

Community and Health Services

Environmental Scan

The Community and Health Services Department continues to identify barriers within the 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 to help people with disabilities live independently in York Region through enhancements to customer service and accessibility improvements to our social housing units and buildings.

Making it Easier to Move Around the Region

- To make it easier to move around the Region, the Department will survey staff of Emergency Medical Services to identify physical mobility barriers on EMS emergency vehicles in order to enhance access to vehicles by patients and relatives.

Making Regional Services More Accessible

- To identify potential barriers in our services and to make our services more accessible, the Department will review its Application Support Worker Pilot, Breastfeeding Clinics, access to Recreational Sport programs for children, printed materials (such as pamphlets, brochures, and promotional materials), and the Department's website.

Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness

- To change attitudes and raise awareness, the Department will review staff training procedures to ensure employees are learning in an environment that addresses their learning needs. The Department will undertake a comprehensive review of its internal departmental policies, practices and procedures to identify gaps and ensure incorporation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* Customer Service Regulation's core principles of independence, integration and equality of opportunity.

Our Customers

The Community and Health Services Department provides a wide range of programs and services to the residents of York Region that promote safe, secure and healthy communities and responds to the needs of vulnerable residents by supporting health care needs at all stages of life.

Community and Health Services

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

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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 oversight along with providing safe and timely transport.

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

The Social Services Branch provides employment and financial support to eligible residents of York Region including adults living in domiciliary hostels. The Branch is also responsible for the provision of financial assistance and direct developmental programming to York Region children.

Our Housing and Long -Term Care 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 also 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, safety and independence of residents.

The Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch provides support to the Department, the Corporation, and Regional Council by integrating program planning and providing cross-departmental analysis on policy and legislation that affects community and health services. The Branch also leads accessibility planning for the coordination of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA) and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). In addition the Branch provides program communications support, implements community development and investment funding, coordinates homelessness programs and human services planning and leads emergency social services planning.

The Business Operations and Quality Assurance Branch delivers direct and support services such as helping clients pursue support income, investigating and collecting revenues owed to the Region, knowledge and skills training for all staff, first call services that provide callers with information, referral and application services, ensuring the Department's fiscal integrity through budget development and expenditure control, delivering accommodation services, and providing technology support.

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Accessibility Statement

The Community and Health Services Department commits to enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to its programs, services and facilities. In 2009, the Department will undertake a comprehensive review of internal policies, practices and procedures to ensure incorporation of the AODA Customer Service Regulation and integration of the core principles of independence, integration and equal opportunity. The Branches will work collaboratively to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in our programs and services.

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Progress Report on Accessibility Achievements – 2008

Barrier Identified (Gives a description of the barrier and indicates where the barrier was found. For example, was the barrier in a program, service, by-law, policy, practice or facility?)	Barrier Type (Indicates the type(s) of barrier (physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)	Disability Type (Indicates the type(s) of disability affected by the barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive, mental illness or other)	How the barrier was addressed (Describes the action taken to identify, remove or prevent the barrier)
Helping People Live Independently			
Finalize the process of creating a centralized waiting list for households requiring modified units.	Policy/Practice	All	Persons with disabilities can access affordable housing on the centralized waiting lists instead of applying to individual housing providers.
Research the self declared disabilities of tenants reported in Housing York, Incorporated tenant survey.	Policy/Practice	All	Improved understanding of the needs of tenants with disabilities.
Facility limitation and need to provide greater accessibility in elevators for social housing residents.	Physical	Sensory	An audit was conducted in preparation for the planned recommended upgrade in 2009.
Facility limitation and need to provide greater accessibility in elevators for social housing residents.	Physical	Sensory	The elevators at Elmwood Gardens will have improved lighting, black lit/large buttons and a large digital floor display.
Inadequate lighting levels in common areas of Housing York Inc. property.	Physical	Sensory	Lighting levels have been improved in the common areas of Maplewood Place and the public areas of Heritage East and Fairy Lake Gardens.
Inadequate lighting levels in the suites of Housing York Inc. seniors buildings.	Physical	Sensory	Lighting levels were upgraded in the suites of nine senior's buildings.
Inadequate lighting levels during power blackouts.	Physical	All	A new emergency power generator was installed that will keep elevators operating and the hallways and community room lit during a power outage for an unlimited time. This is over and above building code requirements.
Facilities limitation and need for greater accessibility to building entrances.	Architectural	Physical	Door openers were installed in Evergreen Terrace and Heritage East.
Fire Alarm Systems in public areas of the Maple Health Centre and the Newmarket Health Centre.	Informational, Communicational	Sensory	A visual alarm feature was added to fire alarm system in all public areas of both Health Centres.
Inadequate washroom facilities in seniors' buildings.	Physical	Physical	Raised toilet seats were installed in all the suites in North View Court.

