitment. Passage of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 marks a new era for improving accessibility for all Ontarians.

The government continues to take a leadership role in identifying, removing and preventing barriers, and improving accessibility through an integrated approach that spans the priorities of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

In 2004-05, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services demonstrated continued leadership in improving accessibility. A dedicated email address, [accessibility@jus.gov.on.ca](mailto:accessibility@jus.gov.on.ca), was established to respond to staff concerns about accessibility issues within ministry facilities. So far, nine concerns identifying five types of barriers have been flagged and addressed. For example, in one ministry location automatic doors were installed - in another location security features on the automatic door were adjusted to improve access for persons with physical disabilities.

As well, the Office of the Fire Marshal is teaching a two-day fire safety seminar to employees in care and treatment facilities. This training increases safety for those who are particularly vulnerable to fire - residents of nursing homes, homes for the aged, private and public hospitals, residential care facilities and group homes.

The achievements highlighted in this year's plan, as well as the commitments to make further improvements in the coming year, demonstrate the Ministry of Community Safety & Correctional Services' efforts to support the government's commitment to make Ontario's communities strong and accessible to people of all abilities.

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

Monte Kwinter, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services

# Report on Achievements of 2004-2005 Planning Commitments

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services was successful in achieving its planned commitments outlined in its 2004-05 accessibility plan. The following section provides a status report.

## 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.

### **Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. This commitment is ongoing

### **Action and Timeframe:**

A total of 12 sessions for managers, focusing on return to work/employment accommodation, were completed during 2004-05. A total of 310 managers participated. In addition, a total of 20 ministry employees with disabilities have accessed the Employment Accommodation Fund to assist in meeting their accommodation needs and full participation in the workplace.

In addition, the ministry increased its complement of case management coordinators, whose role is to support managers in employee return to work/accommodation issues, by 25 per cent.

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### **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.

### **Status:**

Complete

## **Action and Timeframe:**

The ministry provided all procurement staff with MBS guidelines for implementing the Procurement Provision of the ODA. In addition, in July 2005, information on AODA and new tools to support accessibility in procurement processes were communicated to all ministry procurement staff. The tools included: e-presentation on ODA, 2001 Procurement Guidelines; Guideline for implementing the Procurement Provisions of the ODA, 2001; ODA procurement requirements check-sheet; and ODA procurement FAQs. Staff were also informed to contact their Business Practices Unit analyst for further assistance.

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## **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.

### **Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. This is an ongoing commitment.

### **Action and Timeframe:**

Any future changes to the Fire Code Regulation will continue to be reviewed in order to prevent the creation of any unnecessary barriers to accessibility.

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## **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.

### **Status:**

Complete

### **Action and Timeframe:**

During the fiscal year 2004-05, the ministry completed initial reviews of 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. The ministry has also completed a Physical Demands Hazards Analysis and an RFP has been posted in order to hire an external consultant to identify and recommend appropriate physical abilities testing for correctional officers.

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**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.

**Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. Ongoing activity.

**Action and Timeframe:**

It is current standard in the ministry to automatically include the new *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* in all new construction projects. Project managers and architects are informed of and required to follow ministry standards as well as the new *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities*.

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**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. Ongoing activity.

**Action and Timeframe:**

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

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**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. Ongoing activity.

**Action and Timeframe:**

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

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**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

Planning complies with the Ontario Building Code and addresses Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities.

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**Commitment:**

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

**Status:**

Complete

**Action and Timeframe:**

Guidance is provided to all Facility Management Coordinators to ensure accessibility continues to be considered as part of the annual and in-year capital planning and operating planning processes.



# **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.

## **Status:**

Complete

## **Action and Timeframe:**

The ministry's Senior Social Worker/Special Needs Consultant is involved in a number of initiatives related to special-needs offenders. Discussions with staff training and Technology Coordination Unit are ongoing with respect to training issues and identification of offenders with special needs. Best practices guidelines for Discharge Planning, including areas that focus on offenders with special needs, have been developed and approved by senior management.

To help remove barriers for offenders with hidden disabilities, the ministry is involved in the Mentally Ill Diversion Project and has provided recommendations to the Ministry of Health (lead ministry) related to diverting the mentally ill from the criminal justice system. The ministry is also participating in a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Intergovernmental Action Network, which is in the preliminary stages of developing a Terms of Reference. One of the key purposes of this group is to operationalize the FASD National Framework for Action for Ontario. Finally, the ministry participates in an interministerial working group in response to an Ontario Superior Court Ruling regarding keeping accused individuals who are mentally ill in detention while awaiting a forensic bed in hospital for a fitness assessment. A number of strategies have been implemented in the ministry, including changes to the ministry's Offender Tracking Information System (OTIS), to capture and review more detailed information about fitness assessment orders; and a fitness assessment clinic has been established at three correctional facilities.

The ministry has also established a fund for offenders with special needs who are under community supervision. The purpose of the fund is to help meet the needs of offenders with disabilities, including hidden disabilities, when they are released into the community under court orders. In fiscal year 2004-05 a total of 129 offenders received assistance through the fund.

## **Practices**

### **Commitment:**

The ministry will continue to identify and prioritize accessibility concerns.

