



Accessibility in Action

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Annual Report 2024

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Table of Contents

A message from the Minister	4
AODA towards 2025.....	6
Jobs for people with disabilities.....	10
Working for you.....	15
Building Ontario Together	28
Helping Organizations Meet Accessibility Requirements.....	34
Raising Awareness About Accessibility	39
Moving Accessibility Forward	42



A message from the Minister

It is my pleasure to table the 2024 report on the [*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)*](#).

The substantial accomplishments outlined in this report demonstrate what can be achieved when everyone works together towards an accessible and inclusive Ontario.

To this end, our government works alongside many partners to further accessibility, from individuals with lived experience, to municipalities, to businesses and other organizations, to expert committees and councils.

As a province, and as a country, we face unprecedented challenges from the tariffs put in place by Donald Trump. In the face of these uncertainties, it is particularly important to ensure that we are all working together to create a province where every Ontarian is able to fully participate.

Our actions are coordinated across the Ontario government to ensure the maximum impact. We examine all government programs and initiatives through an accessibility lens to ensure that our investments and programs are designed to produce concrete results from the outset.

A focused approach has resulted in numerous successful initiatives on many fronts. This includes major infrastructure investments in essential public institutions, including hospitals, long-term care facilities

and schools; strong efforts to ensure fair access to transit; and key programs to help people with disabilities enter the workplace and fully participate in our economy.

By creating a more accessible province, we are helping to ensure that every Ontarian is able to participate in our communities and to feel protected and safe.

In this report, you'll find examples of how these efforts are making a real difference in people's lives. From inclusive hiring programs that are opening doors to meaningful employment, to expanded services at ServiceOntario that make accessing government services easier to navigate, to accessible transit projects that are part of the most significant transit expansion in North America — these initiatives reflect our commitment to removing barriers and building a province where everyone can thrive. The progress Ontario has made is significant, and this report highlights the momentum we continue to build as we remove more and more accessibility barriers.

Promoting accessibility is a collective effort. I'd like to extend my gratitude to my colleagues throughout the government, as well as our partners across the province who work tirelessly to ensure the coordination of our far-reaching actions. Without such overwhelming dedication to making our province more inclusive, we would not have made the progress we have. And by standing together, we are showing that Ontario is strong and united.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the significant contributions that countless individual Ontarians have made to foster more accessible and welcoming communities. We have made substantial progress in making Ontario more accessible, and we are committed to protecting that progress and moving forward with targeted initiatives as we continue building a more inclusive province for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond Cho". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Raymond" and last name "Cho" clearly distinguishable.

Raymond Cho,

Minister for Seniors and Accessibility



AODA towards 2025

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) identifies, removes and prevents barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities by providing a framework to develop, implement and enforce [accessibility standards](#) in five key areas of daily living. Since the AODA was passed, the government has collaborated with the disability community, businesses and other internal and external strategic partners to develop these standards. The standards help move Ontario forward on its journey to create a more accessible and inclusive province.

Accessibility is a journey of continuous improvement. We are committed to regularly reviewing the AODA to enhance the lives of Ontarians well beyond 2025. In this process, we will explore new accessibility standards and consider amendments to existing ones, ensuring a brighter and more inclusive future for everyone.

This report is a [legislative requirement](#) and examines the implementation and effectiveness of the AODA.

Legislated Committees and Council

The AODA requires the establishment of two types of provincial advisory groups to advance accessibility in Ontario: [standards development committees \(SDCs\)](#) and the [Accessibility Standards Advisory Council \(ASAC\)](#). These advisory groups represent a variety of diverse voices and sectors, including people with disabilities, municipalities, businesses and community organizations.

Standards development committees review existing accessibility standards and recommend changes or propose new standards in their area of focus. They provide recommendations to the government on ways to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers for that sector.

Under the AODA, accessibility standards must be reviewed within five years of being adopted into regulation and again on recurring five-year cycles until all recommended standards are adopted by regulation.

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Council, whose members are appointed at the Minister's pleasure, is responsible for providing strategic advice to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility on accessibility. This includes, among other things, advising the Minister on the progress made by SDCs in developing proposed accessibility standards and in achieving the purposes of the AODA.

Making Progress through Standards Development Committees

In 2024, the [Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee](#) was convened to review the current Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) standards outlined in the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#) under the AODA. Additionally, the committee examined the 2015 barrier-free accessibility requirements outlined in the Ontario Building Code. This comprehensive review aimed to ensure that public spaces across Ontario are designed to be more inclusive and accessible for all individuals, particularly those with disabilities.

The committee released its initial recommendations report for [public consultation](#). This consultation period ran from June 5 to August 29, 2024, providing an opportunity for the public, stakeholders and advocacy groups to offer their feedback on the proposed changes. The input gathered during this period has been instrumental in shaping the committee's ongoing work.

Following the close of the public consultation, the committee resumed its meetings to carefully review the feedback received. These discussions have focused on refining the initial recommendations to better reflect the needs and concerns of the community. The committee has also been working diligently to incorporate this feedback into a final set of recommendations that will help guide future updates to accessibility standards.

The committee has indicated that it anticipates submitting its final recommendations report in early 2025. This report is expected to play a critical role in enhancing accessibility in public spaces throughout Ontario, aligning with the broader goals of the AODA to create a barrier-free province.

In addition to this work, the [Customer Service Standards Development Committee](#) submitted its initial recommendations report in April 2024. Following this, the report was made available for [public consultation](#) from October 10, 2024 to February 6, 2025. This consultation period provided an opportunity for the public, stakeholders and advocacy organizations to share their views and contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive customer service standards.

The committee is now in the process of reviewing the feedback received during the consultation period. This input will inform the development of the final recommendations report, which will be submitted to the Minister upon completion. We look forward to the committee completing its ongoing review, as this work is a vital step toward building a more accessible and inclusive Ontario — one where customer service is designed to meet the needs of everyone.

Council Achievements

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Council (ASAC) continued to provide valuable advice to the Minister, offering expertise and guidance on a wide range of topics.

