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**Statistics Canada**

## **Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility, 2023-2025**

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# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

2023 to 2025

Accessibility Secretariat

29/11/2022

To request an alternate format (such as large font, braille, American Sign Language [ASL] and langue des signes québécois [LSQ]) you can send a request to the Project Coordinator, Accessibility Secretariat, by

- mail: Accessibility Secretariat, Statistics Canada, 150 Tunney's Pasture Driveway, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6;
- phone: 1-800-263-1136; or
- email: [statcan.accessibilitysecretariat-secretariataccess.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.accessibilitysecretariat-secretariataccess.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).

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# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Message from the Chief Statistician and Diversity and Inclusion Champion

At Statistics Canada, we want all employees and leaders to be equipped to make accessibility part of their everyday work. We also want them to understand that barriers to accessibility are often experienced when by people who are part of underrepresented groups. Over the last two years, Statistics Canada (StatCan) has made tremendous progress in prioritizing equity, diversity and inclusion. Accessibility, and living barrier-free, is a human right. That means that, as an organization, it's our duty to create inclusive and flexible policies, programs, and services, and to provide physical spaces that give everyone an opportunity to participate and contribute.

I believe wholeheartedly that to fulfill our mandate as Canada's national statistical agency, our workforce must reflect the populations we serve; foster a safe, inclusive and productive work environment; and remove any barriers that prevent any of us from participating to our full potential.

To this end, I am proud to introduce StatCan's first multi-year accessibility action plan, "Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility," which outlines StatCan's commitment to the principles of the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA). The ACA aims to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040. It calls on all federal departments and agencies to focus on the experience of persons with disabilities by

- making the built environment more accessible
- making information and communications technologies accessible and usable for everyone
- giving employees the tools to make products, programs, procurement, and services accessible
- customizing the employee work experience to meet individual needs.

I am extremely proud of the progress StatCan has made improving the accessibility of its products, programs, and services, but I know we need to do more. This Accessibility Plan presents the results we expect to achieve. Together, we will proactively identify, remove, and prevent barriers in the workplace, and in our policies, programs, and services.

The journey to inclusion calls on everyone to help remove barriers to accessibility. We all must work to advance disability inclusion by ensuring that the work we do reflects the realities of all Canadians with disabilities, and we must all commit to being inclusive by design and accessible by default.

The responsibility lies with us.

**Anil Arora**  
Chief Statistician of Canada

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Message from the Champion for persons with disabilities

In my 33 years spent working at Statistics Canada (StatCan), I have experienced many agency-wide changes. Stepping into the role of Champion for persons with disabilities in 2002, in addition to my other management responsibilities, felt like the ideal opportunity to become an agent of change.

I am honoured to work alongside the Persons with Disabilities Committee (PwDC). Together, we have mobilized people to dismantle accessibility barriers and we continue to do so every day. Through our work, I have seen increased interest, questions and engagement pertaining to accessibility from all areas at StatCan and beyond.

I am proud to present “Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility”. This accessibility plan is the result of knowledge gathered from the lived experiences of employees who face accessibility barriers. I hope the goals of this plan will inspire reflection and action in all StatCan employees as the responsibility for an accessible organization is carried by all of us for all of us—and for all Canadians.

I have benefited from countless experiences and opportunities during my time at StatCan, amounting to the fulfilling career I now have. This plan aims to ensure that all employees, especially those experiencing barriers, are afforded enriching careers through which they are supported and encouraged to grow.

My time as an employee and as the champion has shown me that StatCan employees are committed to supporting persons with disabilities and all employees experiencing barriers. To do this, those who don't see themselves as a person with a disability still need the same tools, support, knowledge and corporate culture as persons with disabilities. The actions in this plan aim to support employees and to put accessibility at the forefront of everything StatCan does. Putting accessibility first is the right thing to do and will benefit everyone—employees, partners and Canadians.

The progress StatCan has made since my first day is remarkable. I hope this accessibility plan will push us into making even greater advancements in accessibility. This progress depends on concrete action, inclusivity by design and an accessible environment for all.

**Tony Labillois**

**Champion for persons with disabilities and**

**Director General, Justice, Diversity and Population Statistics Branch**

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## General

### Definitions

The following concepts are defined as:

- Accessibility
  - “The degree to which a product, service, program or environment is available to be accessed or used by all.”<sup>i</sup>
- Accessibility confidence
  - The ability of organizations to “manage disability as a business priority related to customer experience, talent, productivity, innovation, new product development, brand reputation and investment in human potential.”<sup>ii</sup>
- Barrier
  - “Means anything—including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice—that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.”<sup>iii</sup>
- Disability
  - “Means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.”<sup>iv</sup>
- Persons with disabilities
  - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities describes persons with disabilities as those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
  - For the purposes of this plan, the persons who experience barriers who were consulted included
    - persons who reported having a disability
    - persons with an impairment or health condition
    - persons without a disability, impairment or health condition.

## Feedback

### Designated person to receive feedback

The Director Equity, Talent Development and Workforce Strategy Division, Workforce and Workplace Branch is designated to receive feedback on behalf of the StatCan. We want to hear from you.

### What feedback can you provide?

You can provide feedback on the barriers you experience when dealing with Statistics Canada or feedback that will help to inform our future Accessibility Plan. If your feedback is about a particular issue, make sure to include:

- What you were trying to access.

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- Where the barrier happened and what the barrier was.
- Any recommendations you might have .