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Making It Easier to Move Around the Region			
Access to York Region Transit's conventional Travel Training Program for Community Services clients.	Physical, Informational, Communicational, Attitudinal, Policy/Practice, Architectural	All	One Community Services client participated in the YRT's Travel Training Program.
Making Regional Services More Accessible			
Use of Ontario Works Employment Resource Centres by persons with disabilities.	All	All	The Vaughan office site was used for review as part of a larger targeted employment resource centre initiative. In response to user feedback, furniture located near a computer workstation was moved to enhance accessibility.
Printed materials used in Family and Children's Services branch.	Communicational, Informational	Sensory	Using feedback from clients the program areas are in the process of revising printed informational materials/brochures to ensure typeface is legible for people with low vision. It is anticipated that this will be complete by the end of 2008.

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Making Regional Services More Accessible			
Access to information on the Community Services website for people with different types of disabilities.	Informational, Technological	All	Reviewed all programs. Focus tested with a YRAAC member and it was found to be accessible. Ongoing monitoring is underway.
Access to printed materials within Community Services for people with different types of disabilities.	Informational, Communicational	All	Will proceed in 4 th quarter.
Child & Family Health parenting programs, brochures, and promotional material.	Informational, Communicational	All	All promotional flyers for prenatal classes include an accessibility statement “We are committed to making our programs accessible to persons with disabilities: identify your needs to us.” Review of printed materials for accessibility will continue to be incorporated into plans to revise program materials related to new Ontario Public Health Standards.
People who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing are often under serviced in terms of their access to affordable housing.	Policy/Practice	Sensory	Seven units have been designed to house clients of the Canadian Hearing Society.
Access to Community Services web information for persons with disabilities.	Informational, Technological	Sensory	All programs were reviewed and focus tested with a YRAAC member and the website was found to be accessible. Ongoing monitoring is underway.
Access to Community Services printed materials – format and language.	Informational	Sensory	Will proceed in 4 th quarter.
Health Services Fact Sheets.	Informational, Communicational	Sensory	Health Protection has reviewed and revised food safety program fact sheets using the Region’s Multiple Formats Guidelines in 2008.
Dental and Nutrition Services printed material.	Informational	Sensory, Cognitive	Web pages for Dental Services were reviewed and revised in 2008.

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Making Regional Services More Accessible			
Accessibility of Breastfeeding Clinics.	All	All	Plans to be incorporated into 2009 breastfeeding team plans.
Limited awareness and use of Ontario Works Employment Resource Centres by persons with disabilities.	Informational, Communicational, Technological	All	Despite outreach efforts, only a small group of persons with disabilities attended the orientation sessions offered. Those who attended received a tour of the facility, overview of written and internet resources, an overview of community supports, job search strategies. Those in attendance provided positive feedback regarding job search skills and how to access the labour market.
Making It Easier to Participate in Regional Government			
AODA Standards Development Committees.	All	All	Two staff from Community and Health Services participated on the Built Environment and Information and Communication Standards AMO Resource Teams. One staff participated on the AMO Barrier-Free Working Group.
Accessibility Feedback mechanism for York Region residents.	All	All	The Customer Service Regulation (AODA) was released in 2008. C&HS Department is working collaboratively with the Lead Department (CAO's office) to develop a corporate accessible feedback mechanism to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Regulation.