This included offering advice on the development of Ontario's [Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Framework](#). The framework aims to set out risk-based rules for the transparent, responsible and accountable use of AI in the Ontario Public Service (OPS). ASAC's advice informed the [Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Directive](#) and covered topics such as understanding potential discriminatory outcomes, prioritizing plain language in disclosure about the use of public-facing AI and incorporating inclusive design into AI interfaces.

ASAC also focused on advancing accessibility in transit services to make them more inclusive for all individuals. This included advising on specialized transit integration across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and providing input on the development of policy tools and materials to ensure the needs of equity-deserving groups are considered in all stages of decision-making.

Additionally, ASAC contributed to the Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee's review to enhance usability and accessibility. They provided insights on government internship and employment opportunities to support career development. They also advised on ensuring compliance and enforcement of the AODA to promote accessibility across the province.



Jobs for people with disabilities

Ontario is working to help people with disabilities find employment through programs that target all ages and abilities.

Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH is a one-year job skills training program that provides employment experience to students with developmental disabilities who are in their final year of high school to help prepare them for the transition from school to the workplace.

The Ministry of Education's *Developmental Disabilities Pilot — Student Transitions* is an application-based pilot that provides funding to select Ontario school boards to explore the viability of establishing Project SEARCH sites in their communities and, where viable, to implement them.

In the 2024–25 school year, the [Ministry of Education](#) provided funding of \$478,000 to increase the number of transition/work experience program sites through Project SEARCH for high-functioning students with developmental disabilities. The ministry also provided funding to five additional school boards, who had not previously received funding, to explore the program's viability in their communities.

In addition, the ministry provided funding for start-up costs to other school boards that had completed their exploration phase, had purchased a program licence and were moving to implementation.

Since 2021–22, the *Developmental Disabilities Pilot: Student Transitions* has supported school boards to start 20 transition/work experience program sites in their communities, including eight that are starting in September 2025. Once a site is established, it continues to serve an average of seven students per year, according to Project SEARCH Canada data.

Global data shows that 70% of graduates worldwide find immediate employment following graduation from Project SEARCH.

Better Jobs Ontario

The [Better Jobs Ontario](#) program provides eligible and suitable individuals with financial assistance for up to 52 weeks to help them find employment in high-demand jobs in Ontario. Individuals would apply to receive up to \$28,000 for training-related costs and financial supports for tuition, books, other instructional costs, transportation and basic living allowances. Additional funding was available for disability-related support and dependant care. If required, people with disabilities may have received an accommodation that allows them to extend their participation in the program.

In 2023–24, of the more than 3,300 new clients enrolled in the program, 837 individuals (24.7%) self-identified as having a disability. Ontario invested more than \$72 million in the program, which included the College Tuition Differential (a transfer payment made directly to publicly funded colleges to assist with the operational cost of delivering services not covered by the tuition paid by Better Jobs Ontario clients).

Skills Development Fund

The [Skills Development Fund Training Stream](#) offers funding to organizations for innovative projects that address challenges to hiring, training or retaining workers to drive Ontario's economic growth.

One of the program's main objectives is to support workers and job seekers who face additional barriers to employment by creating pathways into meaningful careers. Through the Skills Development Fund Training Stream, projects have included specialized training for people with disabilities to help them acquire in-demand skills in the labour market. Accessibility accommodations are also provided, ensuring that training materials and technologies are adapted to meet the needs of all participants.

In Round 4 of the Skills Development Fund Training stream, \$88 million was invested in 55 projects whose participants included people with disabilities. Funding recipients included:

- **Geneva Centre for Autism:** received \$848,890 for the *Autism Workforce Development Hub Phase 2 project*, to support labour market sustainability and resilience by bridging the gap between the knowledge and skills of autistic job seekers and the workforce development needs of employers. The project aimed to develop a cycle of outreach, training, individualized consulting, jobmatching and supported job placements for participants in the Toronto area.
- **Habitat for Humanity Northumberland:** received \$665,880 for the *Building Skills to Build Homes* program offering hands-on experience in the basics of interior finishing through home construction. Following the six-week training period, the participants, who included people with disabilities, completed a short-term paid job placement.
- **Melly's Workplace:** received \$595,850 for their *Raising the Bar Year 2* program which prepared adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities for meaningful, sustainable employment in the community. Participants were given job skills training, practical experience working at a café, employment advocacy, plus mentorship and on-the-job coaching.

- **South Asian Autism Awareness Centre:** received \$622,665 for *The Goodness Gift project*, which supported autistic and neurodiverse youth in Scarborough over a year to address their employment challenges through targeted training and employment opportunities in e-commerce, retail and logistics.

Supported Employment

The Supported Employment program is designed for individuals who face complex barriers to employment because of a disability. These additional barriers may include some combination of limited or interrupted labour market experience, low levels of education or literacy and other challenging life circumstances — including poverty or lack of family/parental support. The program offers a range of services and opportunities for people with disabilities to prepare for and secure employment. The program also provides a wide range of services for employers to address staffing and skills needs through matches with suitably skilled people with disabilities. Individuals must self-identify as a person with a disability to be eligible for Supported Employment.

In 2023–24, Ontario invested \$2 million in the program.

Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection Summer Programs

The [Youth Job Connection](#) and [Youth Job Connection Summer](#) programs offer young people experiencing multiple and/or complex barriers — including those with disabilities — ways to find employment beyond traditional job search and placement opportunities by providing more intensive supports.

The Youth Job Connection program serves Ontario youth (15 to 29 years old) who are not working, in school or in training.

The Youth Job Connection Summer program provides summer, part-time and after-school job opportunities to Ontario students (15 to 18 years old) — particularly those facing challenging life circumstances who may need support transitioning between school and work.

In 2023–24, Ontario invested approximately \$26 million in Youth Job Connection and \$5 million in Youth Job Connection Summer. More than 5,900 new clients participated in the Youth Job Connection program at that time and 1,607 (27%) self-identified as having a disability. Of the more than 3,000 new clients in the Youth Job Connection Summer program, 476 (16%) self-identified as having a disability.

