



Canadian Northern Economic  
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de développement  
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# Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

## Accessibility Plan

**2022-2025**

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## Accessibility Statement for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)

CanNor is committed to fostering and preserving an inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible workplace where every employee is able to contribute to their fullest and to feel safe in bringing their authentic selves to work. Our vision is an organization that is representative of the population we serve, where the principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) are seamlessly embodied in everything we say and do, and where every employee feels responsible for upholding those principles. We know that accessibility is a journey and we are always looking for ways to enhance accessibility for employees and the clients we serve.

CanNor adheres to the philosophy “inclusion by design” which provides an inclusive and accessible work environment for employees where seeking accommodation is not required.

### General

The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency’s (CanNor) Accessibility Plan (2022 – 2025) aligns with the [Accessible Canada Act](#) and the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#) and is consistent with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#). This Plan strives for consistency with the Inclusion, Diversity, Employment and Accessibility (IDEA) Strategy and the Inuit Employment Plan (IEP).

To submit feedback on this Plan or on barriers within CanNor or accessing CanNor programs, please contact:

Roger Tetreault  
Director of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer  
[roger.tetreault@cannor.gc.ca](mailto:roger.tetreault@cannor.gc.ca)

### Background

The goal of the *Accessible Canada Act (2019)* is to have a barrier-free Canada by 2040. This requires the identification and removal of barriers, and the prevention of new barriers, in the following areas:

- employment
- built environment
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- communication (other than ICT)
- procurement of goods, services and facilities
- design and delivery of programs and services
- transportation

[Nothing Without Us: An Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#), released in May 2019, identified five key goals:

1. Improve recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities
2. Enhance the accessibility of the built environment
3. Make information and communications technology usable by all
4. Equip public servants to design and deliver accessible programs and services
5. Build an accessibility confident public service

## Employment

CanNor is committed to a workforce representative of the population we serve. We strive to ensure that HR systems and processes that impact recruitment, development and promotion are barrier-free.

### Goals:

- All job seekers, including those with disabilities, view CanNor as an employer of choice.
- Employees are confident that they will be supported to achieve their full potential while working at CanNor.
- According to Public Service Commission (PSC) data, persons with disabilities are under-represented by approximately 6% as of March 2021. CanNor will bridge this gap by 2025 by targeting employment opportunities through disability networks.

### Actions:

- Conduct an employment systems review to identify and address systemic and attitudinal barriers to employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and other employment equity groups. The review will be conducted in accordance with the [Employment Systems Review Guide](#) developed by the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO).
- Investigate and implement tools to expand CanNor's "reach" to recruitment of persons with disabilities.
- Create a compendium of recruitment tools and resources for managers and HR Advisors, with a focus on guides and best practices for barrier-free hiring. Promote the use of best practices during recruitment processes.
- Create and implement new wording for job advertisements detailing CanNor's commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.
- Implement the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport to facilitate conversations between employees and their managers about the tools and supports required for employees to perform at their best and succeed in the workplace.

## The Built Environment

Some CanNor employees in the Iqaluit office occupy Crown Housing through lease agreements with PSPC. According to the [National Joint Council Isolated Posts and Government Housing Directive](#):

Under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and the Treasury Board Policy on the Duty to Accommodate Persons with Disabilities in the Federal Public Service, as amended from time to time, it is the employer's duty to ensure that the employee with a disability(ies) is fully accommodated to the point of undue hardship. Decisions and practices flowing from this directive shall be inclusive and barrier free.

CanNor recognizes the challenges with availability of housing in Iqaluit and will continue to work with employees and PSPC to identify appropriate housing and solutions to accessibility issues.

### Goals:

- All office buildings occupied by CanNor are accessible to people with disabilities including a warm and welcoming environment, inclusive and comprehensive signage and wayfinding, barrier-free and safe circulation and safe entrance, exit and evacuation.
- Crown Housing is accessible and shortfalls are addressed in a timely manner.
- Employees are aware of and are able to receive immediate assistance with urgent common area accessibility issues (such as blocked ramp or malfunctioning door or elevator).
- Employees know who to contact to report an accessibility issue in the built environment.

### Actions:

- Consult with PSPC to conduct accessibility assessments in CanNor offices and engage with federal partners to address physical barriers.
- Consult with all employees to identify gaps in the built environment and workplace culture that contribute to a lack of accessibility.
- Liaise with Public Services and Procurement Canada to identify barriers in Crown Housing and develop a workplan to address those barriers.

CanNor does not own the office space it occupies in the four locations (Iqaluit, Yellowknife, Whitehorse and the National Capital Region). CanNor will engage with building management in each location and with Public Service Procurement Canada (PSPC) to address physical barriers.

## Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility is the digital equivalent of accessibility in the physical environment. CanNor believes that it is essential that all employees and clients can access information, perform tasks and receive the same service using information technology.

### Goals:

- All new systems, software, websites and equipment are accessible by all employees and clients/public (as applicable).
- CanNor employees have the hardware and software to carry out their responsibilities and know who to contact when issues are identified.

