

Community and Health Services

Environmental Scan

Community and Health Services continues to identify barriers within the five themes that people in our communities with disabilities have told us have the greatest impact on their lives. For example:

Helping People Live Independently

- The Department will continue assisting people with disabilities to live independently in York Region through enhancements to customer service and accessibility improvements to our social housing units, buildings and Health Centres.

Making it Easier to Move Around the Region

- To make it easier to move around the region, the department will investigate partnering with York Region Transit (YRT) to have selected clients participate in the Travel Training Program.

Making Regional Services More Accessible

- To identify potential barriers in our services and to make our services more accessible the Department will review their Employment Resource Centres, Breastfeeding Clinics, Meeting/Clinical facilities, printed materials (such as pamphlets, brochures, and promotional materials) and the Department's website.

Making it Easier to Participate in Regional Government

- By monitoring and providing feedback on provincial legislation aimed at increasing access for people with disabilities to government programs and facilities, the department will make it easier for our clients to participate in Regional Government.

Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness

- To change attitudes and raise awareness the Department will provide tools, information and training to staff and consult with community agencies, disability organizations and other Regional departments to explore opportunities to provide greater accessibility to our clients and customers with a range of disabilities.

Our Customers

In the fall of 2007, Community Services and Housing and the Health Services Departments combined to form the new Community and Health Services Department. This new Department provides a wide range of programs and services to the residents of York Region that promote safe, secure and healthy communities, responding to the needs of vulnerable residents and supporting health care needs at all stages of life.

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The Department serves people of all ages, including children, youth, and seniors with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in need of financial and/or employment assistance, housing assistance, child care including developmental programming, emergency medical services, long term care, and public health services.

Community Services

The Employment and Financial Support Branch provides employment and financial assistance to eligible residents of York Region including adults and children.

The Family and Children's Services Branch provides financial assistance and/or direct developmental programming to York Region children from birth to 12 years and eligible adults residing in domiciliary hostels.

Our Housing Services Branch manages social housing units through the operation of Housing York Inc. and administers social housing units through independent non-profit and co-operative housing providers. The Branch is also responsible for the increasing supply of affordable housing including the creation of new accessible units. The Region supports and funds a range of homelessness and prevention support programs in partnership with community agencies.

The Policy and Program Support Services Branch provides support to the Department, the corporation and Regional Council through the provision of strategic policy analysis and program development services.

The Business Operations and Support Services delivers direct and support services such as assisting clients in pursuing support income, investigating and collecting revenues owed to the Region, knowledge and skills training for all staff, first call services providing callers with information, referral and application services, ensuring the Department's fiscal integrity, delivering accommodation services and providing technology support .

Health Services

Emergency Medical Services provides emergency and non-emergency land ambulance services to residents and visitors of York Region. Paramedics perform patient assessment, life saving treatment and provide skills and procedures which require medical control along with providing safe and timely transport.

Long Term Care and Seniors provides programs and services that recognize the needs of adults who can no longer live independently. These programs and services focus on promoting the health, well-being, safety and independence of these individuals.

Public Health delivers programs and services legislated by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, to the residents of York Region. Public Health strives to ensure that programs and services are delivered in accordance with the provincial guidelines.

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The Business Services Branch ensures fiscal and program integrity within the Department and is responsible for human resource management, business continuity planning, emergency preparedness planning, adherence to policies and procedures, administrative support, and technical expertise within the department.

Accessibility Statement

The Community and Health Services Department commits to enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to its programs, services and facilities through partnerships with community agencies and by increasing our awareness of the needs of persons with both visible and invisible disabilities, so that we can better respond to those needs. After four years of accessibility planning under the ODA, the Department continues to consider accessibility planning as a key component when reviewing, improving and developing its programs and services. In 2008, branches will work together to identify, remove and prevent barriers in our programs and services.

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Progress Report on Accessibility Achievements – 2007