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Making It Easier to Participate in Regional Government			
Meetings are not equally accessible to all.	All	All	Flu Clinic sites were chosen with wheelchair accessibility as a key criterion; in addition, clinic sites are well lit to ensure that individuals can see written information, particularly fact sheets and consents. If clients are not able to read the consent and interview questions, the staff will go over the material verbally with clients. Health Protection staff now host public information sessions (e.g. for faith based groups, special events, information sessions) in facilities that are accessible.
Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness			
Review training materials to identify gaps in training for staff awareness of the needs of Community Services clients with disabilities.	Informational, Communicational, Policy/Practice	All	A review of training materials is underway.
Regional Staff and community knowledge of York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee.	Informational	All	A YRAAC brochure was drafted and presented for feedback to the YRAAC in September. Revisions are underway.
Staff access to resources and information regarding mental illness issues, learning disabilities and chronic diseases.	Attitudinal, Informational	All	Staff resource libraries were created in Ontario Works offices providing staff access to resource and information materials to support clients with issues such as: Learning Disabilities, Mental Illness, Chronic Disease, Addiction, Domestic Violence and Family Strengthening.
Knowledge of community programs and services for people with disabilities.	Attitudinal, Informational	All	A Community Partners Open House was created to provide information to staff about community services available for people with disabilities. Two sessions have been held to date.

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Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness			
Increase workforce diversity within Community Services.	Policy/Practice	All	A Summer Student was hired through York Region Summer Student Program.
Awareness of ODA and AODA legislation.	Attitudinal, Informational	All	Initiative pending redesign of newsletter.
Need for more staff awareness of customers with disabilities and how best to serve them.	All	All	National Access Awareness Week was promoted through newsletter and posters.
Increase awareness of staff to the needs of persons with disabilities through staff participation in inclusivity training.	Attitudinal	All	62 staff from Community and Health Services have completed the 'Just Ask' Inclusivity Training.

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Barrier Identification for 2009

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 2009. The nature of the action may be phased in over a number on months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the Department)
Helping People Live Independently		
Enhance opportunity for people with disabilities, who are in receipt of Ontario Works to provide feedback on the delivery of services.	The implementation of an Ontario Works Reference Group that provides the opportunity for feedback, enhancing the service to people with disabilities.	Q4 – 2009
Effective communication with patients, relatives and people with sensory disabilities.	Consultant to assess any barriers to communication with people with sensory disabilities.	2009
Making it Easier to Move Around the Region		
Access to EMS vehicles by patients, relatives and people with physical disabilities.	Survey staff to determine the need for additional step aids.	2009
Making Regional Services More Accessible		
Comprehensive review of the recently initiated Application Support Worker Pilot project to determine best practices.	Assess the Application Support Worker Pilot, which assists Ontario Works applicants with disabilities to apply for provincial benefits through the Ontario Disabilities Support Plan creating better customer service for persons with disabilities.	Q4 – 2009
During the website redesign, barriers to accessibility will be reviewed.	Assess the new website to ensure that all information remains accessible.	Q4 - 2009
Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness		
Review department's training procedures to ensure employees with disabilities are learning in an environment that best suits their needs.	Review internal departmental practices to ensure the needs of employees requiring training in an alternate format are identified.	2009
Review department's internal policies, practices and procedures to ensure incorporation of the AODA Customer Service Regulation's core principles of independence, integration and equal opportunity.	A comprehensive review of all internal departmental policies, practices and procedures to identify gaps in the core principles of independence, integration, and equal opportunity.	2009

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Barriers That Will Be Addressed for 2009

Barrier Identified (Indicated 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, mental illness 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 2009; 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						
Inadequate lighting levels in suites of Housing York Inc. seniors' building.	Physical	Sensory	Increased safety and independence of seniors with reduced vision.	Update the lighting in the suites of 11 seniors' buildings.	Greater independence for seniors with reduced vision.	Third Quarter 2009
Inadequate lighting in parking areas and walkways at Housing York Inc. buildings.	Physical	Sensory	Increased safety and independence of seniors with reduced vision.	Upgrade lighting in the parking area and walkways. • 55 Orchard Hts.	Greater independence for seniors with reduced vision.	Fourth Quarter 2009
Inadequate lighting in common areas of Housing York Inc. buildings.	Physical	Sensory	Increased safety and independence of seniors with reduced vision.	Replace lighting in common areas. • 84 Oakridge St. • 190 Church St.	Greater independence for seniors with reduced vision.	Third Quarter 2009
Facility limitation and the need to provide greater accessibility in elevators for residents living in Housing York Inc. buildings.	Physical	Physical	Greater independence and accessibility for residents.	Upgrade elevators for greater accessibility for senior residents. • 37 North St.	Greater accessibility for persons with physical disabilities.	Fourth Quarter 2009
Facility limitation and the need to provide greater accessibility in stairwells for residents living in Housing York Inc. buildings.	Physical	Physical, Sensory	Greater independence and accessibility for residents.	Install new stair treads that will brighten and provide better grip for seniors using the stairs. • 190 Church St.	Greater accessibility for persons with reduced vision and/or a physical disability.	Third Quarter 2009

