

**Accessibility for
Ontarians with
Disabilities Act**

**Accessibility
on the Ground
and in
Communities**

**Annual
Report**

2018

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ISSN 1911-818X (Print)

ISSN 1911-8198 (Web)

This document was produced by the
Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

Ce document est disponible en français.

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A message from the Minister



We are all lucky to live and work in the best province in Canada, and to call Ontario home. Every Ontarian, regardless of age or ability, has something important to contribute to our communities. This makes our province so rich, diverse and welcoming.

Making communities accessible to everyone is both a vision and a goal. Accessibility impacts people's daily lives, families, careers and opportunities.

For the first time in the history of Ontario, two very important portfolios – accessibility and seniors – came together as a new ministry in 2018. I am very proud and honoured to have been appointed Ontario's first standalone Minister for Seniors and Accessibility in June 2018. Our ministry is dedicated to serving seniors and people with disabilities. There are 2.6 million

people with disabilities in the province. This represents one in four people – 43% of people with disabilities are also

seniors. As the population continues to age, frequency and severity of disability will increase. As a senior myself, who has struggled with the challenges that follow a stroke, I have an intimate understanding of how these two files intersect. I am confident that working together in these two areas will allow us to get closer to our goal of ensuring Ontario achieves accessibility.

We want to make it easier for everyone in Ontario to participate more fully in their communities. We want to build a province where someone with a visual impairment can safely buy groceries because their community is designed to allow them to move freely and independently. A province where businesses hire the very best

talent. Where a student that uses a wheelchair can play with their classmates on a school playground without feeling left out. We want our province to be a place where people of all ages and abilities can be independent, engage in their communities and contribute to the economy.

We are pleased to report on how the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility is working for the people to build barrier-free communities that are accessible for all. Since being appointed, I have met with a multitude of stakeholders and have connected with accessibility champions to learn how they have advanced accessibility. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hundreds of stakeholders and volunteers for all the work they do behind the scenes to help make Ontario more accessible.

Our ministry believes that a strong tomorrow means making important changes for people today.

To help this happen, we work with partners across Ontario to advance our accessibility goals. In 2018, we:

- worked to ensure that the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* continues to be implemented by providing key supports to organizations in the private and public sectors that are trying to become accessible
- continued our annual tradition of participating in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's 2018 conference to connect directly with municipalities
- visited students and staff at Carleton University's Paul Menton Centre to learn how this post-secondary institution is removing barriers for students with disabilities

- highlighted organizations like the Canadian National Exhibition that are going above and beyond to realize the benefits of accessibility and to provide opportunities to people with disabilities
- continued to support businesses that hire people with disabilities in various ways, including through the Discover Ability Network – a free online tool that connects Ontario businesses to job-seekers with disabilities
- engaged with members of the Employers’ Partnership Table who are demonstrating the strong business case for hiring more people with disabilities.

I know that our continued partnerships and collaboration with innovative organizations, business leaders and frontline advocates is integral to our success as accessibility champions. Our government will continue to partner with and support innovative

accessibility champions that improve our communities.

Also, we must continue to consider feedback in order to learn and improve. I thank the Honourable David C. Onley for his review of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, for which he held public consultations during 2018. I am pleased to report that our government has tabled the report in the legislature and has already taken action.

I am enthusiastic about our continued work in 2019 and the new ways we will work to make Ontario a leader in accessibility and a province that is open for all.

Sincerely,



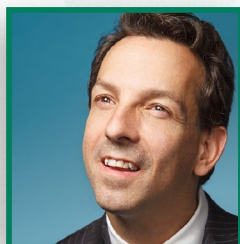
Raymond Cho
Minister

Improving the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Accessibility Standards Advisory Council

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Council includes representatives from the disability community and organizations that are required to

comply with Ontario's accessibility laws, such as businesses and the non-profit and public sectors.



Rich Donovan – Chair



Scott Allinson



Nuria Bronfman



Lois Davies



Pina D'Intino



Josephine Ho



Ashleigh Molloy



Kelly Paleczny



Michelle Saunders



Sam Savona



Kevin Shaw



Meenu Sikand



Angelo Tocco



Phillip B. Turcotte



Olga Dosis

Photos include members who served partial terms in the 2018 calendar year.
Not pictured: Dawna Kinnunen

Standards Development Committees

To ensure that Ontario's accessibility laws are working as intended, each standard is reviewed five years after it is enacted. People with disabilities and industry representatives work together to review the standards with support from the government.