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Helping People Live Independently			
Community Services Access to special needs units for people with disabilities. (Housing Services)	Informational	All	Survey of support service providers who have referral agreements with housing providers is underway.
Community Services Housing York Inc. resident feedback on the housing services they receive including accessibility issues. (Housing Services)	Informational (baseline tenant survey)	All	902 completed surveys identifying issues to be addressed in the 2008 accessibility plan.
Community Services Explore with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind the need for and options to improve housing facilities for the use of persons who are blind or have low vision. (Housing Services)	Informational	Sensory	Initiated discussions with CNIB staff.
Community Services Access to special needs units for people with disabilities with support services. (Housing Services)	Informational	All	Have engaged a consultant to prepare a detailed inventory of the support service providers with housing provider referral agreements. (It will be a centralized source of information regarding special needs units (units with support services) within the social housing portfolio).
Community Services Facility limitation and need to provide greater accessibility for social housing residents. (Housing Services)	Physical	Sensory, Physical	The modernization of elevators to include several accessibility measures, including but not limited to Braille floor buttons and large digital displays and buttons, in the following two Housing York Inc. communities is underway: •Maplewood Place (71 Dunlop St.) •Pineview Terrace (190 Church St.)
Community Services Uneven or inadequate lighting levels in older Housing York Inc. properties. (Housing Services)	Physical	Sensory	The development of a lighting standard and a survey of 10 buildings are underway and, following energy audits, correct lighting where necessary will be put in place.
Community Services Explore the opportunity of installing railings in the halls of seniors' communities. (Housing Services)	Architectural	Physical	Hall railings installed in two senior apartment buildings (72 residents and visitors serviced).

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Helping People Live Independently			
Community Services People who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing are often under-served in terms of their access to affordable housing. (Housing Services)	Informational	Sensory	Building seven dedicated units at Tom Taylor Place in Newmarket for households with members who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing, and creating a referral system for potential tenants for designated units at Tom Taylor Place in Newmarket.
Community Services Service Contact Centre. (Business Operations and Support Services)	Informational	Sensory	Implementation of Voice Information Systems to make information accessible for people who are blind or have low vision. Drafting of scripts for recording of services and programs.
Community Services Review recommendations from client focus group and make changes to communicate more effectively to Ontario Works clients. (Employment and Financial Support)	Informational	Sensory	New newsletter insert sent in Oct.'07 Ontario Works monthly benefit run. A follow up to be conducted in Nov.2007 to solicit client feedback on the newsletter. The Newsletter insert will be included in the monthly Ontario Works benefit payment.
Health Services Need for more accessible external and internal environments at the Maple Health Centre, to provide essential care to seniors and adults with physical disabilities.(Long-Term Care and Seniors)	Physical, Architectural, Communication	Physical, Sensory, Cognitive	Renovations will be completed by December 2007.
Health Services Need for more physically accessible supportive housing units within the Assisted Community Living program that provides essential homemaking and personal care to seniors and adults with physical disabilities in order for them to stay in the community and remain as independent as possible. (Hadley Grange site renovation of approximately seven units.) (Long-Term Care and Seniors)	Physical, Architectural	Physical, Sensory, Cognitive	Approximately 6 units will be renovated by incorporating accessible features such as lighting, flooring, kitchen and bathrooms. The contract has been tendered; award is pending MOHLTC review and approval.

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Making it Easier to Move Around the Region			
Community Services Access to York Region Transit's conventional Travel Training Program for Community Services' clients.	Physical, Informational, Communicational, Attitudinal, Policy/Practice	All	Department plans to investigate partnering with YRT to have selected clients, who would qualify for Mobility Plus services but may be able to use conventional bus services, to access services provided by Community Services, participate in the YRT Travel Training Program.
Community Services Client feedback on accessibility issues within our programs and services.	All	All	In the process of identifying and developing standardized accessibility questions that could be integrated into the business processes (e.g. surveys) to obtain client feedback on the programs and services within Community Services.
Making Regional Services More Accessible			
Community Services Access for persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing to the Community Services programs and services. (Business Operations and Support Services)	Communicational	Sensory	In discussion with Canadian Hearing Society to determine why minimal use of TTY machine in Contact Centre.
Community Services Review Corporate Accessibility Planning Policy. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Policy/Practice	All	Working with Regional departments planned, to ensure that the corporate accessibility planning policy is updated to include new legislative requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).
Community Services Access to, co-located integrated multi-service building for children and youth with disabilities at 13175 Yonge St. Oak Ridges. (Family and Children's Services)	Architectural, Physical	Any physical, motor or related disability	Building completed, operational. Surveys to begin in September/October 2007.

