



# Accessible Mainstreet



Presented by  
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## Who We Are

- **TABIA – Toronto Association of BIAs**
  - is a non-profit umbrella organization representing the City of Toronto's 66 Business Improvement Areas who in turn represent more than 27,000 business & property owners.
- **OBIAA – Ontario BIA Association**
  - represents BIAs throughout Ontario. Established in 2001, OBIAA now represents over 100 member BIAs, plus Associate Members (suppliers, municipalities and others).



## Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities ACT, 2005

- The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation and buildings. The target date for reaching this goal is no later than **January 1, 2025**.



## Accessibility Standards: It's the Law!

- The AODA applies to hundreds of thousands of businesses in Ontario, as well as to community groups and public services.
- The AODA aims to remove many of the barriers people experience in public and commercial areas.



## Fight it vs. Embrace it

- We as an association chose to take the high road regarding the legislation.
- Even after hearing great concern about the impact it will have on our membership.
- Spun it from a negative to a positive by recognizing the business opportunity.



## Standards

- Customer Service Standards
  - TABIA is represented on this committee
  - Committee has developed an initial proposed standard that were available for public review for 60 days prior to the Oct 23/06 Implamentation.
- Transportation Standards



## Standards

- New Standards Committees were also formed:
  - Information and Communications
  - The Built Environment
  - Employment
- TABIA had/has a role on these committees to express the small business point of view.



## Preparing Our Members:

- TABIA has initiated the program **Accessible Mainstreet** to assist our members through:
  - Awareness of the AODA
  - Education about the AODA and how to comply
  - Assist with transition to accessibility





## The Opportunity

- People with disabilities are a growing consumer market in Canada. Nationally people with disabilities account for an estimated **\$25 billion a year in consumer spending** and influence the spending decisions of twelve to fifteen million other Canadians.
- Over **one-in-eight** Ontarians have disabilities that keep them from more fully participating in society. That will only increase as baby boomers move into their senior years. According to Statistics Canada **by 2025 the number of Ontarians with disabilities will grow to about 1 in 5.**

## Understanding Disabilities

- In 2001, nearly 2.5 million or 10.5% of Canadians had difficulty walking, climbing stairs, carrying an object for a short distance, standing in line for 20 minutes or moving about from one room to another.
- Accessibility issues are just as important to the elderly, the young, people with temporary disabilities, foreign travelers as well as those with life-long disabilities.
- One million persons aged 15 and over report having a hearing-related disability



## Understanding Disabilities

- Accessibility is the ability for a person to read signage regardless of whether they are dyslexic, blind, have low vision, or do not speak or read English -- such as a young child, or a foreign visitor.
- Accessibility is ensuring that a person is heard or can hear a conversation -- as in the case of a person who is deaf, or someone trying to carry on a conversation in a crowded room.
- Accessibility is not simply putting in a ramp at the front entrance of your building and adding an automated door. Accessibility means making the entire experience open and available to everyone.



## Low Cost No Cost Compliance

- Take the time to get to know your customers' needs. Some disabilities are not visible;
- Ensure that accessible washrooms are not used as storage areas rendering them inaccessible;
- Place a straight backed chair with no arms in your store to allow customers to rest;
- Offer menus and other written material in large print;
- Ensure that entrances and sidewalks are not obstructed by merchandise;



## The Project

**MISSED BUSINESS?**

How to attract more customers providing better access to your business

**ONTARIO MAINSTREET ACCESSIBILITY AWARDS 2006**

Recognizing the efforts of small businesses and communities in Ontario that have improved accessibility and reduced barriers for people with disabilities.

[www.toronto-bia.com](http://www.toronto-bia.com)  
click on Accessible Mainstreet

**a guide for small business**  
A part of the Accessible Mainstreet Initiative

Accessible Mainstreet - TipSheet

**What You Should Know About Customers Who Have Disabilities**

If you know that just over 13.3% of Ontarians have a disability, 7% of them are in the population ages that number will grow with disabilities travel, shop and do business in your community and families, just like everyone else. By providing service to people with disabilities, you can offer better service to everyone. To many with individual respect and courtesy is at the heart of business.

• Broaden your customer base by welcoming everyone to your business, including customers with disabilities. By treating people with disabilities with the same respect and courtesy as everyone else, you may be able to provide better service to your entire customer base and a willingness to find a way to help them, and keep in mind that people with disabilities often make assumptions about what type of disabilities they have. Take the time to find out what kinds of disabilities your customers have.

• Do, with your customers, what someone is saying to you - don't just jump to conclusions. A good idea is to ask them if they need help and how you can help them.

**Accessible Mainstreet - Microsoft Internet Explorer**

http://toronto-bia.com/resources/accessibility.php

**tabia** Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas

The Voice of Toronto's BIAs - Representing 25,000 Businesses

**Accessible Mainstreet**

**The Challenge:**

The "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act" (AODA) is new legislation that applies to hundreds of thousands of businesses in Ontario, as well as to community groups and public services. The AODA aims to remove many of the barriers that people with disabilities face in their daily lives.