## How your feedback will be used

Your feedback will be considered as part of the continuous improvement of our accessibility efforts. Some feedback may be addressed right away, and some may be addressed in the development of our future accessibility plans. The feedback we receive and how we take it into consideration will be included in our progress reports, published in the years between accessibility plans.

## How to Provide Feedback:

- mail: Accessibility Secretariat, Statistic Canada, 150 Tunney's Pasture Driveway, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6;
- phone: 1-800-263-1136; or
- email: [statcan.accessibilitysecretariat-secretariataccess.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.accessibilitysecretariat-secretariataccess.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).

Want to send us feedback anonymously? You can send us mail or call us, without providing any personal information, or use our Accessibility feedback form, leaving your email address field blank.

Your feedback is important to us. Except for anonymous feedback, we will acknowledge the receipt of all accessibility feedback.

For more information please consult this [Privacy Notice](#)

## Context

StatCan has a long-standing commitment to accessibility and its role in raising awareness on issues faced by Canadians with disabilities. StatCan continues to contribute to awareness through the following efforts:

- The [Canadian Survey on Disability](#), which is launched every five years and provides critical information about the lived experiences of Canadian youth and adults whose everyday activities are limited because of a long-term condition or health-related problem.
- The launch of the [Data Hub on Accessibility Statistics](#), a joint collaboration with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) that was established in 2021 and provides key insights and information on Canadians with disabilities and accessibility.
- StatCan's Accessibility Measurement Framework (AMF), which allows for the internal measurement of progress made against commitments in the [ACA](#).
- The development of [A Federal Data and Measurement Strategy for Accessibility 2022 to 2027](#), which, in partnership with ESDC, will allow the Government of Canada to track, measure and report on progress in all areas under the [ACA](#).
- The development of a data hub to track and measure, on an agency-wide level, progress made toward the Government of Canada's commitment to hiring 5,000 net new persons with disabilities by 2025.
- Early adoption of, and contribution toward, the creation of the Government of Canada ([GC](#)) [Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) workflow. This project helps address the obstacles federal public service employees and applicants with disabilities face in obtaining the tools, supports and measures to perform at their best and succeed in the workplace. It also facilitates recruitment, retention, and career advancement for persons with disabilities.



# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

In addition to undertaking efforts to raise awareness on disability and accessibility externally, StatCan has also carried out internal commitments to better understand and support its workforce and create an inclusive workplace. To this end, StatCan, in partnership with Canadian Heritage, recently launched the Engaging DisAbility Innovation Study, an employee-led initiative supported by the Office of Public Service Accessibility at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. Through a survey and online engagement, this project has provided StatCan with information to further understand the barriers faced by all employees, including those with disabilities.

Finally, to better support its employees and its journey to becoming fully accessible, StatCan created the Accessibility Secretariat and the StatCan Accessibility Leadership Taskforce (StatCan-ALT). These groups ensure that the priority areas in the [ACA](#) remain key areas of focus for the agency and that the commitments in this plan are measurable, attainable and result in a barrier-free StatCan.

## Introduction

For an organization to become fully accessible, the accessibility of its products and services must be considered first. A workplace that ensures the productivity and well-being of its employees is accessible and inclusive by default. In short, accessibility must be deliberately and proactively woven into the organization's culture. With this, the vision for "Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility," is to build an accessibility-confident culture and a solid foundation where our products, services, workplace, and workspaces are accessible by design.

StatCan's first accessibility plan aims to ensure that all StatCan and Statistical Survey Operations employees across the country are supported in a barrier-free environment, with their accessibility needs met. The first edition of "Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility," which spans December 31, 2022, to December 2025, is intended to be evergreen. As we make progress toward achieving an accessible and inclusive StatCan, our actions and commitments will change and evolve, and the Plan will be updated to ensure a continued and relevant focus on the areas needing it most.

Accessibility barriers can impact many Canadians, including those who do not identify as having a disability and those who have other intersecting identities. Intersectionality, which considers how different aspects of a person's identity can impact the way in which they experience barriers to inclusion, was a key priority in developing this plan. To ensure that the needs of a range of individuals are met with this plan, StatCan conducted extensive reviews and consultations. Emphasis was placed on understanding the experiences of persons with disabilities, members from employment equity groups (women, visible minorities, and Indigenous people), and equity-seeking groups (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and more [2SLGBTQI+]). Additional information on the consultations can be found at the end of this document.

"Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility" is structured around the following priority areas, as described in the [ACA](#):

- employment
- built environment
- information and communication technologies
- communication, other than information and communication technologies;
- procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- design and delivery of programs and services
- transport (non-applicable to StatCan).

Within StatCan, we added two additional areas to emphasize the importance of workplace accommodation and an accessibility-confident and disability-inclusive culture.

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As a result, in addition to the above-mentioned [ACA](#) priority areas, the plan includes a section on

- culture
- workplace accommodation.

Each priority area is defined in more detail in this plan, along with its

- desired state
- key priorities (from 2023 to 2025)
- identified barriers (following the network consultations mentioned earlier)
- actions and commitments to address the identified barriers
- measurement indicators to track progress
- the leads who enable or drive the area.

The plan begins with culture, a priority area in which we all play a role in creating an accessibility-confident and disability-inclusive workplace.

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## Culture

An accessible culture within StatCan is accessibility-confident and disability-inclusive. Focus and commitment are put on educating all employees and managers to empower and inform them on accessibility. Accessibility standards and best practices are emphasized, and employees feel confident and safe in speaking out on barriers to accessibility and potential solutions.