Women's Economic Security Program

Ontario's [Women's Economic Security Program](#) supports projects that provide new opportunities for low-income women — including women with disabilities — to help them gain the skills, knowledge and experience they need to find a job or start a business and achieve financial independence. Women with disabilities who wish to apply to the training programs are eligible for accommodations and other support to enable them to participate.

In 2024–25, Ontario announced a new investment of up to \$26.7 million over three years to support the program in 25 communities across the province. This includes up to \$11.7 million through the bilateral agreement with the federal government on the [National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence](#).



Working for you

Ontario supports and promotes numerous programs and initiatives focused on helping people, communities and organizations. Through these targeted programs, the province is helping people with disabilities and seniors stay independent, safe, active and socially connected. By promoting and providing programs and services, we're helping to create a more accessible and inclusive Ontario for people of all ages and abilities.

Home, Community and Workplace

Abilities Centre

[The Abilities Centre](#) in Whitby is a community hub that delivers inclusive programming to help build life skills and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, while also promoting the value of inclusive hiring to employers. In 2024–25, Ontario invested more than \$3.1 million in the Abilities Centre to support a variety of programs for people with disabilities and a small Partner Facility Renewal project. Programs included LEAD ON which helps organizations become more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities, as well as Abilities Centre Enterprises, which offers skills development to help participants prepare for work in their communities and achieve their economic goals.

Age-Friendly Communities Program

[The Age-Friendly Communities program](#) supports municipalities and community organizations in creating age-friendly, inclusive and accessible communities across our province. As part of this initiative, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility funds the [Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Outreach program](#) (managed by the [Centre for Studies in Aging and Health](#), in partnership with Queen's University) and provides tools that foster and promote inclusive community planning and implementation. In 2023–2024, this outreach provided services or training to 4,043 participants.

Home and Vehicle Modification Program

The [Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility](#) provides funding for the [Home and Vehicle Modification Program](#) run by March of Dimes Canada. This program helps eligible individuals with mobility restrictions to continue living safely in their homes, participate in their communities and avoid job loss. It is intended to help eligible adults and children most in need of assistance. By making modifications to their homes or vehicles, people with disabilities can live safer, more independent and comfortable everyday lives. Eligible individuals may receive a grant of up to \$15,000 for home modifications and/or up to \$15,000 for vehicle modifications.

Eligible home modifications include ramps, widening of doors, stairway lifts and bathtub safety rails. Modifications to vehicles include transferable equipment, such as lifts and hand controls, garage door remote controls and specialized seating.

The ministry has invested \$46.9 million in the program over three years, starting in 2022–23. In 2024–25, it invested \$15.6 million. In 2023–24, there were 2,243 grants issued through the program.

EnAbling Change Program

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility provided funding to not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, industry associations and professional associations across a range of sectors through the [EnAbling Change Program](#). This program educated their stakeholders and members about accessibility, supported regulatory compliance with the AODA and drove cultural awareness about the value and benefits of accessibility.

From 1999 to 2024, the EnAbling Change Program supported more than 265 projects across Ontario. In 2024–25, the ministry invested approximately \$1.5 million in the program to support 19 innovative projects.

The [19 recipients of the 2024–25 program](#) include:

- Abilities Centre
- Ampere (formerly Pinnguaq Association)
- Balance for Blind Adults
- Canadian Abilities Foundation
- Centre for Independent Living in Toronto
- Christie Lake Kids
- City of Oshawa
- City of Vaughan
- County of Brant
- Epilepsy Toronto
- Golf Association of Ontario
- Kerry's Place Autism Services
- Ottawa Foyers Partage
- ParaSport Ontario
- Peel Career Assessment Services Inc.
- Rick Hansen Foundation
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
- Town of Amherstburg
- University of Western Ontario

2024–25 project highlights

Ampere (formerly Pinnguaq Association)

The ministry provided Ampere (formerly Pinnguaq Association) with up to \$140,990 to continue the development and distribution of a series of workshops and online support materials aimed at increasing connections to job opportunities for people with disabilities in restaurant/food service, retail and agriculture. The program is offered in various communities, including Kawartha Lakes, Curve Lake First Nation, Georgina Island First Nation, Rama First Nation, Port Perry, Scugog, Mushekegowuk and Moose Factory. It focuses on specific challenges faced by small and rural communities, including supporting people with disabilities and improving accessibility.

City of Vaughan

The ministry provided the City of Vaughan with up to \$66,925 to provide opportunities for meaningful employment in recreational roles for youth with disabilities, helping to increase their employment rates. The city will create tools and resources specifically designed for youth, including practical training and preparing participants for the workforce. The project will include youth with disabilities in the development phase.

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

The ministry provided the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority with up to \$132,841 to increase the accessibility of nature-based programs delivered throughout the GTA and beyond. This project is intended to address barriers that seniors and people with disabilities face — including those with developmental disabilities and autism — by developing new outdoor nature programs, as well as guidelines and training on best practices that will meet their diverse needs and help facilitate a connection to nature.

Inclusive Community Grants Program

The [Inclusive Community Grants Program](#) helped communities become more inclusive and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

The program provided municipalities, non-profit organizations and Indigenous communities with grants of up to \$60,000 for local projects that helped older residents and people with disabilities participate in community life. From 2020, when the Inclusive Community Grants Program was created, until 2024, the ministry provided almost \$6 million to support 125 projects promoting inclusivity and accessibility across the province.

