

About the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)



Breaking Barriers Together

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Access For All

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark act, the government of Ontario is developing mandatory accessibility standards. These standards will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily life. The standards will apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario.

The province is now working with representatives from the disability community, as well as public and private sector organizations to develop accessibility standards.

Standards will be developed to achieve real results in stages. Milestones will be set that must be reached every five years or less so that Ontario will be accessible to people with disabilities by 2025.





We All Benefit

Disability impacts the lives of many Ontarians. Today, 15.5% of Ontario's population has a disability. This number will keep growing as the population ages.

Improving accessibility is the right thing to do. It's also the smart thing to do. People with disabilities are our neighbours, friends, and family. They are also potential customers, clients, and employees. When we make our communities accessible to them, we all benefit.

Thinking Broadly

When we think of disabilities, we tend to think only of the ones we can see. For example, we think of people in wheelchairs. But there are also disabilities we can't see. They can include: vision disabilities, deafness or being hard of hearing, intellectual or developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, and mental health disabilities. We can't always tell who has a disability.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) uses the same definition of "disability" as the Ontario Human Rights Code. It includes both visible and non-visible disabilities.





Making Progress

The AODA builds on progress made under earlier legislation. Under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) the Ontario government and broader public sector (municipalities, public transportation organizations, colleges and universities, hospitals and school boards), must develop accessibility plans each year. They will continue to do this while accessibility standards are developed under the AODA.

Creating Standards

Accessibility standards are the building blocks Ontario will use to make real, measurable and effective changes to accessibility. Standards Development Committees are developing proposed standards that could become regulations under the AODA.

Committee representatives are selected through a public recruitment process. Those chosen are then invited by the Minister of Community and Social Services to sit on the committees. The committees include people with disabilities or their representatives, as well as representatives from the business community, the broader public sector, and the Ontario government.

Five Key Areas

Standards Development Committees are developing proposed standards in five key areas:

1. **Accessible Customer Service:** This is the first standard to become a regulation. It came into force on January 1, 2008 and is now the law. Public sector organizations were required to comply with this law by January 1, 2010. Private sector organizations will be required to comply by January 1, 2012. This standard addresses business policies, practices and procedures and training needed to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.
2. **Accessible Information and Communications:** These standards will address removing barriers in access to information. These standards could include information being provided in person, or through print, a website or other means.
3. **Accessible Built Environment:** These standards will address access into and within buildings and outdoor spaces. They are expected to build on Ontario's Building Code. The standards could include things like counter height, aisle and door width, parking, and signs.



4. **Employment Accessibility:** These standards will address paid employment practices for employee-employer relationships. This could include recruitment, hiring, and retention policies and practices.
5. **Accessible Transportation:** These standards will address accessible public transportation. Access to transportation is needed for going to work or school, shopping and other aspects of daily life. These standards are seen as crucial for people with disabilities.