In 2018, three Standards Development Committees provided advice to the minister.

Minutes of all committee meetings are available on [Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca).

Employment Standards Development Committee



Employment Standards Development Committee

2018: (left to right) back row: Karen Kuzmowich, Brian Mackenzie, Tania Barrie, Christopher Lytle, Sonny Brar, Laura Glithero (chair), Steve Murphy, Maureen Panizza, Josephine Ho. Front row: Tricia Pokorny, Pina D'Intino, Itsy (service animal), Wendy Lau, Diane McCauley. Not pictured: Scott Allinson, Phillip B. Turcotte, Jamie Burton, Ayesha Zubair, Ruth Wright

The Employment Standards help organizations make their hiring and employee support practices accessible. In 2018, the Employment Standards Development Committee made nine initial recommendations to the minister. The recommendations were posted for public review and feedback.



Awenda Provincial Park has a number of accessible amenities for visitors



Archer Matt Stutzman competes at the 2015 Parapan American Games in Ontario

Later in 2018, the committee reviewed all public feedback before finalizing its recommendations. The committee had its final meeting on November 21st, 2018 and submitted its recommendations to the minister in January 2019.

Information and Communications Standards Development Committee



Information and Communications Standards Development Committee 2018: (left to right) back row: Jennifer Cowan, Kevin Shaw, Diane Wagner, Louise Bray, Gary Malkowski, David Berman, David Best. Front row: Itsy (service animal), Pina D'Intino, Rich Donovan (chair), Jutta Treviranus, Richard Watters. Not pictured: Robert Gaunt, James Roots, Kim Adeney, Matthieu Vachon, Louie DiPalma, Chantal Perreault

The Information and Communications Standards ensure that organizations make information accessible for people with disabilities. The Information and Communications Standards Development Committee met in December 2018 to finalize its Initial Recommendations Report, and it will be formally submitted to the Minister in 2019.

To achieve the long-term objectives of making information and communications accessible for people with disabilities, the report reviews the impact of new and emerging technologies on accessibility. A technical sub-committee was formed to explore these issues in more detail.

Transportation Standards Development Committee



Transportation Standards Development Committee 2018: (left to right) back row: Kelly Paleczny (chair), Eve Wiggins, Sarah Keenan, James Bisson, Steve Murphy, Dana Earle, Robert Gaunt, Jeff Short. Front row: Sue Morgan and Sam Savona. Not pictured: Nicole Cormier, Gary Malkowski, Tracy Schmitt

The Transportation Standards make it easier for people to travel throughout Ontario. The Transportation Standards Development Committee is made up of transit providers, municipalities and people with disabilities. The committee submitted its [final report](#) on January 30, 2018, after a two-year review of the standard.

The government is reviewing the recommendations and determining next steps.



Third legislative review ...

... of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

The government is required to appoint a reviewer to examine the effectiveness of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and its standards every three years.

As part of this review process, the reviewer is required to consult with the public and people with disabilities. Appointed in 2017, the Honourable David C. Onley, Ontario's 28th Lieutenant Governor, submitted his report to the government by January 31, 2019.

Throughout 2018, Mr. Onley met with people with disabilities, business leaders and key organizations from all over Ontario. These consultations included:

- six public town halls in London, Toronto, the Regional Municipality of York, Ottawa, Scarborough and Thunder Bay
- round tables with organizations



- roughly 40 invitational interviews, including public and private sector organizations
- meetings with the chairs of the accessibility Standards Development Committees
- meeting with the chair of the minister's Accessibility Standards Advisory Council
- meetings with representatives from business leaders, such as Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association, CIBC and Retail Council of Canada
- several meetings with different levels of government
- meetings with post-secondary institutions
- online submissions were also received via the review's website.

Compliance and enforcement activities

In 2018, the ministry continued to work with obligated organizations to help them comply with the requirements of Ontario's accessibility standards.

