SIU Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
2013-2018

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SIU ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am very pleased to launch the SIU Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Diversity, accessibility and inclusion are key priorities both for the people we serve and for the people we employ and it is something that we at the SIU have committed to.

The SIU Multi-Year Accessibility Plan represents our portion of the journey to achieve an accessible Ontario by 2025. The plan sets out our statement of commitment, the changes we must make, and the results we intend to achieve. Our immediate focus is to improve how we interact with Ontario's diverse communities and our employees.

Improving accessibility increases access to justice. It helps us build a diverse workforce and deliver the highest level of service.

I appreciate you taking the time to read our multi-year accessibility plan and welcome your input as we move forward.

Best regards,

Tony Loparco
Director
SIU

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The SIU is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The Unit believes in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The SIU aims to provide its services in accordance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the *Code*) and the current Accessibility Standards for Customer Service made under the *AODA*.

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The AODA has adopted the Ontario Human Rights Code definition of disability:

> ## AODA Section 2.
>
> In this Act,
>
> "disability" means,
>
> (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
>
> (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
>
> (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
>
> (d) a mental disorder, or
>
> (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; [1]

The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities that are short or long-term. This also encompasses physical disabilities, sensory disabilities, mental health disabilities, and "invisible" disabilities such as learning disabilities or environmental sensitivities.

We are committed to including persons with disabilities in the continued development of our accessibility plan and will strive to make a status report publicly available each year to highlight our accessibility achievements.

The SIU's Multi-Year Accessibility Strategy describes how the Unit plans to meet the requirements of the AODA. The Act requires that Ontario become an accessible province by 2025. Accordingly, we plan to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility in the following areas:

• Customer Service
• Information and Communications

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[1] http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcss/accessibility/Tools/AO_EmployerHandbook.pdf

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- Employment
- Transportation
- Built Environment

SIU ACCESSIBILITY VISION

- An Accessible SIU by 2025

OBJECTIVES

To outline the SIU's strategy to prevent and remove barriers for employees and citizens with disabilities and meet its requirements under the AODA

STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

- The SIU will review existing policies with the application of the OPS Inclusion Lens, with the aim to revise or develop new polices as required.
- The SIU will implement internal policies to ensure staff are in compliance with accessibility best practices in everyday operations and accomplished through on-going communication and training in accessibility compliance.

Customer Service

The SIU seeks to provide and deliver accessible customer service supportive of persons with disabilities. The SIU is committed to providing accessible customer service policies, practices and procedures based on the principles of dignity, respect, independence, integration and equal opportunity to ensure our staff and persons with disabilities we serve receive the same quality and timely service as others.

The Unit plans to undertake the following:
- Review and update policies and standards regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service.

- Ensure ongoing training of employees and those who interact with the public or other third parties as outlined in the customer service standard.

- Establish a process for stakeholders to provide feedback on how the SIU provides services to persons with disabilities and how the SIU will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints.

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- Make the information about our feedback process readily available to the public.
- Embed accessibility requirements into staff training and orientation materials.

Information and Communication

The SIU is committed to meeting the information and communication needs of persons with disabilities. This includes websites, intranet sites, communications materials, telephone communications and face-to-face interactions. The goal is to achieve the most effective and efficient access to information for all users.

- Achieve compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines-based (WCAG) commitments in the Information and Communication section of the IASR (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation) to ensure websites are accessible for all. The current SIU website was re-developed in 2010 and currently conforms to the WCAG 2.0 A criterion. The Unit commits to be compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA by 2021.

- Develop guidelines and best practices for creating accessible documents for common desktop applications such as MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Provide accessible formats and communications supports as quickly as possible when a person with a disability asks for them.

- Provide information on the Unit's emergency procedures, plans, and public safety, in a variety of alternate formats such as large print, HTML and tagged PDFs or with appropriate communication supports as soon as practicable, upon request.
- Train staff in recognizing information and communication accessibility barriers and to create documents in accessible formats.

Emergency Preparedness – Procedures, Plans & Information

The SIU is committed to providing its clients with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information on an ongoing basis, if necessary.

In accordance with the Regulation, as of January 1, 2012, the SIU has ensured, and will continue to ensure, that any information about emergency procedures, plans or public safety that it prepares and makes available to the public is provided upon request in an accessible format.

Notice of Service Disruptions – In the event of a temporary disruption that impedes or limits a person with a disability from gaining access to SIU services, Notice of

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Service Disruptions will be posted including details of alternative service options in the following method/places:

- Notices on Entrance Doors
- Telephone Automated Voice Recordings
- Website

In the event of any unplanned disruption, alternate arrangements will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities to receive service delivery required in the following manner:

- Services provided at an alternate place and time or format.

Employment

The SIU is committed to integrating fair and accessible employment practices to attract, retain and accommodate employees with disabilities throughout all stages of an employment life cycle. We are dedicated to removing accessibility barriers to create an inclusive work place environment where all employees can reach their full potential.

Recruitment - The SIU will integrate accessibility into its existing recruitment employment practices. We will take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, the SIU will accommodate persons with disabilities during the recruitment, assessment, and training processes when staff is hired and throughout their employment.

- Ensure all SIU job ads indicate that the SIU is an equal opportunity employer.
- Accommodations policies and procedures, to meet Accessibility standards for interviews and employment assessment tests for applicants with a disability.
- Inquire about applicant's specific accommodation requirements which are necessary for them.
- Notify job applicants in the selection process that accommodations are available upon request relative to materials or processes to be used.