Act Now

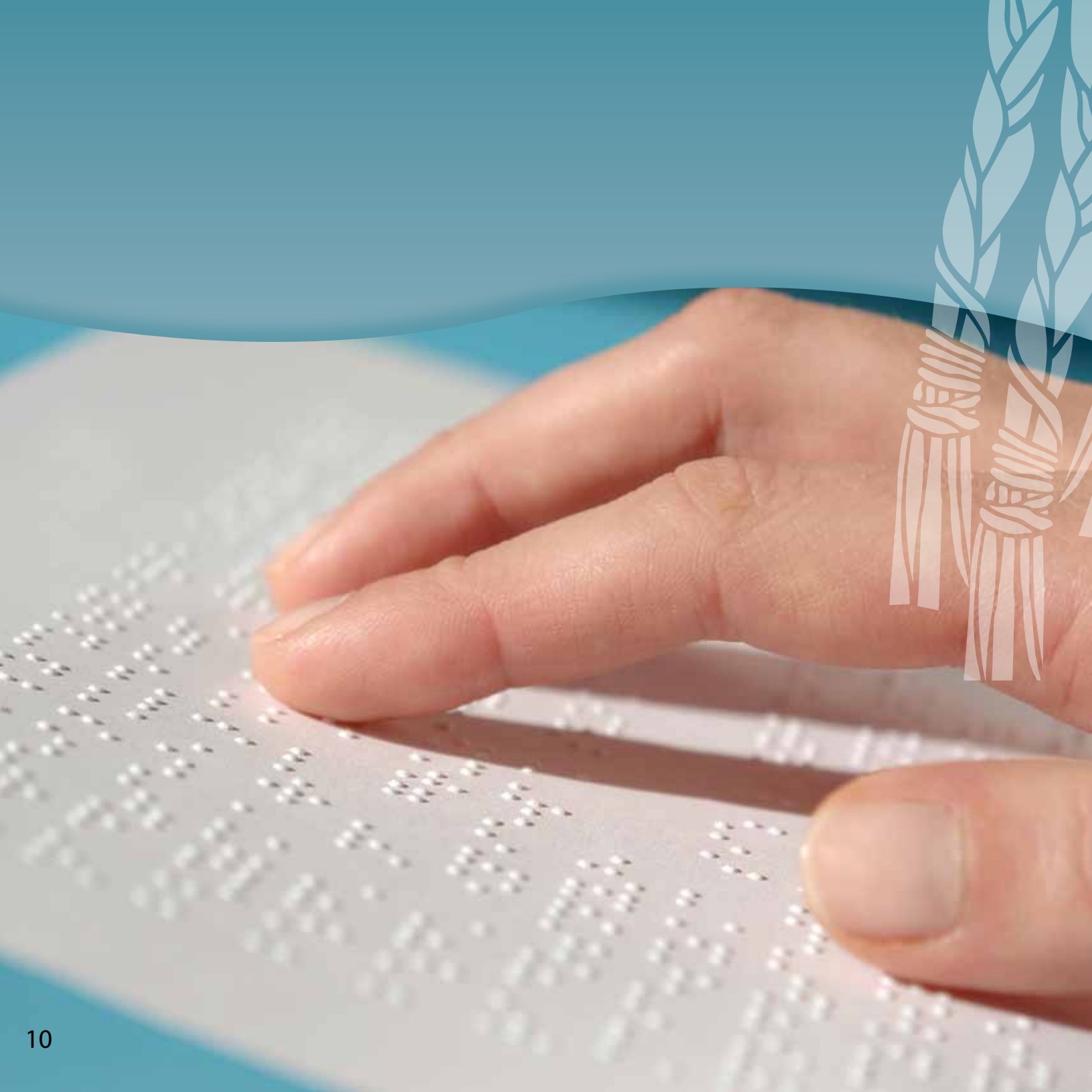
The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 lays out the goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025. To reach this goal, the Standards Development Committees are setting a series of proposed targets for what needs to happen and when. Targets are set for every 5 years or less. This allows organizations, both public and private, to spread out their accessibility investments over time. This way they can plan ahead and include capital costs in their normal business plans and strategies.

Making Standards Into Law

Once a Standards Development Committee develops a proposed standard, it is put forward for public review. After the public review, the committee considers this feedback and makes any changes. Once finalized, the proposed standard is sent to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

The Minister must decide within 90 days whether to recommend that it be enacted as a regulation in whole, in part, or with changes.

When the standard is enacted as a regulation, it becomes law.





Complying with Standard

Each standard will outline:

- who must comply with that standard, and
- when they must comply.

The Standards Development Committees may propose different requirements and timelines for different types and sizes of organizations.

In setting the standards, each committee must also take into account the economic realities and other factors.

Once the government has approved a standard and it becomes a regulation, those who are identified in the standard must comply within set timelines.

Implementing Standards

Organizations covered by each standard must file accessibility reports. There may be penalties for failing to comply with an order, filing false reports, or other infractions.

Breaking Barriers

A barrier is anything that keeps someone with a disability from taking part in the social or economic life of our communities. To make your organization or community accessible, be alert to barriers you can see as well as those you can't.

Types of Barriers:

Architectural or structural: These may result from the design of a building and can include stairs, doorways, the width of hallways and even room layout.

Information and communications: These can make it difficult for people to get or send information. Things like small print size, low colour contrast between text and background, confusing design, and the use of language that is not clear or plain can all cause problems.

Technology: Technology, or the lack of it, can prevent people from having access to information. Everyday technology like computers, telephones and other aids can all present barriers.

Systemic: These barriers can occur through policies and procedures. Any practices or rules that restrict people with disabilities can be a barrier. For example, a rule that denies access to a person with a service animal is a barrier.

Attitude: This may be the most difficult barrier to overcome. Some people don't know how to communicate with those who have disabilities. Or they simply discriminate against them because of stereotypes. They may feel that they could offend the individual with a disability by offering help or they may ignore or avoid people with disabilities altogether.





Raising Awareness

We all need to be aware of how accessible the places and services in our communities are for everyone. Raising awareness will help us to reach the goal of having accessible communities for all of us.

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario is developing and conducting programs of public education on the purpose of the act and how it will be put into practice. Once the standards become law, the Directorate will also provide tools and other resources to help organizations comply with them.

All Together

Making our communities accessible for everyone is good for all of us. Spread the word.