**BIA Resources**

- Resource Directory
- Starting a BIA
- Operating Handbook
- Accessible Mainstreet
- 3D Video
- TipSheets
- Accessibility Awards
- Event Planning
- Suppliers
- Important Contacts
- Links
- Suggest a Resource

**Resources:**

View 3D animated video: "Mainstreet Accessibility on Ontario"

Take a stroll down Main Street and see if you can solve the accessibility dilemmas.

**Nominations now closed for Ontario Mainstreet Accessibility Awards 2006.**



## The Guide

### Table of Contents

#### You Could Be Missing Out On Potential Customers

Which Customers Are We Talking About?

Accessibility Makes Good Business Sense

Meeting Your Legal Responsibilities

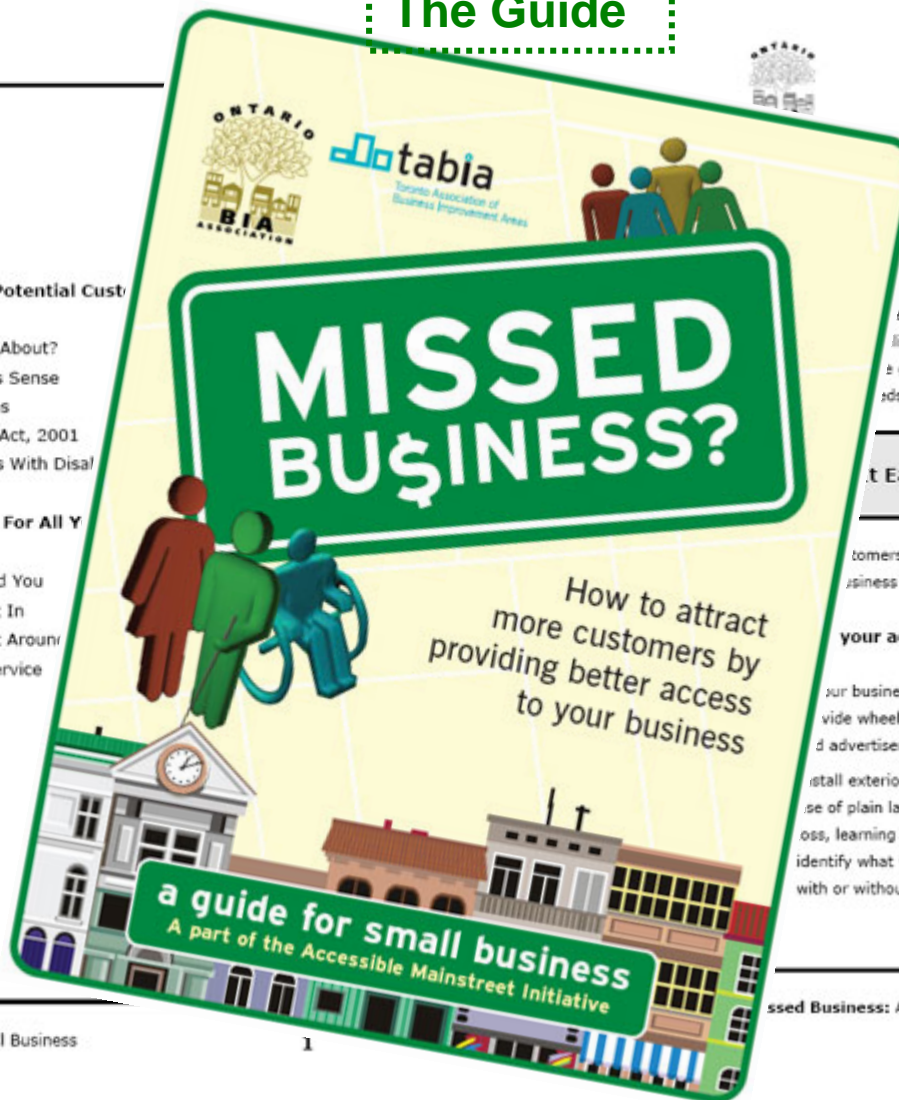
ODA - Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001

AODA - Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act

#### Four Ways To Improve Access For All Your Customers

1. Make It Easy For People To Find You
2. Make It Easy For People To Get In
3. Make It Easy For People To Get Around
4. Make The Most Of Customer Service

#### Additional Information



### Improve Access For All Your Customers

When you follow the principles, remember to refer to more detailed accessibility standards and best practices, prior to and during implementation, to ensure successful outcomes. Talk to City representatives, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) or other accessibility experts for guidance to assist with practical solutions that meet your needs of your customers.

#### Make It Easy For People To Find You

If you have customers who have a disability you can take some simple steps to make your business easier to find and get to.

#### Let People Know Your Advantages

If your business is accessible, let people know. For example, if you provide wheelchair access, include this information in your promotions and advertisements, as well as on an accessible website if available.