The [38 recipients of the 2024–25 program](#) include:

- Aboriginal Experiences, Arts and Culture
- Buckhorn Community Centre & Athletic Association
- City of Brampton
- City of Cambridge
- City of Greater Sudbury
- City of Oshawa
- City of Richmond Hill
- City of Temiskaming Shores
- City of Timmins
- Clarington Public Library
- Crossing All Bridges Learning Centre
- Eganville & District Senior Citizens' Needs Association
- Elgin County Public Library Board
- Heartland Forest Nature
- Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation
- Mattagami Region Conservation Authority
- Municipality of Clarington
- Municipality of Port Hope
- Municipality of St.-Charles
- Ottawa Community Housing Foundation

- Port Stanley Village Association Inc.
- St. Catharines Public Library Board
- Tay Valley Township
- The Nation Municipality
- Town of Ajax
- Town of Carleton Place
- Town of Espanola
- Town of Gravenhurst
- Town of Pelham
- Town of Plympton-Wyoming
- Town of Smooth Rock Falls
- Township of Front of Yonge
- Township of North Frontenac
- Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers
- Township of Terrace Bay
- Township of Tiny
- Township of Uxbridge
- Townships of Head, Clara and Maria.

2024–25 project highlights

City of Brampton

The ministry provided the City of Brampton with up to \$60,000 to install hearing loops in community rooms at recreation centres, at service counters and in meeting rooms, including Council Chambers. Hearing loops are an assistive listening system that transmit audio directly to users' hearing aids or cochlear implants, thus cutting out background noise. This will help community members who have hearing loss to participate in community events and access information and services from the City of Brampton more easily.

The Nation Municipality

The ministry provided the Nation Municipality with up to \$22,489 to pave paths within Marcel Legault Park, ensuring safe and accessible recreational spaces. These pathways will seamlessly connect various sections of the park, helping to make the park open to everyone.

Town of Espanola

The ministry provided the Town of Espanola with up to \$34,380 to implement recommendations from their Age-Friendly Action Plan to provide accessible outdoor activities and install seating and sun coverings at Algoma Park to promote recreation and create a welcoming inclusive space.

More Accessible Provincial Parks

Ontario is working to make [provincial parks](#) more inclusive and welcoming for everyone. By encouraging a wider range of projects and investing in various accessibility enhancements, the overall park experience can be improved for people with disabilities and diverse needs.

Accessibility improvements are being made across many areas of the parks. These include:

- Minor building upgrades, such as automatic door openers and wider doorways, to provide easier access for people with disabilities.
- New decks, ramps and accessible toilets have been added within existing shower areas.
- Accessible kayaks and canoes are being introduced, as well as floating and all-terrain wheelchairs to enhance mobility across different terrains.
- Trails are being widened and accessible trails are being extended. Trail surfaces have been leveled and smoothed with aggregate for better accessibility.

- Mobi-mats are being placed along paths to provide easier travel for all users.
- New accessible swing sets and spinners are being installed for all ages.
- Campgrounds are also becoming more accessible.
 - New docks are being built with enhanced handrails and grips for added safety.
 - Comfort stations are being upgraded.
 - Ramps are being added to allow easier access into canoes, kayaks and boats.

There were 65 accessibility projects completed in 2024–25 in parks across the province. Projects included all-terrain wheelchairs at Blue Lake and Bonnechere, a mobi-mat and beach wheelchair at Restoule, an accessible swing set at Fushimi Lake, an accessible playground at Windy Lake and an accessible washroom and trail at Bon Echo.

Partner Facility Renewal Program

Ontario invests annually in accessibility projects as part of the [Partner Facility Renewal Program](#), which supports building upgrades to maintain and modernize facilities that provide vital community programs and services. In 2024–25, Ontario invested more than \$21.6 million in the program for [social service facilities](#), including women's shelters and agency offices. This helped make those spaces more accessible by funding projects such as ramps, railings, automatic doors and other upgrades.

Education

Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities

The [Ministry of Education](#) is working to help prevent and remove barriers for students with disabilities through its Removing Barriers for Students with Disabilities fund. As part of the Priorities and Partnerships Funding, the ministry provided \$6 million in application-based funding to school boards for the 2024–25 school year, the second year of the initiative.

In the 2024–25 application cycle, 47 projects were selected for funding across 33 school boards. School board projects focused on expanding opportunities for students with disabilities to support their transition from primary to secondary schools, as well as provide support with community services and employment. They also aimed to raise awareness among educators and students about the importance of accessible sport for students with disabilities.

Projects also included training educators to support student achievement and well-being by addressing ableism and integrating more inclusive ways of teaching. This included the use of principles of Universal Design for Learning, which guides instruction to accommodate learning differences for everyone. Additional projects included a framework with key components of literacy instruction for students with complex communication needs.

Other projects focused on developing targeted training, resources and supports to help educators create inclusive learning environments, confidently apply their knowledge in the classroom and address student challenges while fostering an inclusive culture and diversity in schools.

Supporting Students through the Geneva Centre for Autism

The Ministry of Education has supported the [Geneva Centre for Autism](#) since 2005 by funding innovative training for classroom educators. The ministry committed \$4.5 million in the 2024–25 school year to the centre to help educators support autistic students.

The centre offers a variety of online and real-time training courses in Autism Spectrum Disorder and Applied Behavioural Analysis. These courses help educators better understand and address the needs of their autistic students. Key courses include core teaching strategies, play-based learning, Applied Behavioural Analysis for educators, functional behavioral assessment, a 40-hour Registered Behavior Technician training course and strategies for supporting students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

In addition, the Enhanced Autism Training Program provides a two-part training package at beginner and advanced levels — including practical sessions to reinforce learning.

Supporting Postsecondary Students

Since 2018, Ontario has invested millions of dollars to improve accessibility in postsecondary schools across the province.

In 2024–25, the [Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security](#) invested more than \$195 million in retrofits, repairs and renewals at Ontario college and university campuses, including some AODA-related improvements. In addition, the ministry invested \$1.5 million in 2024–25 to support Indigenous Institutes in repairing and modernizing their facilities — including improvements to remove accessibility barriers.

The ministry also provides approximately \$55 million annually in special purpose grants to support postsecondary students with disabilities — including providing funding for students with disabilities in publicly assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous institutes. These grants support a range of initiatives, including an Accessibility Fund for Students with Disabilities, Support for Apprentices with Disabilities and the Indigenous Institutes Accessibility Fund for Learners.

