

Monday October 18
4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

Moving Towards an Accessible Ontario by 2025

According to the Royal Bank of Canada, people with disabilities have an estimated spending power of about \$25 billion each year in Canada. That's a market no business can afford to overlook. People with disabilities travel, shop and do business with their friends and families in our communities, just like everyone else. By learning how to serve people with disabilities, businesses may attract more customers, build customer loyalty and improve their services for everyone.

The Government of Ontario is striving to become a leader in accessibility by 2025 and introduced the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in 2005 to achieve this goal. In 2008 the first of five standards under this Act came into force, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. All businesses or organizations that provide goods or services to the public or to other third parties in Ontario and have one or more employees are legally required to comply with the requirements of the standard. Organizations in the broader public sector were required to comply by January 1, 2010. Businesses and non-profit organizations must comply by January 1, 2012.

Key Learning Objectives:

1. Overview of the AODA, the requirements for compliance with the customer service regulation and where you can get more information to answer your questions and help you comply with the accessible customer service standard.

2. Update on the progress of the four accessibility standards still in development- information and communications, transportation, built environment and employment.

Linda Markowsky is the Manager of Compliance Assistance Training in the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services. She has worked with the Accessibility Directorate for three years and was Manager of Compliance Assurance before taking on her current position last spring.

Throughout her career, Linda has followed her passion to “make a difference”. She began her career in the mental health field, moved to the federal government where she worked on policies related to victims of crime and managed a program reaching out to communities to create alternate approaches to community justice. These experiences motivated her to build a third career as an independent writer, researcher and speaker advocating for greater understanding and prevention of youth violence and violence against women. In this career she wrote four books and received a lifetime achievement award from the Justice Institute of B.C. In the last ten years she has worked for change “from the inside” in the Ontario government, most recently to help promote universal accessibility for people with disabilities.