

**Accessible customer service: How Ontario's accessibility laws will enhance the visitor experience and create a welcoming environment for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games**

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In July and August 2015, Ontario will welcome over 250,000 visitors to the Pan/Parapan American Games at 43 venues over 25 days. Visitors will also enjoy over 40 festivals and cultural events leading up to the Games.

How can tourism operators welcome visitors with disabilities and ensure an inclusive visitor experience for all? How does an informed tourism industry enhance the customer service experience of visitors with disabilities, their families and their friends? How can tourism operators train staff on accessible customer service quickly and affordably?

The implementation of Ontario's accessibility laws could increase tourism expenditures by \$400 million to \$1.6 billion and increase retail sales from \$3.8 billion to \$9.6 billion over the next five years according to a 2010 Martin Prosperity Institute study.

To support an accessible tourism experience, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario is partnering with sector leaders, such as Festivals and Events Ontario and PRIDE Toronto, to provide free accessibility training resources to organizations in retail, hospitality, events, amusement, and tourism. Participating in policies that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities can improve your operation's accessibility and your bottom line.

The most important part of a multi-sport event is the legacy it leaves: by providing accessibility training to 20,000 Pan/ParaPan Am Games volunteers, Ontario is working toward a Pan/ParaPan Am Games legacy of accessible customer service that will benefit people of all abilities and organizations of all sizes.

Find out about the free, online training resources available to support the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and how you can use them to train your staff in accessible customer service, even if you do not have to comply with this law. By learning about our partnerships with tourism associations to help them get ready for the Pan/Parapan American Games, you will learn about innovative practices that create destinations for all!