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Making Regional Services More Accessible			
Community Services Reception area at 62 Bayview Parkway Office. (Business Operations and Support Services)	Architectural	Physical	Plans to ensure that enhancements to accessibility at the reception area are included in the capital renovation work of this facility. The renovations are estimated to begin prior to the end of the 4 th Quarter, 2007, and be completed during the 1 st Quarter, 2008.
Community Services Need for Accessibility Planning Resource list of accessibility services to use when planning meetings or events (e.g. Interpreter Services, Notetakers etc.). (Policy and Program Support Services)	All	All	Developing an Accessibility Planning Resource list.
Health Services Audit Public Health offices to assess accessibility. (Public Health)	Physical, Architectural, Informational, Communicational	All	The Health Services ODA Committee reviewed various toolkits from outside resources as well as the Corporate Accessibility Meetings Checklist. The Committee is in the process of modifying the Corporate checklist which focuses on meeting room facilities to broaden it to address the Health Services' needs. Anticipated completion of the revised checklist and one Public Health audit should be completed by the end of 2007.
Health Services Review Health Services fact sheets to identify potential barriers.	Informational, Technological, Communicational	Sensory	All Safe Water Fact Sheets were reviewed for barriers and barriers were addressed.
Health Services Need for more accessible internal environment and building system at the Newmarket Health Centre, to provide essential care to seniors and adults with physical disabilities. (Long-Term Care and Seniors)	Physical, Architectural, Communication	Physical, Sensory, Cognitive	Renovations will be completed by December 2007.
Health Services Inclusion of persons with disabilities into York Region Health Services emergency planning process, specifically for Pandemic Influenza. (Business Services)	Physical, Communicational	Physical, Sensory	Consultation with the CNIB and the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) on pandemic contingency planning has taken place and are ongoing.

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Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness			
Community Services Increase awareness of staff to the needs of persons with disabilities through staff participation in inclusivity training.	Attitudinal	All	In 2007, 22 employees in Community Services' Branches will have participated in the inclusivity and accessibility training course being offered corporately.
Community Services Need for more staff awareness of customers with disabilities and how best to serve them. (Policy and Program Support Services)	All	All	Recognized National Access Awareness Week (NAAW) internally through information displays at the Administrative Centre and South Services Centre; held Know York lunch-time session; promoted NAAW and held quiz/contest through York Beat (internal e-newsletter); produced newsletter with tips and distributed along with resources and tips from various organizations serving people with disabilities.
Community Services Staff knowledge of employment resources for Ontario Works participants with disabilities. (Employment and Financial Support)	Informational, Policy/Practice	All	Staff training to be provided in 4 th quarter to improve employment planning with clients who have chronic diseases/disabilities.
Community Services Extend mental illness and learning disabilities training to Community Service's staff. (Business Operations and Support Services)	Attitudinal	Cognitive	Planned are one session in 4 th Quarter 2007, and one session in 2 nd Quarter 2008.
Health Services Increase awareness of staff to the needs of persons with disabilities through staff participation in inclusivity training.	Attitudinal	All	To date, 11 persons have attended.

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Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness			
Health Services Staff awareness related to the ODA and incorporation of accessibility practices into daily activities within Health Services. (Business Services)	Communicational, Informational, Policy/Practice, Attitudinal	All	An ODA Internal Newsletter for Health Services was developed to educate staff on ODA initiatives and activities. The newsletter incorporates information on how to better serve our clients with disabilities, provide staff the information they need to search for other departments ODA Initiatives and to provide staff with an avenue for feedback or concerns. In 2007 the Long Term Care and Seniors Branch implemented an In-Service Inclusivity Training Program entitled: 'Organizational Diversity and Inclusion', which is mandatory training within the Branch. 372 Long Term Care and Seniors staff have attended this program specifically designed for those working in this Branch.

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Barrier Identification for 2008

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing (When will this be completed? The timing for addressing a barrier does not necessarily have to be set within 2008. The nature of the action may be phased in over a number of months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the Department)
Helping People Live Independently		
Community Services Finalize the process of creating a centralized waiting list for households requiring modified units. (Housing Services)	This is the final phase of a multi-year process to improve customer service for households requiring modified units.	Fourth Quarter 2008
Community Services Research the self declared disabilities of tenants reported in Housing York Incorporated tenant survey. (Housing Services)	This is the second phase of a process to improve understanding of tenants self declared disabilities.	Third Quarter 2008
Making it Easier to Move Around the Region		
Community Services Access to York Region Transit's conventional Travel Training Program for Community Services clients. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Investigate partnering with YRT to have selected clients, who would qualify for Mobility Plus services but may be able to use conventional bus services to access services provided by Community Services, participate in the YRT Travel Training Program.	2008
Making Regional Services More Accessible		
Community Services Use of Ontario Works Employment Resource Centres by persons with disabilities. (Employment and Financial Support)	Staff will actively solicit feedback to determine barriers.	Third Quarter 2008
Community Services Printed materials used in Family and Children's Services Branch. (Family and Children's Services)	Review of printed materials to identify barriers.	Feasibility completed by Q3 2008
Community Services Access for persons with different types of disabilities to information on the Community Services website. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Review website materials and technology to determine which items are accessible and where barriers exist.	2008
Community Services Access for persons with different types of disabilities to printed materials within Community Services. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Survey different client groups to identify barriers and suggest solutions or possible alternative formats.	2008
Health Services Child & Family Health parenting programs, brochures and promotional material. (Public Health)	Review parenting programming, brochures and promotional material for barriers.	End of 2008