## Desired state

- The workplace culture at StatCan is welcoming to all employees, including persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers.
- Accessibility, by default, is treated as a business imperative, internally and externally.
- Decisions at all levels consider the perspectives of persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers.
- All tools, documents and information provided to employees are fully accessible.

## Key priorities for 2023 to 2025

- Build awareness and educational opportunities for all employees.
- Establish accessibility accountability at StatCan.

## Barriers

The following are some of the barriers that have been identified within StatCan:

- **Lack of awareness:** The lack of disability and accessibility confidence among colleagues and managers may result in stigma and microaggressions toward employees with disabilities, negatively impacting their well-being and career mobility and progression.
- **Lack of inclusion and feedback:** Employees with disabilities and others who experience accessibility barriers do not have a centralized and safe mechanism through which they can share their feedback or concerns. This leaves employees feeling isolated and unheard. This lack of a centralized mechanism also results in an inability for StatCan to understand the broad accessibility issues faced by employees.
- **Lack of internal collaboration:** Accessibility initiatives are siloed and vary across teams and functions. A governance structure that links initiatives or a mechanism to share best practices is lacking.

## Short-term actions

### To address the lack of awareness

- Develop and deliver annual manager and employee training to increase disability awareness and ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities. Training material will be developed in consultation with persons with disabilities.
- Create an Internal Communication Network (ICN) page to centralize all internal accessibility-related information and reports for employees and managers.
- Develop and implement performance management objectives for executives to measure progress made in fostering accessibility and inclusion in their teams.
- Develop and implement performance management objectives to ensure all employees prioritize accessibility in their work.

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## **To address the lack of inclusion and feedback**

Develop a centralized and anonymous feedback system, first for all employees then for Canadians and external StatCan users, to which they can provide input on accessibility barriers.

## **To address the lack of internal collaboration**

Present the progress made on accessibility as identified in *Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility* to internal senior management committees, on a trimestral basis, using the indicators included in the Accessibility Measurement Framework.

## Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure StatCan's progress in achieving an accessible culture:

- The percentage of employees and managers who have completed the annual, planned mandatory accessibility awareness training increases, with the goal of achieving a 100% completion rate.
- The number of employees who are aware of the centralized anonymous feedback mechanism increases, with the goal of reaching all employees in the first year.

## Roles and responsibilities:

Leads: All managers and employees

Enabler: Equity, Talent Development and Workforce Strategy Division

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Workplace accommodation

Workplace accommodation at StatCan means that accommodation is made on a confidential, case-by-case basis and employees are supplied with the functional tools and working conditions they need to maximize their potential.

### Desired state

- Systemic accommodations are integrated in our planning, implementation, and ongoing activities.
- A centralized, timely and efficient accommodation process treats data in a private, confidential manner and on a need-to-know basis.
- Every employee is supported to easily access the tools and workspaces they need in a timely manner.

### Key priorities for 2023 to 2025

- Develop resource capacity within the Duty to Accommodate (DTA) team to improve service delivery to employees and managers.
- Review, modify, develop, and communicate accommodation opportunities, tools, and procedures to all employees.
- Monitor, report and track accommodation requests, their timeliness, and the level of satisfaction of clients.

### Barriers

The following are some of the barriers that have been identified within StatCan:

- **Lack of procedural knowledge:** Employees and managers lack information related to remote onboarding practices, accommodation requests, and their respective roles and responsibilities. Accommodation needs are often an afterthought rather than being built into management practices and procedures. This creates environments that are not responsive to the needs of all persons with disabilities.
- **Delays in getting accommodations:** Accommodations are often delayed because of the complexity of the case, the increased number of accommodation requests (because of the hybrid work environment), insufficient human resources and expertise, the lack of available inventory or the length of time required to obtain the needed tools and services. Reliance on external partners can increase the delay in getting an evaluation or in transferring equipment. Until they get proper accommodation, persons with disabilities can have problems achieving their expected level of work.

### Short-term actions

#### To address the lack of procedural knowledge

- Develop and deliver a comprehensive plan to promote services, resources, tools and training, and increase awareness.
- Promote and increase awareness of the [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#).
- Update the DTA intranet page and include accommodation information and links on the centralized accessibility site.

#### To address delays in getting accommodations

- Hire, develop and provide required training to the DTA team to meet the increasing number of requests.

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- Streamline processes and establish service standards.
- Conduct regular satisfaction surveys to ensure we are meeting the needs of the community.
- Measure the length of time to treat and complete requests by type.

## Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure StatCan's progress in achieving an effective workplace accommodation program:

- The percentage of employees who are aware of the [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) increases each year.
- The number and type of workplace accommodation requests, where such requests are being monitored over time to improve employee experience.
- All accommodation requests are completed within, or in advance of, the expected timelines.
- The percentage of completed accommodation requests where the employee is satisfied with the results increases over time.

## Roles and responsibilities

Leads: All managers and employees

Enabler: Pay, Ethics and Workforce Management Division

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## Areas described under the *Accessible Canada Act*

### Employment

Accessible employment at StatCan means that employees with disabilities and those experiencing barriers are supported throughout their employee journey. From recruitment and hiring to onboarding and career progression, all employees are supported to reach their full potential.

### Desired state

- Job seekers and employees consider StatCan to be an employer that prioritizes accessibility at every step of the employee journey and encourages employees to reach their full potential.
- StatCan achieves and surpasses the workforce availability for persons with disabilities and contributes to the GC commitment of hiring 5,000 net new persons with disabilities by 2025.

### Key priorities for 2023 to 2025

- Improve the recruitment process for candidates with disabilities.
- Improve timely and efficient accessibility and accommodations at all steps of the employee journey.
- Provide learning, advancement, and career development opportunities throughout employment.