### **Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. Ongoing activity.

### **Action and Timeframe:**

The ministry has established a dedicated e-mail account to receive and respond to staff concerns regarding accessibility in the ministry. A total of nine concerns identifying five types of barriers have been flagged and addressed as a result.

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### **Commitment:**

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

### **Status:**

Complete for 2004-05. Ongoing activity.

### **Action and Timeframe:**

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.

# Commitments and Strategies for 2005-2006

This section represents the ministry's plan, including new commitments and initiatives for the coming year.

## Customer Service

### **Commitment:**

The ministry will continue to work toward meeting the needs of offenders with special needs through ongoing involvement in related initiatives, programs and services, and in partnership with other ministries where appropriate.

### **Action:**

The ministry will continue to participate in intergovernmental/interministerial initiatives such as the Mentally Ill Diversion Project, the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Intergovernmental Action Network, and strategies in relation to keeping mentally ill accused in detention while awaiting a forensic bed in hospital for a fitness assessment.

The ministry will implement the recently developed best practices guidelines for Discharge Planning which includes areas that focus on offenders with special needs. The ministry will also ensure the term "offenders with special needs" is consistently defined and applied throughout the ministry for adult offenders in custody as well as those under community supervision.

### **Timeframe:**

Ongoing

Best practices guidelines for discharge planning are to be implemented by December 2005.

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### **Commitment:**

The ministry is committed to educating its front-line employees to assist them in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.

### **Action:**

The ministry's Accessibility Planning Working Group will review the generic training tool for employees titled *May I help you? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities* currently available

from the Public Education and Partnership Unit of the Accessibility Directorate, and will make recommendations in relation to its use/implementation in the ministry.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06

**Employment**

**Commitment:**

The ministry will continue to strive toward 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 will hire an external consultant to validate the Physical Demands Hazards Analysis (completed as part of last year's accessibility plan) and to identify and recommend appropriate physical abilities testing for Correctional Officers, in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code as well as the ODA/AODA.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06

**Commitment:**

The ministry will continue the practice of identifying and addressing potential barriers and accessibility concerns of staff to ensure all employees are provided with a fair, accessible and equitable work environment.

**Action:**

The ministry has a dedicated e-mail account to receive and respond to staff concerns regarding accessibility. The ministry's Accessibility Planning Working Group will recommend that the existence of this e-mail account be communicated to all employees, e.g., including a direct link to the account in ministry's intranet sites. This will ensure that employees are aware of the e-mail account, its purpose, and how to utilize it when needed. The working group will also ensure that all accessibility issues/concerns received from staff are identified and addressed.

**Timeframe:**

Working group recommendations regarding communicating the existence of the e-mail account is to be completed by December 2005. Identifying and addressing accessibility issues/concerns is an ongoing activity.

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**Commitment:**

The ministry will continue educating its managers on return to work/employment accommodation as well as the ODA/AODA.

**Action:**

The ministry will continue to provide in-person training for appropriate managers on return to work/employment accommodation. In addition, the ministry will continue to require all managers to complete the online ODA training. Completion of the ODA training will be included in Performance Development Plan templates for all managers.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Communications and Information****Commitment:**

The ministry will continue its efforts to ensure that information regarding ODA/AODA and accessibility is clearly communicated to all employees as well as members of the public.

**Action:**

The ministry will ensure its main Intranet site (for employees) is in a format accessible to persons with disabilities. Links to accessibility information, including the legislation and the ministry's accessibility plan, will be provided on the Intranet site. In addition, the Accessibility Working Group will recommend that the ministry's Internet site (for public use) include a link to accessibility information on its main page.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06

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**Commitment:**

The ministry will continue to maintain a list of appropriate stakeholders on accessibility issues in order to ensure access to up-to-date information and consultation with outside organizations when needed.

**Action:**

The ministry's Accessibility Planning Working Group will update the list of stakeholders and ensure it remains current. The Working Group will also ensure that ministry managers are aware of the list and how they can access it.

**Timeframe:**

December 2005

**Built Environment****Commitment:**

The ministry is committed to the ongoing application of the current *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities* and will implement all standards arising from the new legislation (AODA) as they are established.

**Action:**

The ministry will continue to dialogue with the Ontario Realty Corporation and network with facilities management partners across the OPS to explore consistent and improved accessibility for persons with disabilities in relation to Ontario government facilities.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

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**Commitment:**

The ministry is committed to reducing existing physical barriers within the workplace to accommodate the specialized requirements of employees as they may arise.

**Action:**

The ministry will continue to respond to the requirements and standards for accessibility within the ministry's facilities to reduce physical barriers within the workplace.

**Timeframe:**

Ongoing

**Acts and Regulations****Commitment:**

The ministry will ensure that accessibility issues are considered in the implementation of Bill 138 (*an Act to amend the Emergency Management Act and the Employment Standards Act, 2000*) upon proclamation.

**Action:**

Should Bill 138 become law, the Accessibility Planning Working Group will be available as a resource to ministry staff involved in its implementation, to ensure accessibility issues are considered. The working group will expand its membership to include a representative of Emergency Management Ontario.

**Timeframe:**

2005-06