All organizations with one or more employees in Ontario that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties are obligated to comply with the AODA and the accessibility standards.

The ministry provides obligated organizations with tools, resources and information to help them understand and meet their requirements. The ministry does targeted outreach and education campaigns each year to encourage compliance.



The ministry conducts attestation audits that focus on an organization's requirement to submit compliance reports. Desk audits may also be done to further verify an organization's compliance. In

2017, the ministry completed 1,730 attestation and desk audits, while 2,791 were completed in 2018 representing a 61% increase.

When organizations are found to be non-compliant through these audits, 97% become compliant with additional support. This demonstrates the willingness and preparedness of organizations to identify and remove barriers to accessibility.

On the ground and in communities

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees

Many accessibility-related conversations need to happen at a community level. Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees continue to assist in their municipality's planning process by helping local leaders understand the accessibility needs of the community.

The ministry consulted with these committees between January and May 2018 with the goal of connecting, engaging and supporting them in their mandate. The 2018 consultation was initiated to learn more about:

- the activities of municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees
- what conditions are needed for municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees to be successful
- how the ministry might better support the municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees going forward.



Findings showed that committees have a positive impact on local communities. Roughly 85% of committee members believe they have helped bring about accessibility improvements.

Summer student outreach program

During the summer of 2018, the ministry hired four students to engage with Ontarians in 27 communities at events across the province. The students distributed accessibility resources and talked

to people about how they could remove barriers for people with disabilities in their communities.



Our public outreach and accessibility summer student pictured at the Honda Indy Toronto with Premier Doug Ford

Association of Municipalities of Ontario's 2018 conference

Municipalities are on the front line of Ontario's efforts to improve accessibility.

Minister Cho was welcomed by delegates at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's 2018 conference held in Ottawa. The



Minister Cho addressing delegates at the 2018 Association of Municipalities of Ontario's 2018 conference

ministry connected with municipal representatives, including mayors and municipal councillors from across the province. The conference was an opportunity for Minister Cho and ministry staff to engage with attendees about the progress made by municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees and about the benefits of accessibility to seniors and the community as a whole.



The ministry also led a learning session with Brent Kittmer, Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk from the Town of St. Marys, and St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee about how that community worked with the local municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee to improve accessibility in St. Marys' historic downtown. The session focused on the extensive consultations with people with disabilities that the town conducted in the early planning phases of its project and the various accessibility features that are now in place.



Photo of St. Marys following the downtown revitalization project, which included the renovation of the bridge to ensure accessibility. The portion of sidewalk that touches the street is slightly lighter than the rest of the sidewalk. It was added to make the sidewalk wide enough to meet the accessibility standard

Carleton University tour

include liaising with faculty and departments to ensure their needs are met, providing one-on-one learning support and facilitating problem resolution.



Minister Cho with students from the Paul Menton Centre at Carleton University

In August 2018, Minister Cho toured the Paul Menton Centre at Carleton University.

The Paul Menton Centre and its staff provide a variety of support services for students with disabilities to accommodate their needs on an individual basis. Services

In addition to being the university's primary support centre for students with disabilities, the Paul Menton Centre has also enhanced its employment and entrepreneurship programs to provide students with disabilities with more opportunities to find meaningful employment and to realize their potential. The Minister commended Carleton for its work to support students with disabilities and thanked them for their participation in the ministry's Employers' Partnership table.

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital tour

In November, Minister Cho visited the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. It is Canada's largest children's

Accessibility symposium hosted for the Government of Manitoba

On June 12, 2018, Ontario joined Manitoba in celebrating Manitoba Access Awareness Week. Manitoba has introduced its own accessibility standards and has been working with businesses and organizations that had to comply with the Customer Service Standard under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act by November 2018.



Minister Cho learning about one of the many research initiatives at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

rehabilitation hospital and is focused on improving the lives of children with disabilities. Minister Cho praised the hospital for its work on championing education and training opportunities for children. He also presented a ministry supported Accessibility Excellence in Research Award that recognized Holland Bloorview as a leader in research and innovation in the treatment and rehabilitation of children with disabilities.