### Barriers

The following are some of the barriers that have been identified within StatCan:

- **Lack of knowledge or understanding of accessible and inclusive hiring practices:** Managers lack information, resources, and knowledge on how to hire, support and promote persons with disabilities.
- **Stigma and attitudinal barriers:** Some employees face barriers to retention and promotion because of persistent stigmas and ableist assumptions regarding their ability to do the job or their accommodation needs. Some persons with disabilities do not self-identify because they are concerned about being discriminated against when seeking work, learning and promotional opportunities.
- **Inflexible and complex staffing tools and processes:** Some tools and processes used for recruitment and staffing, such as job posters and assessment tools, are in an inaccessible format and cannot accommodate diverse needs. Information or wording on posters may be confusing and, as a result, employees with disabilities may not apply for new or promotional opportunities. Once appointed, many persons with disabilities face additional barriers when required to fulfill official language requirements and may face challenges in accessing accessible language training.

### Short-term actions

#### **To address the lack of knowledge or understanding of accessible and inclusive hiring practices**

- Provide mandatory training for all Human Resources (HR) Advisors and hiring managers on disability awareness and etiquette and on accessible and inclusive recruitment, staffing processes and procedures.
- Ensure Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce (COR120) training becomes mandatory for all selection board members.

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- Update and develop accessible tools for in-person and virtual orientation for new employees, including a section on the intranet where information and tools related to accessibility for new employees are centralized (accessible parking, restrooms, employee networks, accommodation requests, etc.).
- Develop an accessibility checklist outlining the steps to verify the accessibility of promotional hiring materials.
- Create hiring goals for persons with disabilities at all occupational groups and levels.

## **To address stigma and attitudinal barriers**

- Create a framework and timeline to implement priority actions recommended in the reports produced following the employment system review, the accessibility system review, and the Engaging DisAbility Innovation Study.
- Add accessibility training within the mandatory corporate training list for all employees, including managers and executives, and report annually on the completion rate.
- Provide hiring managers with the guidance and resources to discuss accessibility and accommodations with new employees.
- Promote self-identification through a specific campaign on the definition of person with disabilities.
- Participate in conferences and career fairs to develop partnerships with post-secondary institutions, communities and associations that represent persons with disabilities to promote and prioritize the hiring of individuals that identify as having a disability across StatCan.

## **To address inflexible and complex staffing tools and processes**

- Adjust generic job advertisements to make them inclusive and barrier free for all people, including persons with disabilities.
- Produce guidelines on inclusive hiring practices.
- Develop an external page on the StatCan website that provides career information, including testimonials of persons with disabilities and employees experiencing barriers.
- Increase the representation of persons with disabilities in official language (English and French) and development training programs.
- Develop leadership development strategies and programs, including sponsorship and mentorship programs, to prioritize and support the advancement of persons with disabilities.

## Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure StatCan's progress in achieving accessible employment:

- The percentage of HR Advisors and hiring managers who complete training on disability awareness and etiquette and on accessible and inclusive recruitment, staffing processes and procedures increases with the goal of achieving 100%.
- Of all the qualified candidates in a pool who have received a letter of offer, the percentage of those who have self-declared as a person with a disability increases.
- The percentage of persons with disabilities who report feeling that accessibility and accommodation issues have adversely affected their career progress in the federal public service over the last 12 months decreases annually (data source: PSES).
- The number of hires toward StatCan's goal of hiring 219 net new persons with disabilities by 2025 is met or exceeded.



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Roles and responsibilities:

Leads: Hiring managers, selection board members and HR Advisors

Enabler: Organizational Design and Resourcing Division

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## Built environment

An accessible built environment at StatCan is one where workspaces and the work environment are accessible for all. From the spaces in employees' homes to those owned or leased by StatCan, all environments used by employees will be accessible by design.

### Desired state

- Employees have barrier-free access to the built environments owned and leased by StatCan.
- Employees are equipped to stay productive and healthy when working from home or from the office.

### Key priorities for 2023 to 2025

- Assess the accessibility of StatCan leased spaces or those outside the lease agreement.
- Coordinate the renovations of the National Capital Region (NCR) offices to maximize accessibility and to provide best-in-class individual or systemic accommodations.

## Barriers

The following are some of the barriers that have been identified within StatCan:

- **Lack of consultation with persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers:** Employees are not consulted in the building design and maintenance processes for StatCan's offices and those not under StatCan's control. This impacts employees' ability to fully participate in their work environment.
- **Accessibility is not a key requirement in construction:** Because construction projects inadequately consider inclusion by design, employees must ask for accessibility adjustments. This forces employees to work in a non-accessible workplace until adjustments are made and increases costs.

## Short-term actions

### To address the lack of consultation with persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers

- Develop a consulting process to receive input from persons with disabilities and employees experiencing barriers on upcoming renovation projects with Public Service and Procurement Canada (PSPC).
- Establish a working group to ensure accessibility codes are respected for all renovation projects.

### To address that accessibility is not a key requirement in construction

- Hire a consultant to complete a review of accessibility in the workspaces leased by StatCan in the NCR.
- Coordinate with the Fire Safety Office to ensure all procedures meet accessibility and accommodation requirements.
- Prioritize the accessibility adjustments for the R. H. Coats Building and the Main Building in the NCR.
- Ensure that the spaces owned by PSPC and managed by the property management team meet StatCan's accessibility needs.
- Renovate regional office space to account for accessibility needs.

