Zero Project Innovative Policy 2018 on Accessibility

# Towards an accessible Province

# Canada – Province of Ontario – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

## Summary:

### The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a legal framework for accessibility that applies to organizations in both the public and private sectors in the most populous province of Canada. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the AODA includes five standards (design of public spaces, employment, information/communication, transportation, and customer service) that aim to remove barriers, and help Ontario reach its goal of an accessible province by 2025. There are over 200 requirements under the IASR. Most of the requirements have been implemented, and the remaining will take effect by 2021.

## Problems Targeted:

### Due to persistent accessibility barriers, people with disabilities are frequently disadvantaged and isolated from the rest of society.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact:

### In 2005, Ontario passed the AODA, which provides a framework for developing accessibility standards for organizations in the public and private sector. Broad public consultation was a major part of the development of the accessibility standards under the AODA, and continues to be part of the standards’ reviews.

### The AODA applies to over 446,000 organizations with one or more employees. Furthermore, all government and public-sector organizations with at least one employee, and all businesses and non-profit organizations with at least 20 employees must submit a self-certified accessibility compliance report. Thousands of organizations submit reports to the Ontario government per a standardized schedule. Non-compliant organizations are subject to audits, inspections, and possible financial penalties or even prosecution. However, Ontario´s approach to compliance and enforcement emphasizes proactive assistance, including education and public outreach.

### The AODA is a unique piece of legislation because it includes requirements to continuously review and improve the AODA and its standards. Five years after their implementation, all accessibility standards must be reviewed by Standards Development Committees, which consist of at least 50 per cent people with disabilities as well as industry sector representatives.

## Outlook, Transferability, and Funding:

### Ontario is the first jurisdiction in Canada with legislation that sets a clear goal and timeframe to meet accessibility goals in the areas that most affect the daily lives of people with disabilities. Organizations have the flexibility to implement accessibility standards under the AODA in ways that consider their existing business practices. For example, the requirements of the standards are being phased in over time to give organizations time to integrate accessibility into their regular business planning, and so that investments are spread out over many years while moving toward an accessible province by 2025.

### Ontario does not provide funding to obligated organizations to fulfil their requirements under the AODA. However, the EnAbling Change Program provides grants to industry and sector leaders so they can educate their stakeholders about accessibility.

## About the Policy at a Glance:

### Laws and Regulations Involved: O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards

### Responsible Body: Government of Ontario

### Country of Implementation: Canada

## Facts and Figures:

* As of 2016, over 446,000 businesses, non-profits, and public-sector organizations are required to meet the new accessibility standards.

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## Links and Further Reading:

### [Integrated Accessibility Standards](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r11191)

### [The Accessibility Hub](http://www.theaccessibilityhub.ca/)