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Making it Easier to Participate in Regional Government		
Community Services AODA Standard Development Committees. (Housing Services/Policy and Program Support Services)	York Region staff participation in AODA –AMO Resource Team for Built Environment and Information and Communication Standards and on the AMO Barrier-Free Working Group.	2007/2008
Community Services Accessibility feedback mechanism for York Region residents. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Review feedback process related to accessibility planning in York Region.	2008
Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness		
Community Services Review training materials to identify gaps in training for staff awareness of the needs of Community Services clients with disabilities. (Business Operations and Support Services)	Comprehensive review of all training materials and changes made to enhance staff training.	2008

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Barriers That Will Be Addressed for 2008

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Helping People Live Independently						
Community Services Facility limitation and need to provide greater accessibility in elevators for social housing residents. (Housing Services)	Physical	Sensory	Greater independence and integration and accessibility for residents.	Engage a consultant to prepare elevator upgrades to service persons with visual and hearing disabilities. • Northview Court (37 North St.)	Use of facilities by persons with visual and hearing disabilities.	Third Quarter 2008
Community Services Inadequate lighting levels in common areas of Housing York Inc. property. (Housing Services)	Physical	Sensory	Improved lighting levels in common areas to support seniors with reduced vision.	Replace common area lighting to new lighting standard. • Dunlop Pines (78 Dunlop St.)	Use of common areas in facility by persons who are blind or have low vision.	Third Quarter 2008
Community Services Facilities limitation and need for greater accessibility to building entries. (Housing Services)	Architectural	Physical	Improved accessibility to building entry for all residents.	Install two automatic door openers. • Evergreen Terrace (75 Dunlop) • Heritage East (Crowder Blvd.)	Increase accessibility of facility for use by persons with physical disabilities.	Second Quarter 2008
Health Services Fire Alarm Systems in public areas of the Maple Health Centre and the Newmarket Health Centre. (Long-Term Care and Seniors)	Informational, Communicational	Sensory	Increase safety and independence of persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing during an emergency.	Add visual alarm feature to Fire Alarm Systems in public areas of the Maple Health Centre and the Newmarket Health Centre.	Improved communication system in place in the event of an emergency for persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.	Fourth Quarter 2008

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Making Regional Services More Accessible						
Community Services People who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing are often under serviced in terms of their access to affordable housing. (Housing Services)	Informational	Sensory	Households with members who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing will have priority access to a number of new affordable housing units.	Building seven dedicated units in Tom Taylor Place in Newmarket for households with members who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.	Completion of housing units, occupied by people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.	Third Quarter 2008
Community Services Access to Community Services' web information for persons with disabilities. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Informational, Technological	Sensory	People with disabilities will be able to access information more easily and readily from the Community Services' website.	Web pages will be made more accessible and incorporate technology to assist people with disabilities to navigate the website.	Customer Service will be enhanced because more people will be able to find the information that they are searching for easily and at their own convenience.	Fourth Quarter 2008
Community Services Access to Community Services' printed materials - format and language. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Informational	Sensory	People with different types of disabilities will be able to access Community Services service information more easily.	Standards of practice will be developed for printed material to incorporate plain language and alternative formats e.g. large print, PDF or others as requested.	Increase accessibility to services for people with different types of disabilities.	Fourth Quarter of 2008

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Making Regional Services More Accessible						
Health Services Meetings are not equally accessible for all. (Business Services)	All	All	Equal accessibility for all to meetings conducted by Health Services.	Conduct accessibility audits of meeting locations using The Region's Accessible Meeting Guidelines.	Create participation of person with disabilities in Health Services Department meetings.	Fourth Quarter 2008
Health Services Health Services Fact Sheets. (Public Health)	Informational, Communicational	Sensory	Improve access to information for persons with low vision.	Develop template using The Region's Multiple Format Guidelines.	Improve access to information on Fact Sheets for people with low vision.	Fourth Quarter 2008.
Health Services Dental and Nutrition Services printed material. (Public Health)	Communicational	Sensory, Cognitive	Increased accessibility to printed material.	Assess current materials and make revisions where necessary to ensure that language, font style, font size, and contrast are accessible using the Region's Multiple Format Guidelines.	Increased access to Dental and Nutritional services information for person with Sensory disabilities.	2008
Health Services Accessibility of Breastfeeding clinics. (Public Health)	All	All	Accessibility will be enhanced at Breastfeeding clinics.	Audit of clinics using the Accessible Meeting and Multiple Format Guidelines.	Greater participation of persons with disabilities at Breastfeeding clinics throughout the Region.	Fourth Quarter 2008.

