

Ontario Public Service Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2016 Annual Status Report

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Advancing accessibility

The Ontario Public Service (OPS) is committed to creating an accessible Ontario by 2025. One way we can facilitate this is by identifying, removing and preventing barriers within our organization.

An accessible OPS means employees of all abilities can fully participate in the workplace environment and the public can receive equitable and barrier-free access to our services.

The OPS' plan to improve accessibility in the workplace and in the services we provide is outlined in our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) – [Accessibility in the Ontario Public Service: Leading the Way Forward](#). MYAP provides a roadmap to help the government not only meet our legislative requirements under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#), but also go beyond them. This is the last annual status report under the 2012-2016 MYAP and highlights the achievements made towards addressing accessibility barriers in the OPS in 2016.

Serving people better

MYAP key outcome: People with disabilities who are OPS customers receive quality goods and services in a timely manner.

One of the key priorities for the government is to help create a fairer society. We do this by providing timely accessible programs, services and products to people and businesses in Ontario. Here are some highlights of the progress we made in 2016.

In 2016, the province made travelling experiences more convenient. Travellers with disabilities can access full-service fuel 24 hours a day at ONroute highway service centres through Canadian Tire's Disability Assistance Program. The government worked with operator Host Kilmer Service Centers and sub-tenant Canadian Tire Corporation to make full-service fuel available after hours by appointment for travellers with disabilities who need assistance. Program information is posted on the ONroute and Canadian Tire websites and displayed on window signs at ONroute centres. The self-serve information kiosks at all 20 ONroute centres were also replaced with new interactive and accessible kiosks in 2016, making it easier for people with disabilities to access tourism and highway information.

The OPS dedicated \$460,000 over three years (2015-2018) through the Ontario Women's Directorate to an Innovation Fund project that focuses on people with disabilities. This funding will enable the delivery of accessible services in French, adapted to the needs of Francophone communities. Le Phénix – service d'intégration social, Inc. will design, deliver and evaluate a training program and coaching services to

help organizations across the province provide support to people with disabilities who have survived sexual violence.

As well, consultations were held in accessible venues to support public input into the Ontario Municipal Board Review. There was an online portion to make it easier for citizens who may have difficulty attending public events to take part.

Changes to the [Customer Service Standard](#) under the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (IASR) were also made in 2016 to help create a more accessible customer experience.

Communications that work

MYAP key outcome: Information and communications are available in accessible formats or with necessary supports to all OPS staff and customers.

An important way to improve accessibility in information and communications is to let people know that they can ask for alternative formats or communication supports when requesting documents or providing feedback. The OPS offers information on how to get accessible formats of documents in various ways, including on-site signage, job postings, internal emails and website messaging.

A Guide to Accessible Festivals and Outdoor Events was made available to festivals and event organizers across Ontario as part of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's 2016 Celebrate Ontario program. The guide helps event organizers improve accessibility and better understand their requirements under the AODA.

The OPS continues to improve the quality of our services and products for people with disabilities by encouraging feedback from both our internal and external customers. Accessible customer feedback is gathered in many ways, including:

- “contact us” links on websites
- telephone/TTY/mail/facsimile
- client satisfaction surveys

Managing these inquiries allows us to better identify and respond to possible barriers for people with disabilities.

Meaningful employment

MYAP key outcome: OPS employees with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully in their employment.

In our journey towards an accessible OPS, we strive to provide a work environment where staff of all abilities can contribute to their full potential, by understanding needs and removing barriers.

Staffing decisions are more transparent and policies and processes are being updated to consider accessibility at the forefront. We have developed inclusive recruitment lenses for both executive and non-management recruitment. This helps ensure that accessibility and diversity principles support barrier-free competitions.

Senior executives, as well as all OPS staff and management, are also encouraged to incorporate inclusion and diversity objectives in their performance plans.

Several internal OPS services continue to support managers in providing employment accommodations. Disability accommodation specialists at the Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness provide advice on employment accommodations. In addition, the Information and Information Technology Assistive Technology Support Service assists with procurement and support of computer-based and telephone-related assistive technology.

The OPS also continues to make efforts to break down the stigma that surrounds mental health issues and illnesses. To help create a more inclusive culture, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) implemented its comprehensive new [OPP Mental Health Strategy: Our People, Our Communities](#) in 2016. Its goal is to improve the response to the mental health needs of OPP members and the people they serve. The [OPP Wellness Unit](#) was also created in 2016 to provide targeted programming.

The OPS continues to build a diverse talent pool by encouraging staff to take part in mentoring and career development programs. These provide an opportunity for employees from under-represented groups, including people with disabilities, to exchange information on inclusion and career development. For example, the Diversity Careers Champions Program (DCCP) offers career guidance to employees of all abilities. In 2016, 38 out of 652 participants in the program self-identified as having a disability. The Ministry of the Attorney General has a similar initiative called the Mentoring for Career and Inclusion Program. In 2016, 157 employees participated; two self-identified as having a disability. Additionally, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Housing hosted its annual Connexions networking event in 2016 for college and university students with disabilities and recent graduates. To date, roughly 475 students have participated in this program.

Accessible transportation

MYAP key outcome: The OPS continues to support the development of barrier-free transportation services for the people of Ontario.