The ministry also provides support directly to postsecondary students with disabilities through components of the [Ontario Student Assistance Program \(OSAP\)](#). In the 2024–25 fiscal year, the ministry provided almost \$4.2 million in the form of bursaries to help students with disability-related educational costs. Almost \$3 million of that funding was delivered to assist eligible students with educational costs for disability-related services and equipment, such as braille displays and assistive technology software.

In 2023–24, special purpose grants provided supports to over 112,500 students with disabilities at publicly assisted colleges and universities, as well as 760 students at Indigenous institutes.

Health

Assistive Devices Program

In 2024–25, Ontario invested more than \$650 million in the [Assistive Devices Program](#). This program supports more than 475,000 Ontarians with disabilities annually by providing wheelchairs, hearing aids, diabetic equipment and supplies, and more.

Home Care

[Home care services](#) support people of all ages who require care in their home, at school or in the community. Many services can help seniors and people with complex medical conditions live in their homes for as long as possible.

In the 2022 Budget, the government announced a \$1 billion investment over three years to get more people connected to care in the comfort of their home and community.

In the following year, the government accelerated investments in home care to bring funding up to \$569 million — including nearly \$300 million to support wage increases to stabilize the home and community care workforce.

In the [2024 Budget](#), the government committed to investing an additional \$2 billion over three years to boost the accelerated \$1 billion committed in 2023. This funding supports earlier investments to increase compensation for personal support workers, nurses and other frontline staff and stabilize expanded services.

This funding helped to improve community care by providing supports for the workforce to strengthen adult day programs, meal services, transportation and assisted living services. Having strong home and community care is a key part of the government's plan for connected and convenient care to keep people healthy and in the comfort of their homes.

Government Services and Supports

Changes to the Ontario Disability Support Program

Following the rate increases in 2022 and 2023, Ontario increased income support rates for the [Ontario Disability Support Program \(ODSP\)](#) by 4.5% in July 2024 — in line with inflation. This brought the total increase in ODSP rates to 17% in less than 24 months.

The government also continued to help people with disabilities make choices for themselves and their families without fear of losing their ODSP health benefits. If ODSP recipients are able and choose to work, the government has continued to exempt 100% of the first \$1,000 they earn in a month — so that this income will not cause any reduction in their ODSP payments. In February 2023, the government raised this earned income exemption threshold for people with disabilities to \$1,000 from \$200 — a 400% increase. Additionally, there continues to be a 25% exemption of earnings after the first \$1,000. When ODSP recipients earn enough income from employment and no longer require ODSP, the program may continue to provide coverage for essential benefits, such as prescription drugs and dental care, for them and their children.

More Accessible Government Services

Ontario introduced its [Digital Accessibility Standard](#) in December 2023 to help Ontario Public Service (OPS) staff — especially ministry teams who deliver products and services — identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities when interacting with digital products and digitally-enabled services. The standard:

- is a set of requirements and expectations for designing, developing and delivering accessible digital products to support inclusively designed digital services
- supports staff by streamlining practices and processes to meet and exceed current accessibility requirements
- applies to all OPS websites, web applications, mobile applications and relevant digital files (including Word and PowerPoint) created on or after September 1, 2024.

Enhancing ServiceOntario for Better Service

Over the past year, [ServiceOntario](#) has introduced many improvements to make their services more accessible and convenient for everyone, including people with disabilities.

Expanding services

- **Expanding the availability of health card services:** In the past, most ServiceOntario centres could complete basic health card transactions. In 2024–2025, Ontario completed the expansion of specialty in-person health card services to all ServiceOntario centres across the province. For example, these specialty services include registrations for returning residents and special registrations for Ontarians experiencing homelessness. Health card service expansion improves accessibility for Ontarians — including people with disabilities — by helping them access critical health card services within their communities.
- **Online Child Health Card renewal:** Parents and guardians now have the option to [renew their child's health card online](#). Before this service was launched in 2024, health cards for children could only be renewed by sending an application through the mail or by visiting a ServiceOntario location in person. This online capability improves accessibility and saves time and money for parents and guardians.
- **Appointment booking:** This feature enables Ontarians to schedule their in-person visits to a ServiceOntario centre. With expansion to all the busiest locations completed in 2024, appointments can be booked (by phone or online) for the completion of multiple services all in a single appointment, for an individual or for the whole family. Those with accessibility needs can identify them ahead of the appointment so that any necessary preparations can be made in advance.

Improving locations

- **Deskside workstations:** In a pilot project, ServiceOntario introduced a new workstation that features a lower level counter to improve the in-person experience for seniors and those with accessibility needs. The deskside workstations are now considered a design requirement for all new service centres.



Building Ontario Together

Transit Investments

The Ontario government is investing \$70 billion to build and expand public transit. Transit funding programs require that any transit vehicles purchased must be accessible, ensuring better public transportation access for people with disabilities throughout Ontario. As a result, 99.7% of conventional transit buses across the province are accessible.

[The Ministry of Transportation](#) continues to ensure transportation vehicles, platforms, docks and other Ontario government transit-related buildings and structures meet the requirements under the [Ontario Building Code](#) by incorporating accessibility features.

[GO Transit](#) continues to prioritize accessibility for customers with disabilities. Accessibility improvements include:

- All GO Transit buses are accessible.
- GO Transit trains are accessible with an accessible coach forming part of each train (with 68 accessible trainsets used for GO service daily).

- Most GO rail stations and bus stops are accessible, with ongoing improvements being made to improve accessibility. By 2024, 67 out of 69 existing GO stations were accessible and all planned new stations will also be accessible.

