

# MEDIA RELEASE



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April 20, 2010.

## FREE RESOURCES ANNOUNCED FOR BUSINESSES TO MEET NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

**Toronto:** The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce are working together to help Ontario businesses comply with Ontario's new customer service standard.

Breaking down barriers for people with disabilities begins by breaking down barriers for organizations that want to better serve them," says Len Crispino, President & CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. "Compliance requires knowledge and access to the right tools. The OCC and our chamber network are determined to help businesses throughout Ontario get both so that they can better serve the growing population of people with all types of disabilities."

**Accessibility Works** is a partnership between the OCC and local chambers of commerce and boards of trade in Ontario and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to help businesses comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Standard (customer service standard). The customer service standard is one of five that will form part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

"Our members provide good customer service but they want to embrace the goals of the AODA in order to make their service even more customer-friendly for all their customers," says Joan Fisk, President & CEO of the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce.

Through a free online training module and facilitated workshops throughout the province, *Accessibility Works* will make it easier for business owners, their staff, volunteers and contractors to meet the requirements of the new customer service standard.

"We're pleased to be partnering with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to help reach out to their broad network of members across the province. These are the business on the front lines who understand, better than anyone, that improving accessibility for people with disabilities is not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do. By making their businesses more accessible to customers with disabilities they tap into a broader customer base and foster increased customer loyalty, and it all starts with

providing quality customer service to each and every customer who comes in the door,” said Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services.

An advisory committee has been established to assist in the development of the program. The members are Suzanne Andrews, Manager, Quinte West Chamber of Commerce; Joan Fisk, President & CEO, Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce; Erin Kelly, Executive Director, Ottawa Chamber of Commerce; Keitha Robson, Manager, Timmins Chamber of Commerce; and Walter Sendzik, Executive Vice President - General Manager, St. Catharines-Thorold Chamber of Commerce.

The online training, which will provide graduates with proof of certification, will be delivered by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and its 160 affiliated chambers of commerce and boards of trade in Ontario. The training will be available later this fall in order to help businesses prepare for the January 1, 2012 compliance date for all private sector organizations.

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The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is a federation of 160 local chambers of commerce and boards of trade in the Province of Ontario, representing 60,000 businesses of all sizes, in all economic sectors and from every area of the province. In its mandate to advocate strong policies on issues affecting its members, the OCC is currently focused on economic renewal and business competitiveness. Its over-arching goal is to make Ontario the most competitive jurisdiction in North America.

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