The Ontario government supports municipalities in making their transit systems more accessible through various funding programs and by providing guidance on meeting accessibility standards.

Beginning in 2016, ferry terminals at Pelee Island, Kingsville and Leamington were made more accessible by:

- setting washroom counters, sinks, hand dryers and mirrors at accessible heights
- installing grab bars at urinals for support
- adding automatic door openers

The washrooms on the MV Jjimann ferry, built in 1992, were also updated in 2016 to improve accessibility.

The Ministry of Transportation's Remote Northern Airport Program operates and maintains 29 airports in Ontario's remote northern communities. Out of these, 27 have gravel surfaces that can be difficult to get across for people with limited mobility. The ministry has begun installing concrete walkways to provide safer access when moving between the terminals and aircraft. Two walkways were completed in 2016, with plans to complete the remaining 25 by 2020.

In 2016, OPS staff assisted the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario with its five-year [review of the Accessibility Transportation Standards](#), making various recommendations that are now under review.

Barrier-free public spaces

MYAP key outcome: There is greater accessibility into, out of and around OPS facilities and public spaces.

The OPS strives to embed the principles of universal design at every stage in the development of public spaces, from planning and design to construction and completion.

Being able to identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek ways to prevent or remove them takes a workforce that has the right training, tools and information to include accessibility in their daily practices. To this end, specialized training is available for staff who work in the built environment.

The OPS continues to follow the guidelines for barrier-free design of Ontario government facilities as we create more accessible workplaces across the province. The guidelines were reviewed and updated in 2016 to meet all of the accessibility-related requirements under the revised [Ontario Building Code](#).

People with disabilities can plan visits to ServiceOntario centres based on their needs, thanks to improvements to the online Service Finder. The tool provides a list of accessible features for each centre. The International Symbol of Accessibility is used on the website to show offices that meet specific accessibility criteria.

In 2016, more than 120 of the province's older courthouses and offices were reviewed for accessibility. A capital plan is being developed to improve accessibility in existing buildings. Specialized accessibility design guidelines for courthouses (such as accessible witness and jury boxes) continue to be used as new courthouses are designed and built, and in renovation and upgrade projects as appropriate.

Several Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) offices were also updated in 2016 to improve accessibility.

A new state-of-the-art facility opened at the Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre in September 2016, providing accessible accommodation for diverse needs.

In Ontario Parks, we continue to renovate and build more barrier-free campsites, cabins and comfort stations. People in Ontario with mobility issues can more easily enjoy beaches at several parks, where nonslip roll-up mats provide wheelchair-friendly access to the water or all-terrain wheelchairs are available to move through the sand.

Accessibility upgrades at several provincial attractions, such as Sainte-Marie among the Hurons in Midland, will make it easier for tourists to enjoy the sights. In addition, the ongoing revitalization of Ontario Place in Toronto includes many accessible features.

Best practices in procurement

Goods and services that are accessible not only meet the needs of persons with disabilities, but also benefit all members of the public. Accessible procurement within the OPS considers the needs of people with disabilities at all stages of the procurement or purchasing process with the aid of checklists, best practices, processes, e-learning, guides and the OPS Inclusion Lens.

All ministries are responsible for ensuring accessibility requirements, including those under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), are addressed when purchasing goods, services or facilities.

Ministries that buy goods and services must follow the rules in a document called the [OPS Procurement Directive](#). We held public consultations in 2016 to ensure these rules are clear and easy to follow. We are reviewing the feedback and will share the results at ontario.ca/procurement when they are available.

Celebrating our successes

In 2016, the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth worked with the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) to develop and deliver the second annual Accessibility Innovation Showcase and Tech Pitch Competition at Discovery, Canada's leading innovation-commercialization conference. Thirty-five exhibitors took part in the showcase, with five finalists competing for the \$20,000 Tech Pitch Competition award ultimately won by iMerciv. The program included the Honourable David C. Onley, Ontario's Special Advisor on Accessibility, and author and humanitarian Spencer West, whose message inspired more than 3,500 attendees. The event was held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, an accessible venue.

The OPS celebrated National Accessibility Awareness Week again in 2016 with an accessibility expo. The event welcomed approximately 200 guests and provided staff with an opportunity to learn about leading accessibility practices, services and supports for people with disabilities.

For the tenth year in a row, the OPS was named one of [Canada's Best Diversity Employers](#) in 2017.

Looking forward

Premier Kathleen Wynne appointed Tracy MacCharles as Ontario's first stand-alone Minister Responsible for Accessibility on June 13, 2016 – the 11th anniversary of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA). This led to an enhanced mandate for the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) to support a renewed focus on accessibility in the province.

In December 2016, we released the government's new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The [2017-2021 MYAP: Moving Forward Together](#) plan builds on what we have achieved to date, setting out our priorities and commitments for the next five years. It will serve as a roadmap for creating an inclusive and barrier-free OPS.

Key parts of this plan support the AODA standards around Customer Service, Information and Communication, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces and Employment, as well as general requirements around procurement and training.

We report on progress made toward the new commitments in 2018.

While we still have much work to do, the OPS is proud to be an accessible and respectful employer and service provider for the province of Ontario.

Contact us

For general inquiries or to request an alternative format of this report, please [contact us](#).