Throughout 2024, Ontario marked several significant milestones in improving accessibility and transit services by:

- Breaking ground on [three stations on the Ontario Line](#) (with construction starting on King-Bathurst, Queen-Spadina and Moss Park Stations).
- Announcing [two accessible transit projects](#) in Hamilton that included the purchase of up to 15 accessible transit vehicles and four accessible supervisor vehicles with advanced technology for emergencies. This project is supported by a combined investment of more than \$6 million through the federal, provincial and municipal governments.
- Investing [\\$758 million for the TTC to purchase 55 Line 2 subway cars](#) as part of the New Deal for Toronto (which involved federal and provincial governments matching investments to support this critical public transit project).
- Making [further progress on the Northlander passenger train](#) by awarding a contract for platform reconstruction and installation of pre-manufactured shelters for train stops. In each location, crews will install raised concrete platforms with improved accessibility, lighting and signage. The province also unveiled the new exterior design of the Northlander. The new fully accessible trains will feature built-in wheelchair lifts, mobility aid storage spaces, galley-style food services, Wi-Fi and fully accessible washrooms. The Northlander is expected to be in service by 2026 and will connect Timmins and Toronto.

Ontario is also helping to make transportation and transit services more accessible, convenient and safe across the province. Ministry of Transportation initiatives include:

- Having accessible washrooms at all new rest areas and ONroute centres.
- Ensuring accessible pedestrian signals in new highway infrastructure.
- Having traffic control signals with accessible pedestrian signal features inspected every six months to ensure signal operations are in compliance with Ministry of Transportation standards and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR).
- Building AODA-compliant signalized intersections that meet accessibility requirements under the IASR's [Design of Public Spaces standards](#). These intersections address the needs of pedestrians with cognitive and/or sensory disabilities, and enhance the safety, mobility and independence of Ontarians with disabilities. The work includes installing accessible pedestrian signals, tactile features, audible push buttons and dropped curbs. Since 2018, the Ministry of Transportation has completed more than 150 AODA-compliant signalized intersections and more are planned for the future.

In addition to improving infrastructure, work is also being done by [Metrolinx](#) to improve transit for people with disabilities. Metrolinx is an agency of the Government of Ontario that was created to improve the coordination and integration of transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Metrolinx places a high priority on ensuring that everyone — regardless of age or ability — has full access to transit services. It does ongoing work to improve accessibility through its [Accessibility Advisory Committee](#). This committee provides advice and input to Metrolinx staff on the development and implementation of accessibility plans, as well as on significant new developments, policies, issues or changes that will affect customers with disabilities. Members are selected from across the region and represent a cross-section of people with diverse disabilities and travel needs, as well as various modes of transportation, including bus, rail and related transit agencies.

In 2024, the Advisory Committee was instrumental in the development of the [Metrolinx 2025–2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#), which also helps set the direction for upcoming Annual Public Meetings and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Status Reports.

Metrolinx has also established programs and partnerships with various partners to improve accessibility, including:

- [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program](#): this program supports people with particular disabilities that may not be immediately visible and is offered on GO Transit and UP Express. As part of the program, customers can choose to wear a sunflower pin as a subtle way of letting staff know that they have an invisible disability and may require additional support, assistance or a bit more time. Metrolinx is the first public transit agency in North America to adopt the Sunflower program.
- [AccessNow](#): this app provides accessibility information to make trip planning easier for transit riders. Metrolinx's presence on AccessNow lets transit riders know what to expect when visiting a GO or UP Express station through detailed accessibility listings and photos.

Ontario's Building Code

Ontario's [Building Code](#) supports increased accessibility across the province by promoting high standards for barrier-free accessibility, resulting in more accessible spaces and buildings being constructed. For example, the code requires a barrier-free path of travel in 15% of new units in multi-unit residential buildings — contributing to improved design standards. There are also requirements for power door openers to be provided at entrances to a broader range of buildings, as well as at entrances to barrier-free washrooms and common rooms in multi-unit residential buildings.

Accessibility requirements apply to new construction and significant renovations, working in conjunction with the [Design of Public Spaces Standard](#). This includes all new and renovated hospitals, long-term care homes, courthouses, schools, colleges, universities and provincial buildings.

The 2024 edition of the Ontario Building Code, which came into force on January 1, 2025, provides for further enhancement of accessibility requirements. The 2024 code changes strengthen accessibility provisions by aligning them with accessibility requirements in the 2020 National Construction Codes, further enhancing Ontario's leading standards for accessibility.

Ontario continues to contribute to the development of a pan-Canadian approach to removing barriers for people with disabilities. Recommendations for new priorities to help improve accessibility are currently being developed by the Design of Public Spaces Standards Development Committee. Recommendations related to Ontario's Building Code will be considered through the code change review process.

In 2024, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing held eight regional in-person training sessions across Ontario to inform code users about significant new changes to the 2024 Ontario Building Code — including enhancements to barrier-free accessibility requirements.

Improving Evacuation Procedures

In addition to enhancements to the Building Code, the government is acting on its commitment to improve evacuation for people with disabilities in government-owned buildings. Work to date includes ensuring government-owned buildings have evacuation and fire safety plans that consider the needs of people with disabilities. Further work is being informed by extensive consultations with a variety of safety partners across government.