Install exterior signs with easy to understand text and graphics (e.g., use of plain language and pictograms), to help people with a vision loss, learning disabilities or others who speak diverse languages to identify what your business is. Accessible signage helps everyone, with or without a disability!



## Tip sheets



### Accessible Mainstreet - Tip sheet What You Need To Know About Customers Who Have Vision Impairments

Everyone is different in some way. Each of us has a different way of doing things and there are some things we can't do without some help from people, or from machines and products that are easy to use.

Visual impairments reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light.

Impaired vision can restrict your customers' abilities to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a visual disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have visual impairments:

- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Don't refer to the disability, and never use phrases like "handicapped".
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it's an emergency.
- If you offer assistance, wait until your receive permission.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Don't touch service animals - they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- If you're giving directions or verbal information, be precise and clear. For example, if you're approaching a door or an obstacle, say so.
- Don't just assume the individual can't see you.
- Don't leave your customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.



### Accessible Mainstreet - Tip sheet How to Welcome Customers with Disabilities

If you know that just over 12.5% of Ontarians have a disability? That's over 1 in 10 Ontarians and as the population ages that number will grow.

People with disabilities travel, shop and do business in your community with their friends and families, just like everyone else. By providing service that welcomes people with disabilities, you can offer better service to everyone. Treating all your clients with individual respect and courtesy is at the heart of excellent customer service.

To broaden your customer base by welcoming everyone to your store, shop or services, including customers with disabilities, by learning how to serve people with disabilities, you can attract more customers and improve your service to everyone.

Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration you have for able-bodied people.

- One way you can provide better service to your customers with disabilities is to be patient, optimistic, and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your tools.
- Relax, and keep in mind that people with disabilities are just people. Make assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities a person has. Disabilities are not visible. Take the time to get to know your customer's needs.
- People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand what someone is saying. Just politely ask again.
- Offer to help - don't just jump in. Your customers with disabilities will let you know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Try to communicate. A good start is to listen carefully.



### Accessible Mainstreet - Tip sheet What You Need To Know About Customers with Speech Impairments

Everyone is different in some way. Each of us has a different way of doing things and there are some things we can't do without some help from people, or from machines and products that are easy to use.

People have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, stroke, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, access language, or not being able to express oneself or understand what is written or other assistive devices.

People who have severe difficulties may use communication devices.

- Be patient and polite, and give your customer whatever time they need.
- If a customer has difficulty speaking, don't assume they have an intellectual disability as well.
- Understand, ask your customer to repeat the information.
- Ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no".
- Don't patronize and guide, and give your customer whatever time they need.
- Refresh your customer's sentences. Wait for them to finish.
- Have a willingness to find a way to communicate as your goal.

Have emergency procedures for customers with disabilities. Know what they are.

Tip sheets can be found at: <http://www.tabia.com/resources/disabilities.php>

Helping Customers with Disabilities "Resource Manual" Ministry of Community and Social Services

## The Awards

### Category 1 SMALL BUSINESS

Small Businesses are divided into four groups.

- > under 1,500 sq ft
- > 1,500 to 3,000 sq ft
- > 3,000 to 5,000 sq ft
- > 5,000 to 10,000 sq ft.



Awards in each group are divided into 2 categories:

- > **Customer Service**  
Demonstrate measures that have been taken to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities through customer service.
- > **Built Environment**  
Demonstrate measures that have been taken to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities through physical accommodations.

An additional award will be given to one business that has modified or adapted its working environment to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities as employees.

Examples for each category can be found at:  
[www.toronto-bia.com/resources/OMAaward](http://www.toronto-bia.com/resources/OMAaward)

### Category 2 COMMUNITY

Demonstrate measures that have been taken to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities through customer service.



## ONTARIO MAINSTREET ACCESSIBILITY AWARDS 2006



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click on Accessible Mainstreet

### NOMINATIONS

Nominations must include:  
- A nomination form detailing the contributions this small business or community has made to increase access and inclusion.



- Supporting materials, testimonials, and/or photographs related to the contribution made.

Download the nomination form at:  
[www.toronto-bia.com/resources/OMAawards.php](http://www.toronto-bia.com/resources/OMAawards.php)

Who can be a nominator?

Nominators can be a person or group of people with direct knowledge of the nominee's contributions, self-nominations are acceptable as long as objective documentation is provided.







## The Website

**TABIA :: Accessible Mainstreet - Microsoft Internet Explorer**

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://toronto-bia.com/resources/accessibility.php>

**tabia** Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas *The Voice of Toronto's BIAs - Representing 25,000 Businesses*

About Us Toronto's BIAs Membership BIA Resources News & Media Contact Home

**BIA Resources**

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**The Response:**

ORBIAA and TABIA, in partnership with the Ministry of Community

**Resources:**

[View 3D animated video: "Mainstreet Ontario"](#)

**Accessibility on MAINSTREET ONTARIO**

Take a stroll down Main Street and see if you can solve the accessibility dilemmas.

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Done Internet



# Accessible Mainstreet



3D Animated Videos





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