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## **To contribute to the desired state of enhancing accessibility of the workplace and employee workspaces**

Make building and floor plans easier to find on the current intranet page and include links on the centralized accessibility page.

### Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure StatCan's progress in achieving an accessible built environment:

- Where within the control of StatCan, the percentage of features that comply with national accessibility standards in spaces leased by StatCan and those outside the lease agreement with property management increases with the goal of 100% compliance.
- The percentage of employees who identify as a person with a disability and have reported that they are satisfied with the accessibility of their physical office workspace increases and suggests that the employee workspace is barrier-free.

### Roles and responsibilities:

Enablers: Security and Facilities Division and Occupational Health and Safety

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Information and communication technologies

Accessible information and communication technologies at StatCan (often called IT) means that IT products are usable and accessible for everyone. Whether it is software development, infrastructure support, platform operations, service request fulfillment, IT asset management, cloud environments or offsite support, these all need to be accessible.

### Desired state

- All employees have the electronic and software tools they need to do their work.
- Accessibility is an integrated and expected component of IT infrastructure (for example, security, infrastructure and application procurement or development).
- Accessibility is part of standardized approaches, and needs are considered in the lifecycle of software and services development and software and hardware purchases.
- Accessibility is incorporated and prioritized at every stage of IT processes.

### Key priorities for 2023 to 2025

- Improve IT employee knowledge to provide better accessibility and accommodations support to StatCan employees.
- Integrate accessibility in every stage of product and service development.
- Achieve IT accessibility compliance.

### Barriers

The following are some of the barriers that have been identified within StatCan:

- **Knowledge gaps within the IT team:** IT employees lack awareness in how to best support and adapt their work for persons with disabilities and employees experiencing barriers. This impacts IT's ability to best support persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers.
- **Accessibility consideration:** At the time of purchase or creation, IT products and services do not prioritize accessibility, and this results in inaccessible purchases being made when barriers could have been signalled at the very beginning. This means that persons with disabilities and persons experiencing barriers cannot use these necessary tools.
- **Unavailable tools:** Accessibility can be limited by the available technology, and sometimes the necessary tools and technology do not exist or are not available in all three networks. This prevents persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers from accessing some of their accommodations.
- **Lengthy accommodation processes:** It takes a long time for IT to receive accommodation requests because making technology requests can be confusing and time consuming for employees. This means that some employees might start working without their necessary tools.

### Short-term actions

#### To address knowledge gaps within the IT team

- Document barriers and develop training, software and hardware to solve them.
- Assign accessibility-specific training for each role in the Digital Solutions Field to ensure all IT job streams are covered.
- Develop accessibility assessment metrics that are applicable to all offerings from the Digital Solutions Field.

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## **To address accessibility considerations**

- Create an inventory of IT products, services, and documents to then schedule consultations on, and assessments of, their accessibility.
- Introduce IT policies, processes, guidelines and accessibility best practices for new and existing IT products, services, and content.
- Launch the IT accessibility self-serve portal to capture user feedback and IT accessibility issues.
- Operationalize an IT accessibility governance board that includes all relevant partners within StatCan.
- Implement change at the contracting and governance level to include accessibility from the planning to the delivery stage (accessibility by design).
- Pilot accessibility standards and compliance for the release and deployment of new IT items.
- Operationalize accessibility standards and compliance for the release and deployment of new IT content, products, and services.

## **To address unavailable tools**

- Create a list of accessibility tools that are available to all employees.
- Launch the self-serve portal that makes common adaptive solutions available to all employees by default.

## **To address lengthy accommodation processes**

- Allow for greater flexibility in the customization of computer settings so employees can address accessibility challenges.
- Create an accessibility support team for all employees.

## Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure StatCan's progress in achieving an accessible IT:

- The percentage of employees and managers within the Digital Solutions Field who have completed mandatory accessibility and accommodation support training increases with the goal of reaching 100% completion.
- The percentage of tools and platforms that are developed or deployed (managed by StatCan) that meet accessibility standards (EN 301549 / WCAG [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines] 2.1) increases to result in 100% of all developed tools and platforms include accessibility in their design.
- The timelines of IT accommodations requests, from initiation to full completion, continually improve.

## Roles and responsibilities:

Enabler: Information Technology Operations Services Division

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Communication, other than information and communication technologies

Accessible communication at StatCan means information that is provided, sent, or received is clear, direct and easy to understand and meets the needs of employees and Canadians.

### Desired state

StatCan communication tools and services (in-person, digital or other) are accessible, inclusive, written in plain language, and free of biases and discrimination.

### Key priorities for 2023 to 2025

- Identify and remove accessibility barriers in the design and delivery of communication tools and services.
- Develop a communication plan to build internal awareness on accessibility.
- Promote the use of accessible communication tools to StatCan employees.

### Barriers

The following are some of the barriers that have been identified within StatCan:

- **The communication of information is inconsistently accessible:** Internal communication products, such as the ICN and information broadcast popups, do not always consider the information access needs of all users. Some corporate communication products, such as PowerPoint presentations and briefing documents, are developed and shared in inaccessible formats or contain inaccessible elements.
- **Lack of emphasis on the accessible design of communications:** There is a perception among employees that communication about the importance of accessible information is generic and not a primary focus at StatCan. Communication products are not varied enough to accommodate for different learning styles or to reach a broad audience.

### Short-term actions

#### **To address the communication of information that is inconsistently accessible**

Identify communication tools that are commonly used by employees, assess the accessibility barriers, and recommend alternatives.