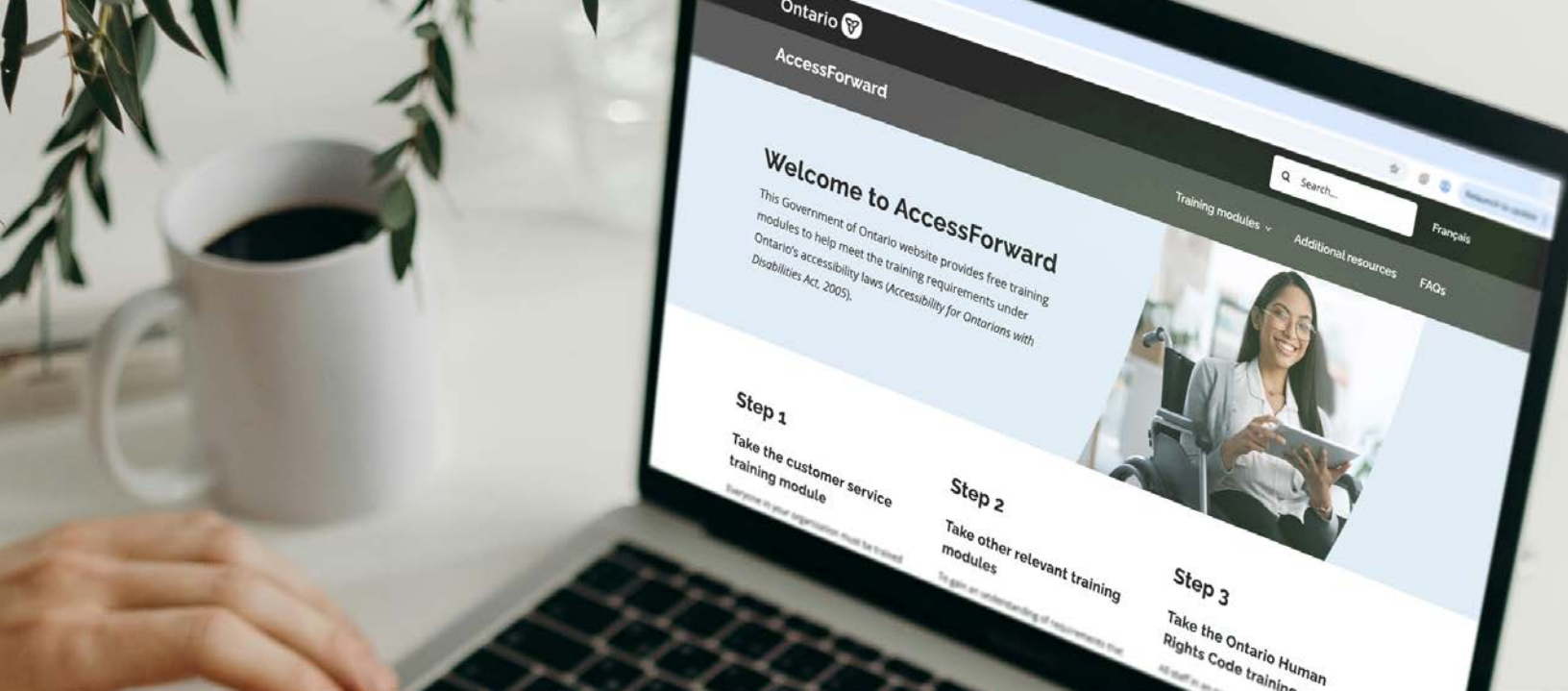
Investing in Ontario's Infrastructure

Ontario is investing \$107 million over five years (from 2022 to 2027) to improve accessibility in provincial government buildings through [Infrastructure Ontario](#) — a provincial agency that supports the Ontario government's efforts to modernize and maximize public infrastructure and real estate. On behalf of the [Ministry of Infrastructure](#), Infrastructure Ontario will undertake 372 accessibility projects across 584 buildings by 2026–2027 — focusing on key features such as exterior access ramps.

For 2024–25, \$46.2 million is being invested in 76 projects. The budgets for 2025–26 and 2026–27 remain at \$25 million each, with 196 projects in the planning or construction phase.

School Renewal and Repair

The [Ministry of Education](#) provides ongoing funding to school boards to address school renewal needs. Each year, school boards are allocated approximately \$1.4 billion to repair and improve school buildings and sites. A portion of this investment can be used to improve accessibility in schools by installing items such as elevators and ramps.



Helping Organizations Meet Accessibility Requirements

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility oversees compliance with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA), and the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) (IASR). The ministry works to help ensure approximately 444,000 organizations that provide goods, services or facilities to the public fulfill their obligations under the act.

Building Awareness

Each year, the ministry conducts targeted outreach and education campaigns to increase awareness of provincial accessibility laws and requirements. Additionally, ministry employees make presentations at prominent industry, stakeholder and association events to promote the economic and social benefits of accessibility.

The ministry also regularly publishes the [AODA Toolbox](#), an e-newsletter with relevant resources and practical tips that organizations can use to become more accessible and better understand the overall benefits of accessibility. In 2024, the

ministry published five editions of the AODA Toolbox that included timely updates, key issues, resources and success stories. Each of these editions were distributed to the AODA Toolbox's more than 9,000 subscribers.

Ensuring Compliance

The ministry is responsible for ensuring compliance with accessibility standards and other requirements under the AODA. It uses a modern regulatory approach, working directly with organizations to help them understand their obligations under Ontario's accessibility legislation, requiring them to submit compliance reports, auditing and inspecting organizations to verify they are following requirements and enforcing requirements where appropriate.

2024: Compliance and Enforcement Activities

Self-certified accessibility compliance reporting

The AODA and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) establish that certain organizations are required to submit accessibility compliance reports. These include:

- businesses and non profit organizations with 20 or more employees
- all designated public sector organizations
- the Ontario Public Service (Government of Ontario)
- the Legislative Assembly.

These organizations are asked to confirm that they have met their accessibility requirements by answering various questions. As outlined in the AODA, each organization must make its report available to the public.

Each sector has a different schedule to submit these reports:

- provincial government entities, inclusive of the Ontario Public Service and the Legislative Assembly, report **every year**
- all designated public sector organizations are required to report **every two years**
- all private and business/non-profit sector organizations with 20 or more employees are required to report **every three years**.

Audits and Inspections

The ministry ensures compliance with the AODA and its standards proactively through desk audits and on-site inspections. Compliance Officers assess most of the over 200 requirements under the AODA by auditing organizations and reviewing documents, such as reports, policies, plans and records. Some requirements, including assessing beach access, sidewalk curbs and ramps, require specific technical expertise or on-site inspection to ensure inclusivity and to protect the health and safety of people with disabilities.

In 2024, the ministry increased its compliance activities by conducting inspections focused on specific requirements for obligated ferries operating in Ontario. Criteria under the Design of Public Spaces Standards, such as exterior paths of travel, ramps and trails for large organizations, were also assessed.

The ministry also continued to expand its audit activities by providing compliance assurance for key accessibility requirements and is on track to assess all auditable requirements by 2025.