Engaging youth about accessibility



WE Day stage in Toronto

WE Day

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility partnered with WE Charity to educate and empower youth at 2018 WE Day events and through in-school workshops.

WE Day is an inspirational live show that features world-renowned speakers and award-winning performers. WE Day events in Toronto in September and in Ottawa in November welcomed 36,000 motivated students and educators with the hope of inspiring positive change in their communities. Both shows featured an on-stage accessibility awareness segment.



Covers of the children's book series

Accessibility children's books

Ensuring dignity and respect for people with disabilities will help create a better future. This is why the ministry continued its work to help parents and educators to promote inclusive attitudes.

In 2017, the ministry partnered with the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work to create a children's book series that promotes accessibility and inclusion. In February 2018, the ministry worked to promote the series to community libraries at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference.

The ministry also provided copies of the books to Halton Regional Police Service, which made the books available in police cruisers to assist in situations where children may be in distress.

Employment and accessibility

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

On October 18, 2018, Minister Cho recognized National Disability Employment Awareness Month in a statement to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Minister Cho highlighted that there are highly educated, qualified Ontarians with disabilities ready to use their skills in a variety of sectors. He also affirmed Ontario's commitment to addressing the persistently high unemployment rate for people with disabilities.

Research has shown that employees with disabilities perform well and are often ranked higher than their colleagues in workplace evaluations. They are often more loyal and productive than the average employee and have a better workplace safety record.



Minister Cho recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Minister Cho congratulated and showcased some of the many outstanding leaders who have helped to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. These individuals and organizations included:

- Mark Wafer, a champion of accessible employment and former Tim Hortons franchisee
- the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN)
- Magnet, an online job-matching platform that assists employers and job-seekers with disabilities, co-founded by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Ryerson University

- The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities at Carleton University, which offers 24-hour personal care services for students in residence with disabilities.

He ended his statement by emphasizing that National Disability Employment Awareness Month provides the opportunity to have important conversations about employment for people with disabilities and gives momentum to create a more supportive employment culture in Ontario.

Discover Ability Network

The Discover Ability Network was created to connect employers with talented job-seekers with disabilities. [Discover Ability is an online portal](#) that provides employers with practical, easy-to-follow resources on how to hire, retain and accommodate people with disabilities.

After visiting Discover Ability, employers seeking to unlock the incredible talents of Ontarians with disabilities can post job opportunities on the [Magnet job-matching site](#). This online platform helps employers and

qualified job-seekers with disabilities connect. In August 2018, 4,143 job postings were sent to job-seekers on Magnet who self-identify as a person with a disability.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce and its Discover Ability Network partners use their wider business communities to promote the case for hiring people with disabilities by highlighting best practices and success stories. They also encourage employers to use resources available through the Discover Ability Network online portal and to post their job advertisements on Magnet.



Minister Cho met with youth with disabilities employed by the Canadian National Exhibition



Canadian National Exhibition visit

In August 2018, Minister Cho visited the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) to meet youth with disabilities employed by the CNE. In 2018, the CNE's partnership with the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) resulted in the hiring of 52 people with disabilities, which included 19 re-hires from 2017. The CNE also launched a Mentoring & Leadership program for employees with disabilities.

The CNE has quickly become a leader in hiring people with disabilities. As part of these efforts, the CNE set a goal to hire 15% to 20% more individuals with disabilities for the next three to five years. In 2017, the CNE's Accessibility Advisory Committee released a report, [Nothing About Us Without Us: Enabling a Great CNE Experience for Everyone](#), with recommendations on how the CNE can evolve to become increasingly inclusive of people with disabilities. In partnership with the Abilities Centre, the CNE will be undergoing an overall accessibility review.

Ontario Disability Employment Network Conference

ODEN is a professional body of employment service providers united to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. ODEN has a network of over 6,800 individuals.