#### **To address the lack of emphasis on the accessible design of communications**

- Develop a policy on internal and external accessible document dissemination that considers accessibility best practices.
- Raise awareness about the need for ASL and LSQ services for internal and external events.
- Promote plain language training and best practices for all employees.
- Increase accessibility awareness through internal channels (for instance, ICN and @StatCan articles) and consider enhancements (for example, audio formats and ASL and LSQ videos).
- Train all executive assistants; senior managers; developers of dashboards, portals, and dissemination tools; and Communications, Engagement and Training staff on accessibility standards and best practices.

## Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

- Diversify the methods for communicating about accessibility to accommodate different learning styles, including town halls and similar events focused on accessibility, and build the case for why StatCan is making this a priority.

### Indicators:

The following indicator will be used to measure StatCan's progress in achieving accessible communications:

- The percentage of accessible internal and external facing communication tools and products increases each year with the goal of achieving 100% accessibility.

### Roles and responsibilities:

Enablers: Strategic Communications and Planning Division and the Center of Expertise on Accessibility, Dissemination Division

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

The accessible procurement of goods, services, and facilities at StatCan means to centralize purchases, including computer software and hardware and a variety of external professional services, while prioritizing accessibility.

### Desired state

- All purchase processes consider accessibility requirements and do not create new barriers or perpetuate current barriers.
- Accessibility is considered early and across several vendors to ensure that it is included and prioritized in finalist selection criteria.

### Key priorities for 2023 to 2025

- Implement accessibility requirements in the procurement process.
- Increase awareness and resources related to accessibility purchases among procurement specialists.
- Ensure that accessibility and the needs of employees facing barriers are considered when new equipment is purchased (for example, microwaves, printers, signs and security gates).

### Barriers

The following are some of the barriers that have been identified within StatCan:

- **GC centralized programs and policies:** Some purchases that affect the accessibility of StatCan are made through pre-established methods. These methods fall under the responsibility of PSPC and Shared Services Canada. Some software licences that are necessary for the operation of StatCan's core services are renewed despite inaccessibility.
- **Lack of consultation:** The procurement process lacks consultation with persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers. This impacts the opportunity to report accessibility issues at the start of the procurement process.
- **Insufficient knowledge:** The procurement team lacks tools on how to ensure that accessibility is considered throughout the procurement process. Persons with disabilities who are unable to use products may require secondary purchases as a duty to accommodate.

### Short-term actions

#### To address GC centralized program and policies

- Stay informed on new accessibility standards and consult other government departments for implementation within StatCan.
- Consult the Financial Management System to find a way to track accessibility requirements.

#### To address the lack of consultation

- Biannually present projects from the procurement team and progress reports to the PwDC to gather feedback and requests.
- Meet with the DTA team to facilitate the procurement process for recurring items on accessibility requests.

#### To address insufficient knowledge

- Report quarterly accessibility progress and compliance within the Financial Management System.



## Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

- Evaluate the accessibility of internal documents and templates and plan for their modification.
- Train employees on accessible procedures for all procurement practices and any related accessibility training.
- Monitor purchased equipment and promptly report anything that is inaccessible.

### Indicators:

The indicators articulated below will be used to measure StatCan's progress in achieving an accessible procurement:

- The percentage of contracts managed by StatCan that meet, and can be validated against, accessibility requirements and standards, such as EN 301 549 national standards, increases with the goal of achieving 100%.
- The percentage of procurement employees who have completed mandatory accessibility purchase training increases with the goal of achieving 100% completion.

### Roles and responsibilities:

Lead: Procurement, Financial Systems, and Internal Controls Division

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Design and delivery of programs and services

The accessible design and delivery of programs and services at StatCan means that surveys, programs, and services are inclusive and accessible by design to meet the needs of Canadians and employees.

### Desired state

- Employees have the necessary tools and resources to design and deliver accessible services to persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers.
- The design and delivery of StatCan surveys, programs and services is informed by feedback from clients, data users and persons with disabilities.
- Clients and employees can independently participate in programs, services, consultations, meetings and feedback processes in an inclusive, accessible, open and safe manner while protecting their language rights, privacy, confidentiality and security.

### Key priorities for 2023 to 2025

- Identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers in the design and delivery of StatCan's programs and services.
- Develop and pilot standardized approaches for accessibility services.

### Barriers

The following are some of the barriers that have been identified within StatCan:

- **Reactive approach:** StatCan takes a reactive approach to accessibility rather than a proactive approach. This can make programs and services unavailable to persons with disabilities and employees experiencing barriers.
- **Inaccessible tools:** Internal tools (for example, the Time Management System, information management tools and statistical software) are inaccessible. Persons with disabilities and employees experiencing barriers may need to request access to files and programs, adding delays to their deliverables.
- **Lack of centralized approach to address accessibility needs:** The lack of a centralized approach to address accessibility needs for surveys, programs and services leads to inconsistency in how these requests are processed. This delays accessibility accommodations and affects employees' ability to do their job.

### Short-term actions

#### To address the reactive approach

- Create an inventory of programs and services used within StatCan.
- Conduct systems review to identify and remove accessibility barriers in the design and delivery of our statistical programs and services.
- Launch assessments and reviews of internal services, including the accessibility of learning programs, the [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) and research data centres.

#### To address inaccessible tools

- Create a working group and develop an action plan for centralized translations services (for example, ASL, LSQ and braille) and collaborate with the service provider, PSPC, to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to provide translation services.
- Participate in StatCan and GC working groups to standardize accessibility tools and testing methods and come up with common procurement measures to acquire accessible tools.