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Helping People Live Independently						
Inadequate access to affordable housing.	Policy/Practice	All	Improved accessibility to affordable housing offered by housing providers.	Allocate the Housing Innovations Fund to housing providers to conduct accessibility upgrades, repairs and purchase playground equipment.	Greater access to affordable housing for people with disabilities.	Second Quarter 2009
Making Regional Services More Accessible						
Access to emergency shelters for persons with disabilities.	Architectural	Architectural	Individuals with disabilities will have access to emergency shelters.	Design and construct Leeder Place emergency shelter to accommodate people with disabilities.	Completion of a barrier free emergency shelter with a modified unit at the newly constructed Leeder Place shelter.	Third Quarter 2009
Inadequate access to affordable housing.	Architectural	Architectural	Individuals with disabilities will have greater access to affordable housing.	Design and construct the Vaughan Civic Centre campus to accommodate people with disabilities.	Completion of a barrier free building with 5 modified units at the Vaughan Civic Centre Campus.	Fourth Quarter 2010

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Making Regional Services More Accessible						
Need to create additional opportunities for persons with disabilities in receipt of Ontario Works to provide input and feedback on how best to serve them.	All	All	Programs and services can be created, changed and modified based on feedback from participants including people with disabilities.	Implement an Ontario Works Consumer Reference Group providing the opportunity for continuous direct input and feedback to enhance services including feedback from people with disabilities.	Recommendations from Consumer Reference Group implemented as appropriate.	Fourth Quarter 2009
Access to recreational programs for children with disabilities.	Policy/Practice	Physical, Cognitive	Equal access to sports and recreational activities for children who have physical or cognitive disabilities from service eligible families (in receipt of Ontario Works, Child Care Fee Assistance under LICO or in receipt of Rent Geared to Income).	York Region's role is to provide the financial assistance for the one-to-one staff cost required to access the program. In partnership with York Support Services Network, Municipal Parks and Recreation staff will be trained to deliver safe and quality programming to children with physical or cognitive disabilities.	Eligible families will have the opportunity to enrol their children, regardless of ability or income level to participate in recreation and sport programs offered by all nine local Municipal Recreation Departments.	January 2009 – to December 2009

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Making Regional Services More Accessible						
Accessibility of breastfeeding clinics.	All	All	Continued participation of people with disabilities at Breastfeeding clinics.	Continued auditing of clinics using the Accessible Meeting and Multiple Format Guidelines.	The breastfeeding clinic assessment will review accessibility requests from clients along with a review of the breastfeeding clinics based on the corporate Accessible Meeting and Multiple Format Guidelines.	2009
The implementation of publication standards will increase access to information for people with different types of disabilities.	Informational	All	People with different disabilities will be able to access Community and Health Services information more easily.	Implement standards of practice for printed materials, incorporating plain language and multiple formats (e.g. large print, PDF, or other ways as requested).	Increase accessibility to services for people with different disabilities.	Fourth Quarter 2009
The re-design of the website with focus on accessibility, allowing people with different disabilities to see the information and understand it.	Informational, Communicational, Technological	Sensory, Cognitive	People with different types of disabilities will be able to access Community and Health Services information.	Ensure that information posted on the re-designed website is accessible for people who use screen readers and is in a plain language format.	Increased access to information and services for those with cognitive and sensory disabilities.	Fourth Quarter 2009

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Making Regional Services More Accessible						
Access to staff communication/information by staff with low vision.	Informational	Sensory	Staff with low vision will have access to written communication/information in a format that is appropriate to their needs.	All written communication will be available in large font. Staff will have access to information via alternative format (i.e. verbal, Braille), upon request.	Staff will have access to written communication/information in an alternate format that meets their needs.	Fourth Quarter 2009
Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness						
Limited awareness among staff regarding the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> , (AODA).	Informational	All	Enhanced staff knowledge of the AODA and how it applies to the work they do.	Add an AODA component to the mandatory annual core in-service training program.	Staff knowledge of the AODA will be enhanced, ultimately improving Customer Service to people with disabilities.	Fourth Quarter 2009