### Actions:

- In consultation with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), conduct an assessment of CanNor's digital accessibility using the [Government of Canada ICT Accessibility Scorecard](#) and develop a plan to improve upon deficiencies.
- Promote the tools and resources available for managers and employees such as the [Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology](#) (AAACT) team, the [Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund](#) and the [Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport](#).

CanNor receives IT services from other Government departments through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU).

## Communication (other than ICT)

CanNor is committed to communication products and activities that are accessible by default. Clear, direct and easy to understand communication removes barriers, and allows everyone to fully use the information and services, participate in consultations and conversations and attend events.

### Goals:

- Accessibility is given priority in the development of presentations and documents and is taken into account when planning events.
- CanNor employees are aware of accessibility issues and receive tools and training to meet established standards.
- All Accessibility Standards for internal and external web content are met.

#### Actions:

- Integrate the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) [Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#) when planning and developing communications products and activities.
- Promote the use of the [Digital Accessibility Toolkit](#).
- Continue to meet all accessibility standards for internal and external web content.

## Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Accessible procurement is about identifying accessibility barriers and how requirements can be defined to meet the needs of a broad range of end-users. The [Treasury Board Directive on the Management of Procurement](#) requires CanNor to consider accessibility during the procurement process.

The Directive states that:

- accessibility criteria must be included when specifying requirements for goods, services and construction,
- deliverables must incorporate accessibility features, and
- a justification is provided when accessibility criteria are not included.

CanNor recognizes that consideration of accessibility at the outset can cost less than adapting, modifying or replacing a product or service later.

#### Goals:

- Goods, services and facilities procured by CanNor are accessible without future modifications to meet accessibility standards.

#### Actions:

- Liaise with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) during the procurement process to ensure that accessibility is a primary consideration in the process.

CanNor receives procurement services from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) through an MOU.

## Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The [Nothing Without Us](#) strategy identifies the need to ensure that persons with disabilities, including employees and clients, have barrier-free access to programs and services.

#### Goals:

- New policies and programs are developed using accessibility as the default; CanNor employees have the skills to address accessibility at the design stage.
- CanNor programs for employees (e.g. training) are accessible to all employees.
- Funding program information and tools are available in multiple formats as requested by clients.

#### Actions:

- In consultation with persons with disabilities, identify barriers to accessing programs and funding.
- Build accessibility into all new policies and programs.
- Review existing program and funding information and, where necessary, prepare in alternate format.
- Consult with all employees to identify barriers to receiving accessible training that meets their needs.

## Transportation

CanNor has a corporate vehicle in each of the Iqaluit, Yellowknife and Whitehorse offices for employees to use in carrying out work-related responsibilities. The current vehicles are not accessible.

There are unique challenges with travel in the North that have caused CanNor employees to experience challenges with accessible travel to the point of concern for safety (e.g. difficulty getting on/off small aircrafts due to limited accessibility options).

#### Goals:

- Employees who are required to travel are accommodated in a way that is safe and preserves their dignity.

#### Actions:

- CanNor will explore, in consultation with Public Services and Procurement Canada and with other Federal Departments in Iqaluit, Yellowknife and Whitehorse, availability of an accessible vehicle for employees.
- Where a CanNor employee is unable to be accommodated by public transport safely, in a way that preserves their dignity, CanNor will work with the employee to explore alternatives that allow them to complete their responsibilities.



## Consultations

CanNor formed an Accessibility Committee to participate in the development of the Accessibility Plan. The Committee included employees with disabilities (visible and invisible) or with family members with disabilities, as well as subject matter experts in the seven identified areas. Employees from the four offices (Iqaluit, Yellowknife, Whitehorse and NCR) were included. The bargaining agents and senior management team were provided the opportunity to give feedback prior to the Plan being finalized.

## Next Steps

In January 2023, CanNor will begin the process of developing a workplan for meeting the goals identified in this Accessibility Plan and detailing the specifics involved in the actions. It is anticipated that the workplan will be completed by June 30, 2023.

This work will include:

- Consultation with all CanNor employees regarding barriers they have experienced in the workplace, including both physical and attitudinal.
- Consultation with bargaining agents.
- Consultation with clients regarding the accessibility of CanNor's programs and services.
- Liaising with CanNor partners including Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).
- Consultation with other Departments for best practices and lessons learned.

## Definitions

**Accommodation** means any change in the working environment that allows a person with a disability or functional limitation to do their job. Changes can include:

- adjustments to the physical workspace;
- adaptations to the equipment or tools;
- flexible work hours or job-sharing;
- relocation of the workspace within the greater workplace;
- the ability to work from home;
- reallocation or exchange of some non-essential tasks for others; and
- time off for medical appointments.

Accommodations (adjustments) can be temporary, periodic or long-term, depending on the employee's situation or changes in the workplace.

**Accessibility** is the practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful and usable for as many people as possible. Visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive and neurological disabilities should be considered when implementing accessibility measures.

**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. \*Attitudinal barriers (attitudes) are behaviours, perceptions and assumptions that discriminate against persons with disabilities. These barriers often emerge from lack of understanding, which can lead people to ignore, to judge, or have misconceptions about persons with disability.

**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.