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## **To address the lack of a centralized approach to address accessibility needs**

- Build awareness by updating and promoting the intranet page that presents the services offered by the Centre of Expertise on Accessibility (CEA), with CEA links on the centralized accessibility site.
- Deliver presentations of the services offered by the CEA to managers and employees across the organization.

## Indicators

The following indicators will be used to measure StatCan's progress in achieving accessible programs and services:

- The percentage of clients and employees with disabilities who are satisfied when accessing StatCan's services increases annually.
- The percentage of statistical programs and services that meet the standardized requirements or procedures increases each year with the goal of achieving 100%.

## Roles and responsibilities:

Enabler: Dissemination Division

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Transportation

- Non-applicable (barrier-free federal transportation network)

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Consultation

Consulting employees was a critical element in the development of “Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility.” This first plan is to improve the employee experience by making persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers the centre of all actions planned for the next three years. To this end, consultations allowed StatCan to have the proper information and data to help define the possible barriers and desired states for all areas under the ACA. Furthermore, consultation helped define which actions should [ACA](#) be prioritized in “Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility”

As we shift our focus outside the agency, we will consult Canadians who use StatCan programs and services to inform future iterations of the plan.

## Employee consultation on the current state

### Accessibility assessment by an external firm

From March to October 2022, an in-depth and independent accessibility assessment was conducted by an external firm using qualitative and quantitative data. This external review, which served to ensure a bias-free view of accessibility barriers, was centred around data analysis, document review, employee consultations and focus groups. Preliminary findings on barriers have informed the actions articulated in “Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility.”. The final report, due by the fall of 2022, will serve to influence and inform future actions in future iterations of the plan.

Throughout their review, the consultants ensured that the perspectives of persons with disabilities and those experiencing barriers were accounted for. They also verified the accessibility of our employment policies and practices. During the process, all employees were invited to participate on multiple occasions and 70 employees were interviewed virtually on the topics required under the [ACA](#). Most of the interviews took place from April to June 2022. Participants were from varied equity seeking groups and sociocultural backgrounds to ensure an intersectional perspective. Those participants included

- the PwDC and its co-chairs
- the Champion for persons with disabilities
- employees with disabilities and those experiencing barriers
- members of other employee networks, such as women, visible minorities Indigenous people and 2SLGBTQI+
- area lead(s).

## Employment and Accessibility Survey in collaboration with Canadian Heritage

In addition to the external review, StatCan launched the Engaging DisAbility Innovation Study, an employee-led collaboration with Canadian Heritage, which was supported by the Office of Public Service Accessibility.

In February 2022, the Employment and Accessibility Survey was provided to StatCan employees and received a 49.2% participation rate (4,226 employees). The survey included 41 questions on recruitment, retention, promotion and workplace accommodation and asked respondents to comment on their experiences with perceived employment barriers at StatCan. The survey was designed by StatCan survey methodologists who ensured that it was accessible to all employees.

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

The first phase of the survey was conducted online using an accessible format, and the second phase gather employee insights using an online engagement platform, Recollective. Both phases of the survey were available to all employees across the regions, and, in October 2022, the results were presented in a report on the barriers to the employee journey.

## Data reports

In November 2021, StatCan launched the Employee Wellness Survey to assess employees' psychological health and to provide a better understanding of the key drivers of psychological health. The survey results were published in the fall of 2022.

The [2020 Public Service Employee Survey \(PSES\)](#) measured federal government employees' opinions about their engagement, leadership, workforce, workplace, workplace well-being, compensation, diversity and inclusion, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## The Persons with Disabilities Committee and StatCan-ALT working group involvement

- The PwDC were presented with the plan structure and have been crucial in shaping the plan.
- Members with different disabilities issued recommendations to guide area leads in their action plans.
- Relevant partners participated in the StatCan-ALT working group. Any individual interested in accessibility was welcome to attend. This accessibility working group has 20 members in regular attendance from diverse backgrounds, locations and positions and who have various disabilities. The StatCan-ALT group meets virtually on a bimonthly basis to discuss actions to improve accessibility, present information on each area and share helpful practices.

## Engagement on the plan

### Disability stakeholders

The National Educational Association of Disabled Students, the Employment Accessibility Resource Network, Realize, ACT (Accessible Career Transitions) to Employ and Carleton University students were invited to provide comments on the draft plan for employment, in the format of their choice. This feedback was assessed and added to the plan.

### Employees

- The PwDC, which is composed of 65 members, was consulted on the following occasions:
  - On June 14, 2022, PwDC members received the activities proposed by all area leads and approved the plan of actions.
  - From July to September 2022, PwDC members were invited to provide comments on the identified barriers and the proposed actions in an electronic version of the plan draft. Feedback could be sent electronically or be given over the phone, by video conference or in the group meeting.

## Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

- In mid-November 2022, PwDC members were presented with the version that would be sent for approval to the chief statistician and informed of the recommended changes.
  - In November 2022, PwDC members received the final version that was approved by the chief statistician
- The Champion for persons with disabilities provided feedback on an early version of the plan in August and again in September.
- The StatCan-ALT, the working group and internal senior management committees were given time to read and assess the plan.

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Statistics Canada's accessibility commitment

StatCan is committed to the prevention, identification, and removal of accessibility barriers. The accessibility plan will serve as a framework to ensure accessibility in our services, products and facilities for our employees and the public we serve. Employees need to be able to function effectively, and clients need to receive timely, high-quality services in a way that works for them.