On October 16, 2018, Minister Cho provided remarks on the opening night of ODEN's annual Rethinking Disability Conference. The conference took place during National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The annual event brings together a wide range of businesses and employment service leaders committed to supporting employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



Minister Cho provided remarks at the Ontario Disability Employment Network Conference

EnAbling Change Program

The EnAbling Change Program provides funding for educational projects that promote accessibility for people with disabilities. Stakeholders regularly provide feedback to the ministry and have shared that greater awareness and understanding of barriers for people with disabilities is needed. Similarly, the Transportation Standards Development Committee stressed the need for greater education and outreach to help address attitudinal barriers, including those regarding people with invisible and cognitive disabilities.

In 2018, the program helped organizations advance accessible employment practices and increased awareness about people with invisible disabilities. For example, the ministry partnered with Parkinson Canada to [develop a guide](#) about recognizing and removing barriers on transit and in workplaces for people with invisible disabilities. They also hosted an informational seminar at the Canadian Urban Transit Association Annual Conference to promote the resources and further assist transit providers in becoming more accessible.

Retail Council of Canada webinars

The Retail Council of Canada worked with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility to promote hiring people with disabilities to retailers across Ontario. The Retail Council of Canada has worked in partnership with the ministry on a long-term basis to improve accessibility in the retail sector and improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

To do this, the Retail Council of Canada created and presented a [series of 11 webinars](#) which included guest speakers from the business community such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Goodwill Industries and Dolphin Digital Technologies. The series also featured guest speakers from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Canadian Hearing Society, Epilepsy Toronto, Ready, Willing and Able, Corbrook Awakening Abilities, March of Dimes Canada and Spinal Cord Injury Ontario.

OCAD University

The [Our Doors Are Open Guide](#) for Accessible Congregations was developed by OCAD University with support from the EnAbling Change Program.



Minister Cho speaking with Dr. Sara Diamond at the Our Doors Are Open guide launch

Designed to provide best practices for places of worship, the guide was featured at the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions Conference hosted by the City of Toronto from November 1 to 7, 2018.

The conference was attended by an audience of over 8,000 people of faith and conscience from over 80 nations and more than 200 unique spiritual backgrounds.

OCAD University also delivered a workshop on the “Our Doors Are Open” project and showcased the guide at this important conference.

Conference Board of Canada's small business guide

Making Your Business Accessible for People with Disabilities: Guide for Small Businesses in Ontario was produced by the Conference Board of Canada to help

organizations comply with the AODA.

The guide highlights that many people with disabilities are potential employees who bring valuable skills to the workplace. The resource is a plain language guide with concise tips, checklists and links to additional materials that organizations can use to ensure their businesses are accessible to customers and employees.



Cover of the Conference Board of Canada's guide for small businesses

Ontario Retirement Communities Association

[Ontario Retirement Communities Association](#) is building the capacity of its roughly 600 member organizations across Ontario with the creation and distribution of online learning modules and a toolkit of resources on AODA compliance.

Springtide Resources

[Springtide Resources](#) is addressing challenges facing older women with disabilities and Deaf women accessing the Violence Against Women Shelter system in Ontario. This project is examining barriers for these communities and will publish a resource guide of promising practices to allow for a more inclusive and accessible experience for women with disabilities experiencing violence.

EnAbling Change Partner Organizations 2018-2019

Thank you to our partners who led important outreach and education projects which contributed to greater awareness of accessibility throughout Ontario:

ArtsBuild Ontario Charitable Organization

Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

Canadian Hearing Society – Toronto

Canadian Urban Institute

Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation

Courageous Companions Inc. Ontario Chapter

Design Exchange

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

March of Dimes Canada Non-Profit Housing Corporation

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre

Ontario Business Improvement Area Association

Ontario Chamber of Commerce

Ontario Retirement Communities Association

Parkinson Canada

Realize

Retail Council of Canada

Ryerson University

Sports Information Resource Centre

Springtide Resources

The Arthritis Society

University Health Network

Moving Forward in 2019

In 2019, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility will continue its work to advance accessibility and provide the support and resources people with disabilities need to be independent and to fully participate in their communities.

With the assistance of people with lived experience, Ontario will continue to work with municipalities, businesses and service providers to review Ontario's accessibility legislation.

The ministry looks forward to hearing about the incredible work of many accessibility champions on the ground and in Ontario's communities. Businesses, municipalities and community champions will continue to play a critical role as a more inclusive, prosperous and accessible province takes shape.