More Information

For more information, contact:

**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
Contact Centre (*ServiceOntario*)**

Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025

TTY: 416-325-3408 / Toll-free: 1-800-268-7095

Fax: 416-325-3407

Or, visit: www.ontario.ca/accesson and www.mcass.gov.on.ca
(click on “Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities”)

You’ll Find

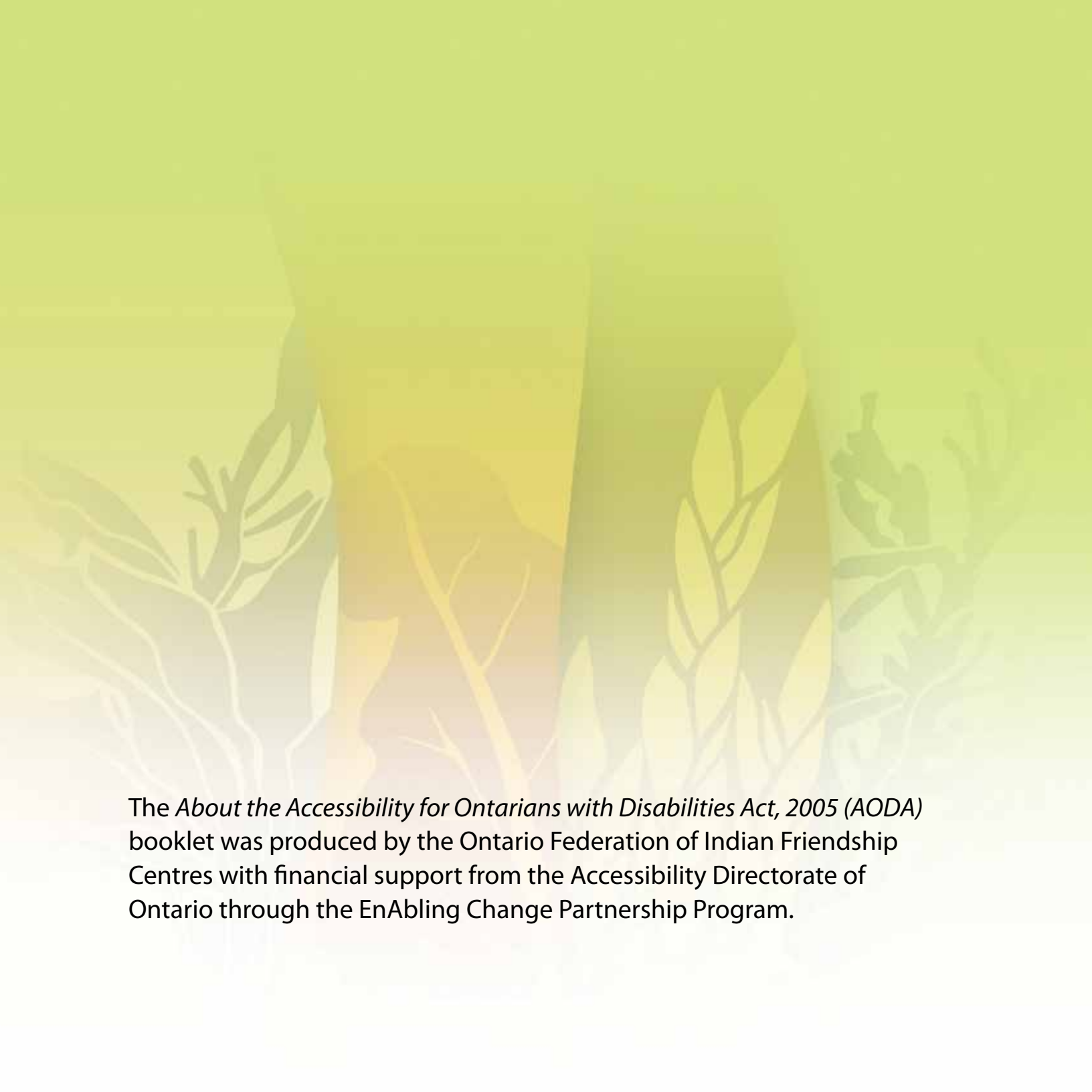
- Frequently asked questions about the AODA
- A plain language guide to the AODA
- Updates on standards development
- Announcements on public review of proposed standards
- And much more.

To Read The Act

Visit the e-laws website of the Ontario government:
www.e-laws.gov.on.ca

Let's work together to make Ontario a leader in accessibility.
It's the smart thing to do. It's the right thing to do.





The *About the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* booklet was produced by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres with financial support from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario through the EnAbling Change Partnership Program.