Procurement - SIU is committed to integrating accessibility criteria into its procurement processes. SIU is aware of and understands the need to demonstrate leadership in removing barriers for persons with disabilities. Procurement staff will receive training on identifying, integrating, and incorporating accessibility considerations into the Unit's procurement practices when procuring for goods, services or facilities maintenance utilizing OPS procurement resources. Our procurement practices will incorporate any new requirements mandated by government.

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Built Environment

The SIU is committed to improving accessibility for all staff and the public by 2025 as set out in AODA.

OUTCOMES

Customer Service: All stakeholders receive an equitable and effective customer experience that accommodates their needs.

Information and Communication: Staff and customers receive equal and timely access to the information and communications materials they require.

Employment:
- Development of individual workplace emergency-response plan for employees with disabilities.

- Employment-related policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure they meet legislated requirements.

- Recruitment, retention and career development programs and processes are barrier-free.

- Accommodation for disabilities is offered and provided as required.

Procurement: The SIU benefits from the increased awareness and responsiveness by vendors in adopting accessibility measures.

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Milestones and Steps to Achieve Compliance

Major Milestones or Deliverables	Components	Steps to Achieve	Timelines
Accessibility Policies *(Section 3, Establishment of Accessibility Policies) of the IASR*	• Develop, document accessibility policies including statement of commitment • Make publicly available • Provide in accessible format on request	• Form Accessibility Committee by November 1, 2013 • Consult persons with disabilities to review and provide feedback on the SIU Accessibility Plan by December 1, 2013 • Post plan on website after completion • Create accessible formats – large print, electronic screen readable • Establish policy to deal with accommodation requests	January 1, 2013
Accessibility Plans *(Section 4, Accessibility Plans) of the IASR*	• Establish, maintain, document, post a multi-year accessibility plan • Provide plan in an accessible format on request • Establish, review and update plan in consultation with persons with disabilities • Review and update plan at least once every **five** years • Prepare and post an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement plan • Provide status report in accessible format on request	• Consult the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer and any other relevant resources • Conduct internal/external 'Needs Assessment' to identify achievements and gaps • Consult persons with disabilities to develop plan • Attend 'Community of Practice' meetings • Develop an annual status report in an accessible format. • This report is to be made available upon request	January 1, 2013 Dec 31, 2013

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General Requirements - Procurement *(Section 5, Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities) of the IASR*	• Include accessibility criteria and features when procuring goods, services or facilities	• Train procurement staff on purchases of goods/services/facilities to integrate accessibility requirements.	January 1, 2013
Report on compliance	• File accessibility compliance report which includes all AODA requirements up to, and including, January 1, 2013. Note: agencies have almost one year after meeting the requirement to file their compliance report.	• Accessibility Committee to meet quarterly to review SIU compliance and prepare status report.	**Dec 31, 2013**
General Requirements- Training *(Section 7, Training) of the IASR*	• Train employees and volunteers on IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities	• Training Coordinator to facilitate staff training on the IASR, and OHRC (in relation to people with disabilities) • Update New Staff Orientation Training to include Accessibility training and policies. • Train staff on creating accessible documents • Training Coordinator to maintain training records for all staff.	January 1, 2014
Information & Communications - Emergency and public safety information *(Section 13, Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information) of the IASR*	• If provided, make emergency and public safety information accessible on request	• Review and update SIU Emergency Preparedness Plan • Establish protocol for members of the public during emergencies • Task SIU Occupational Health and Safety committee to assess SIU premises for accessibility compliance.	January 1, 2012
Information & Communications- Feedback *(Section 11, Training) of the IASR*	• Have accessible processes in place for receiving and responding to feedback	• Develop accessible feedback forms	January 1, 2014
Information & Communications- Website Accessibility *(Section 14, Accessible Websites and Web Content) of the IASR*	• Make new internet websites and web content on conform with WCAG 2.0 level A • Make all websites and content conform to WCAG 2.0, Level AA	• Ensure current SIU website conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level A by 2014. • Revaluate to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0 AA by 2021	January 1, 2014 January 1, 2021

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Information & Communications - Accessible Formats and Communications Support *(Section 12, Accessible Formats and Communication Supports) of the IASR*	• Provide or make arrangements for accessible formats and information and communication supports in a timely manner, on request and at no cost greater than regular cost	• Ensure accessible documents and information are available upon request.	January 1, 2015
Employment - Emergency response information *(Section 27, Workplace emergency response information) of the IASR*	• Provide customized workplace emergency information to employees with disabilities if necessary	• Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to persons with a disability if necessary. • The SIU will protect the privacy of an employee's personal information relative to the accommodation plan. • Regular review of the employee's individual accommodation plan to ensure compliance. • With employee's consent, share information with those designated to help them in an emergency • Emergency Preparedness representatives to maintain a record of emergency protocols and information materials.	January 1, 2012
Employment - Accessible Employment Practices *(Employment Standards Sections 20-32) of the IASR*	Establish processes to make sure: • Recruitment is accessible • Job-related information is provided in accessible formats • Individual accommodation plans are developed • Employees returning to work after disability-related absences are accommodated • Employees' accessibility needs are considered for all employment opportunities	• Establish SIU committee to review and amend (if necessary) SIU hiring practices to ensure accessibility requirements are met • Ensure job-related information is available in accessible formats • Establish protocols are in place to develop accommodation plans for employees/candidates with disabilities • Establish procedure to	January 1, 2014

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		ensure employees returning to work after disability-related absences are accommodated (temporary and permanent)	

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