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Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness						
Community Services Regional Staff and community knowledge of York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Informational	All	Increase community knowledge and participation in YRAAC activities.	Create brochure regarding YRAAC, membership, role and activities.	Increase community awareness and participation in accessibility planning.	2008
Community Services Staff access to resources and information regarding mental illness issues, learning disabilities and chronic diseases. (Employment and Financial Support)	Attitudinal, Informational	All	Improved case management and employment planning for persons with disabilities related to mental illness, learning disabilities and chronic diseases.	Creation of a staff resource library in each Ontario Works office with initial focus on materials related to: 1)Mental Illness Issues 2)Learning Disabilities 3)Chronic Diseases	Staff will be better able to serve the needs of clients with mental illness issues, learning disabilities and chronic diseases.	Fourth Quarter 2008

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Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness						
Community Services Limited awareness and use of Ontario Works Employment Resource Centres by persons with disabilities. (Employment and Financial Support)	Informational, Communicational, Technological	All	Persons with disabilities will access the Employment Resource Centre to support their employment planning goals, increasing their chances to secure jobs.	Ontario Works clients with disabilities will be invited to participate in one-on-one orientation sessions in the Vaughan Ontario Works Employment Resource Centre, as part of a pilot project. Clients will learn about available resources and their feedback will be sought to further enhance services.	Increased use of Ontario Works Employment Resource Centres by persons with disabilities.	Third Quarter 2008
Community Services Knowledge of community programs and services for people with disabilities. (Business Operations and Support Services)	Informational	All	Increase staff education and knowledge of community resources for persons with disabilities.	Organize agency fair for the Department Staff Day bringing together community agencies to educate and support staff on their interactions with persons with disabilities. Agencies to include: Canadian Hearing Society (CHS), CNIB, etc.	Improved staff knowledge, skills and awareness to understand and assist customers with disabilities.	Second Quarter, 2008

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Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness						
Community and Health Services Increase awareness of staff to the needs of persons with disabilities through staff participation in inclusivity training.	Attitudinal	All	Will provide staff with an introduction to the information to effectively and respectfully serve persons with disabilities.	In 2008, 12 employees across Community Services and approximately 15 staff in Health Services will participate in the inclusivity and accessibility training course being offered corporately.	Staff awareness is raised and staff report having a better understanding of the needs of people with disabilities.	2008 - Ongoing
Community Services Increase workforce diversity within Community Services. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Policy/Practice	All	Increase work force diversity within Community Services.	Participate in the Ability Edge program for assistance with planning 2008 National Access Awareness Week activities and to provide an employment opportunity to a person with a disability.	Mutual benefits to be gained through employment experience and special project completion.	2007/2008
Community Services Awareness of ODA and AODA legislation. (Policy and Program Support Services)	Informational	All	Increased knowledge of ODA and AODA legislation.	Regular submission of ODA/AODA articles to "Working Together" Newsletter.	Raised Awareness of ODA/AODA.	2008

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Community and Health Services - 2008

Barriers That Will Be Addressed for 2008

Barrier Identified (Indicate where the barrier was found)	Barrier Type (Indicate the type of barrier - physical, architectural, informational, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)	Disability Type (Indicate the type of disability affected by the barrier - physical, sensory, cognitive or other)	What will be gained by removing or preventing the barrier (Indicate how accessibility will be enhanced by removing or preventing this barrier)	Means to prevent/remove the barrier (Describe what action will be taken to remove and/or prevent the barrier)	Indicators of success (Indicate how customer service will be improved by removing or preventing this barrier. Also indicate any other measure(s) that will be used to determine whether or not the Department was successful in removing and/or preventing this barrier)	Timing (The timing for addressing a barrier does not necessarily have to be set in 2008; the nature of the action may be phased in over a number of months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the Department)
Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness						
Community Services Need for more staff awareness of customers with disabilities and how best to serve them. (Policy and Program Support Services)	All	All	Improved customer service to people with disabilities.	Design and implement activities to support and promote National Access Awareness Week in consultation with other departments.	Greater staff sensitivity and awareness in serving customers with disabilities; greater customer satisfaction.	Second Quarter 2008