

October 23, 2006

## MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS AN ACCESSIBLE ONTARIO

Just over a year ago, the McGuinty government proclaimed the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. The Act provides for the province to develop accessibility standards that will apply to the private and public sectors across the province in order to address and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Proposed accessibility standards are being developed by Standards Development Committees which consist of people with disabilities, representatives from industry and the business community, the public sector, and Ontario government ministries.

The aim of the Act is to make the province accessible by 2025. This will allow for the implementation of accessibility standards to be phased in over several years, giving private businesses and public organizations the time to spread out their accessibility investments as part of their normal planning and capital investment cycle. The committees may propose different requirements and timelines for different types and sizes of organizations; they are not taking a one-size-fits-all approach.

### **Recruitment – Information and Communications**

In November of 2005, the Ministry of Community and Social Services completed the recruitment for the first two standards development committees in the areas of customer service and transportation. Today, recruitment for the third standards development committee will begin. This committee will focus on accessible information and communications.

Recruitment for the next two standards development committees for the built environment and employment will happen in 2007.

The application deadline for the information and communications committee is November 30, 2006. Application forms and committee terms of reference are available on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at:

<http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/>

For additional information, or for application packages in alternate formats, please call 1-888-789-4199 or TTY 1-888-335-6611.

### **Public Review – Customer Service**

In addition, the proposed customer service standard developed by the Customer Service Standards Development Committee will be posted on the Web for public review today. The committee that developed the proposed standard included representatives from the Ontario March of Dimes, Community Living Ontario, the Retail Council of Canada, the Motion Picture Theatres Association of Canada, and the Greater Toronto Hotel Association.

The public will have 60 days to review the proposed standard and submit feedback. Once the public review period is complete, the standards development committee will reconvene to consider the feedback. They may make changes to the proposed standard based on that feedback prior to finalizing the proposed standard for submission to the Minister.

To review the proposed standard and to provide feedback, visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at: <http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/>

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