The ministry conducts two types of audits to oversee compliance with the AODA:

1. **Attestation audits** are used to facilitate accessibility compliance reporting among organizations that had:
 - Reported previously but failed to meet the most recent reporting deadline.
 - Submitted a report indicating non-compliance.
 - Never filed in the past.

2. **Verification audits** are used to ensure that organizations that indicated compliance in their report are, in fact, meeting requirements. Verification audits are conducted every year to obtain and verify evidence of compliance. These audits may vary in scope. For example, some target a few requirements in one standard, while others are more comprehensive and target numerous requirements across multiple standards. More comprehensive audits take longer to complete, resulting in some fluctuation in the number of audits completed from year to year.

In 2024, the ministry launched:

- 1,238 attestation audits (904 were completed by December 31, 2024).
- 807 verification audits (704 were completed by December 31, 2024).

The annual number of audits corresponds to the reporting schedule for organizations. All types of organizations, including businesses and non-profits, were required to submit an accessibility compliance report in 2023.

An additional 247 audits carried over from previous years were also completed. Of this group, 167 were verification audits and 80 were attestation audits.

In total, 871 verification audits were completed in 2024. These audits assessed requirements in the AODA, the General Requirements of the IASR, as well as the Customer Service, Information and Communications, Transportation, Employment and Design of Public Spaces standards.

The results of the 871 completed verification audits break down as follows:

- 97 designated public sector audits were conducted. These covered 85 requirements, involving 96 organizations (with one organization being audited twice).
 - The audits revealed that designated public sector organizations did well in several areas — particularly in ensuring accessible school transportation services, acquiring necessary goods and services and providing accessible emergency information.

- The audits also identified challenges in some areas — record keeping related to accessibility awareness training for educators, gaps in providing educators with the necessary training and poor explanations for why accessible goods and services could not be provided.
- 772 business audits were conducted. These covered 75 requirements, involving 769 business and non-profit organizations (with three organizations being audited twice).
 - The audits revealed that business and non-profit organizations did well in several areas — particularly in establishing and sharing accessibility policies, informing new employees of supports and providing ways to provide accessible feedback.
 - The audits also identified some challenges related to the process for documenting individual accommodation plans, and in ensuring adequate accessible parking options.
- Two audits were conducted covering 36 requirements for the Ontario Public Service.

Enforcement

The ministry works to ensure obligated organizations comply with the AODA and its standards through audits, on-site inspections and a range of compliance and enforcement tools.

When audited organizations are found to be non-compliant, the ministry works with them to establish compliance before considering enforcement measures.

For organizations that do not engage proactively with the ministry or avoid meeting their legal obligations, a range of escalated enforcement actions may be used. This includes Director's Orders, monetary penalties and prosecutions. In 2024, 99% of verification audits were resolved as compliant. Nineteen Director's Orders and one Director's Order with Administrative Penalties were issued to achieve compliance.



Raising Awareness About Accessibility

Increasing awareness of Ontario's accessibility standards helps organizations reduce barriers for people with disabilities. In 2024, the ministry continued to provide targeted information to organizations across all sectors on how to promote accessibility both within and outside their organization, as well as help them meet their accessibility requirements. Outreach activities included a variety of initiatives: publishing stakeholder e-newsletters, creating and distributing helpful resources and inspiring success stories, and promoting [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) in October.

Light it Up! for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

On October 17, 2024, Ontario participated in [Light It Up! For NDEAM](#), an annual event led by the [Ontario Disability Employment Network \(ODEN\)](#) that lights up buildings in blue and purple across the country to help raise awareness about the many benefits of inclusive hiring. This was the third year the Ontario government participated in this

event that is held during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Several provincial government buildings were illuminated in support of the event, including: the Lincoln Alexander Building in Orillia, Robinson Place in Peterborough, Garden City Tower in St. Catharines and 1 Stone Road in Guelph.

Helping Make Municipalities More Accessible

The Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, Raymond Cho, promoted government programs and initiatives that are helping make communities more inclusive through partnerships with municipalities and other key stakeholders at various important conferences in 2024. Examples include the:

- Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference (January 21–23)
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference (August 18–21).

In addition, accessibility-related grants and partnership programs were also strongly promoted to municipalities and other key stakeholders. Examples include:

- Inclusive Community Grants 2023–24 recipients — [news release](#) (March 15)
- EnAbling Change Program 2023–24 recipients — [news release](#) (May 21)
- Inclusive Community Grants 2024–25 recipients — [news release](#) (September 26).

Celebrating and Recognizing People with Disabilities and Leaders in Accessibility

Throughout the year, Minister Cho raised awareness about the benefits of inclusion by celebrating accessibility leaders and reinforcing the government's commitment to making Ontario more accessible. Examples include:

- National AccessAbility Week (May 26 - June 1) — social media
- David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility — [news release](#), [backgrounder](#) and social media celebrating the recipients (September 10 and 16)
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month — social media and business [success story](#) (October 3)
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities — [Minister's statement](#), social media, [AODA Toolbox](#) and business [success story](#) (December 3).



Moving Accessibility Forward

Ensuring that individuals with disabilities can fully engage in everyday activities is a fundamental value of our society. Yet, achieving sustained progress on accessibility requires the collective efforts of government, businesses, community organizations, people with lived experience and advocates.

In 2024, our strategic investments across various sectors and partnerships across Ontario paved the way for significant advancements in accessibility throughout the province.

Each dollar allocated to infrastructure and programs and services for people with disabilities is dedicated to creating inclusive communities for people of all abilities. And each program we undertake helps deepen everyone's understanding of the need for sustained and strong action on accessibility.

To further community action on accessibility, we will be consolidating the EnAbling Change and Inclusive Community Grants programs in 2025 to create a new program, Enhancing Access to Spaces for Everyone (EASE) Grant. This program will fund small capital projects that will make outdoor spaces, buildings and housing more accessible for everyone.

These investments and initiatives are transforming our communities by helping to ensure not only equitable access to essential services and facilities but a greater sense of inclusion and belonging. As we look ahead, we are focused on preserving and strengthening the progress we've made. We eagerly anticipate more shared successes in 2025.