To implement the plan, we will continually work with persons with disabilities and partners to prioritize our commitments. We will update our implementation and delivery plans to reflect lessons learned, ongoing research, best practices and new standards or requirements. As required by the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#), StatCan will submit an annual progress report on the implementation of the accessibility plan and publish updates online.

We are refining our Accessibility Measurement Framework to evaluate the prevalence of barriers for StatCan employees, respondents, and data users with disabilities and to assess our capacity to address them. We will implement a planning and reporting structure that validates our results with persons with disabilities and includes transparent reporting on their feedback. We recognize that feedback is critical to the process of identifying and removing barriers to participation and improving how we deliver our services. We will ensure that a mechanism is put in place so employees and clients can provide feedback on the current state of accessibility at StatCan.

The accessibility plan, feedback mechanism and performance measurement strategy represent commitments that we will make to get real results for Canadians, especially those with disabilities. Our accessibility effort will advance through the design, planning, implementation, reflection, and adjustment stages that will lead to a barrier-free StatCan by 2040.

Accessibility is everyone's responsibility, and you can help shape StatCan's accessibility commitment. We invite your comments and suggestions as we travel the road to accessibility together. We all must take part in ensuring the future state of accessibility at StatCan.



# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Annex A: List of recurring terms

- 2SLGBTQI+: Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and more
- ACA: Accessible Canada Act
- ASL : American Sign Language
- CEA: Centre of Expertise on Accessibility
- DTA: Duty to Accommodate
- ESDC: Employment and Social Development Canada
- GC: Government of Canada
- ICN: Statistics Canada's Internal Communication Network
- IT: Information and communication technology
- LSQ: Langue des signes québécoise
- NCR: National Capital Region
- PSES: Public Service Employee Survey
- PSPC: Public Service and Procurement Canada
- PwDC: Persons with Disabilities Committee
- StatCan: Statistics Canada
- StatCan-ALT: Statistics Canada Accessibility Leadership Taskforce
- WCAG: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

# Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

## Annex B: Actions completed so far

For many years we have been improving the accessibility of Statistics Canada (StatCan) products, programs, and services. Below are some of the actions that were completed in the last year that contributed to our goal of being completely accessible by 2040.

### Culture

- Created an Accessibility Secretariat and expanded the accessibility governance structure to advance accessibility awareness and engagement.
- Launched the [Accessibility Data Hub](#) in June 2021.
- Hired an external consultant to conduct a comprehensive accessibility review to identify the barriers to participation for persons with disabilities across StatCan.
- Participated in the employee-led Engaging DisAbility Innovation Study in collaboration with Canadian Heritage and supported by the Office of Public Service Accessibility.
- Developed a draft measurement framework to evaluate and report on the work done on all areas under the [Accessible Canada Act](#).

### Workplace Accommodation

- Co-led the Workplace Accommodation Workflow Design Project with the Office of Public Service Accessibility.
- Piloted the [Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport](#).
- Mapped all accommodation processes to identify barriers and establish where accommodation timelines could be reduced (ongoing).
- Standardized the purchase authorization for ergonomic chairs and sit / stand desks.
- Published a frequently asked questions page for employees on how to submit a request for accommodation.

### Employment

- Established a partnership with Office of Public Service Accessibility to develop a data hub to track the progress of hiring of 5,000 net new employees with disabilities within the public service.
- Hired an external consulting firm to conduct a comprehensive system review to identify accessibility barriers in processes and practices.
- Completed the Employment Accessibility Survey as part of the Engaging DisAbility Innovation Study to identify where and how employees experience barriers in recruitment, retention, promotion and workplace accommodation practices.
- Hired one intern through the Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities (FIPCD) and one through the Live Work Play initiative.

### Built environment

- Secured consultants to conduct a physical audit of the office spaces within all buildings in the National Capital Region.
- Completed 65% of priority repairs on nine temporary offices.
- Held consultations with persons with disabilities.
- Leveraged the return-to-work application and secured accommodations for on-site workers.

### Information and communication technologies

- Raised awareness on the state of information and communication technologies (often called IT) accessibility and adoption of accessibility standards for all IT products.

## Statistics Canada: Road to Accessibility

- Established a preliminary listing of 800 existing applications that will be assessed to determine their accessibility compliance.
- Created the IT Accessibility Advisory Board to present, review and synchronize horizontal and vertical IT accessibility project work.

### Communication, other than information and communication technologies

- Launched a text to speech function on the StatCan website.
- Assessed internal communication products to meet accessibility requirements.
- Provided American Sign Language and langue des signes québécois interpretation for summary videos in support of census releases.
- Conducted accessibility checks for all client-facing communication products to ensure accessibility compliance prior to their release.
- Transformed two non-accessible communications (for instance, eliminated PDF [portable document format] and pop-up messages).

### Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

- Developed content and information about accessibility for the ICN page for business owners;
- Adjusted internal procedures and working documents to include accessibility requirements.
- Adjusted the Internal Procurement Audit Program to manually compile compliance on accessibility.
- Consulted with the Financial Management System to find a way to track accessibility requirements.

### Design and delivery of programs and services

- Initiated the review of current learning platforms that identified accessibility barriers.
- Developed a preliminary inventory of all services provided by StatCan as a baseline for future review.
- Initiated a pilot project to offer text-to-speech on several sites (Phase I included 12 modules).

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<sup>i</sup> Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (2020). [Glossary: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#).

<sup>ii</sup> [Accessible Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#). (2020). Appendix A.

<sup>iii</sup> [Accessible Canada Act](#). (2019). p.12.

<sup>iv</sup> [Accessible Canada Act](#). (2019). p.12.