

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Accessibility Plan

2023–2026

Canada

Ce document est aussi disponible en français.

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National Capital Commission
National Capital Commission Accessibility Plan 2023-2026
ISSN: 2817-0822

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Executive Summary

The *Accessible Canada Act* aims to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

The NCC has developed this Accessibility Plan to meet its responsibilities under the *Accessible Canada Act* and to persons with disabilities. This plan outlines the barriers that exist in the NCC, and over the next three years (2023–2026) we will identify the steps that we will take to remove them.

A key principle of the Act is “Nothing Without Us,” which means that persons with disabilities should be consulted when developing laws, regulations, policies, practices and programs. People with disabilities are in the best position to tell us about the barriers they face. As such, the contribution of NCC employees with disabilities has been instrumental in the development of this action plan.

The NCC also consulted with its partners in accessibility, such as the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Gender-based Analysis Plus Working Committee and the Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility on the development of this plan. All employees of the NCC were provided with an opportunity to identify barriers to accessibility through a survey.

Summary of the key barriers and actions to be taken

The NCC is implementing real solutions to address barriers to accessibility. The NCC’s actions will contribute to a National Capital Region that is accessible and a workforce that reflects the diversity of Canadians.

Key barriers identified	Actions to be taken by the NCC
<p>Barriers exist in a range of communications methods with the public and employees, particularly relating to digital communications.</p> <p>Accessibility standards are not fully met with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information available on the public website and intranet. • Public and internal events. • Software and equipment used by employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving public and internal communications during meetings and events and ensuring that digital communications are fully accessible. • Improving the NCC’s technology architecture and software systems to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 Level AA). • Conducting annual consultation and engagement activities with persons with disabilities.
<p>Some employee workspaces and some public amenities and spaces owned by the NCC are not fully accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striving to implement and exceed standards of Universal Accessibility in the NCC’s stewardship, design, signage and construction of public spaces and workplaces and in the design of public programs.

Key barriers identified	Actions to be taken by the NCC
<p>Training for employees to support awareness and accessibility are currently limited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementing training on accessibility and disability awareness, diversity and inclusion for employees, managers and executives.• Implementing practices aimed at embedding a culture of diversity and inclusion in the workplace to attract and retain employees, regardless of ability, age, gender and other identity factors.• Supporting committees that promote and support diversity, inclusion and accessibility matters on behalf of the NCC.
<p>Certain NCC policies and their supporting tools need reviews and updates to identify and eliminate barriers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued consultations with persons with disabilities (public and employees) on NCC’s Accessibility Plan, policies, programs and practices.• Updating and developing policies and guidelines to include accessibility requirements in multiple areas of responsibility, including short and long-term planning, design, construction, federal land use, IT systems, communications and human resources.

Accomplishments and highlights

While the NCC still has barriers to remove, we are proud of the many actions we have already taken to support accessibility in public places we manage and in our workplaces. In 2022, the advancement of diversity and inclusion was made one of the NCC’s main priorities.

The NCC has multiple active committees that work on issues related to accessibility. These are:

- The Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility (ACUA)
- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- The Gender-based Analysis Plus Working Committee
- Occupational Health and Safety Committees

The NCC is continually maintaining public sites we manage and our workplaces. We work hard to identify and correct safety hazards. We are also proud of the processes and approvals in place that help identify barriers for persons with disabilities and solutions when working on build projects. Major build projects that are, or will be, accessible to the public are presented to the Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility, and their input is used to adjust projects to make them more accessible. Universal accessibility is a guiding principle for the NCC’s workplace modernization project of the new headquarters building at 80 Elgin Street.

The NCC is in the process of updating some of the information technology systems and applications that we use, and we are working towards compliance with government universal accessibility standards. Recently, we have added captioning and video streaming for the NCC Headquarters boardroom where public meetings of the Board of Directors take place.

The NCC offers candidates accommodation measures when participating in staffing processes and has a dedicated staff member who helps new employees who need accommodations or ergonomic support. We have also added some required learning for employees to help them develop awareness about health and safety, gender-based analysis plus and harassment prevention, with more learning opportunities to come.

I. General

The Accessibility Plan for the National Capital Commission (NCC) aligns with the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA) and the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#).

Words used in this document that are related to accessibility are defined in the [Glossary](#).

Background

The [Accessible Canada Act](#) aims to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040. It is a federal law that involves identifying, removing and preventing new barriers to accessibility. The NCC is subject to the Act and, as such, we must:

- Publish an accessibility plan.
- Set up a process for receiving feedback about the plan and barriers to accessibility.
- Consult with persons with disabilities.
- Prepare progress reports on the implementation of the plan.
- Provide a description of the feedback process.
- Report to the [Accessibility Commissioner](#) every year.
- Carry out the NCC’s responsibilities by applying the [principles identified](#) in the Act.
- Update the accessibility plan every three years.

About the National Capital Commission

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is a federal Crown corporation established by the *National Capital Act* in 1959 and is also a federal separate agency, in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act* (Schedule V). The NCC is dedicated to ensuring that Canada's Capital Region is a dynamic and inspiring source of pride for all Canadians, and a legacy for generations to come. The NCC provides a unique value in the Capital Region with the support of its 500 employees by fulfilling three specific roles:

- Long-term planner of federal lands.
- Principal steward of nationally significant public places.
- Creative partner committed to excellence in development and conservation.

Our commitment to universal accessibility

The [2017 Canadian Survey on Disability](#) found that over 6.2 million people in Canada met criteria for having a disability. This includes over 6 million people with long-term health problems or conditions that fit into one or more of the ten [categories of disability](#).

This action plan supports the NCC's goals of ensuring inclusiveness and the richness of Canada's diversity are reflected in the stewardship of NCC assets, public spaces and the development of its workforce and workplace.

The NCC is committed to working towards the goals of the *Accessible Canada Act* by:

- Striving for a barrier-free NCC by 2040.
- Ensuring that the design of NCC lands that are accessed by the public and the services/amenities offered meet the Capital Design Guidelines.
- Implementing universal accessibility and championing the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility in its programs, policies, public spaces and workplaces.
- Working with and consulting persons with disabilities, organizations who advocate on their behalf and internal committees, to better understand the full range of diversity of the communities the NCC serves and to identify and address barriers to accessibility.
- Increasing its representation of persons with disabilities.
- Creating a work environment where everyone is treated with dignity, fairness and respect and where everyone can fully participate and contribute to the objectives of the NCC.

Contact information for the National Capital Commission

You may communicate with us about accessibility in the following ways:

- Telephone: 613-239-5000 or 1-800-465-1867 (toll-free)
- Teletypewriter (TTY): 613-239-5090 or 1-866-661-3530 (toll-free)
- [Canada Video Relay Service](#)
- Email: accessibility-accessibilite@ncc-ccn.ca
- Mail:
National Capital Commission
202–40 Elgin Street
Ottawa ON K1P 1C7

Address communications to:
Coordinator, Information Programs

II. Barriers and actions

The barriers and plans to remove and prevent them are grouped into seven priority areas.

1. Employment
2. The built environment
3. Information and communication technologies (ICT)
4. Communication other than ICT
5. The procurement of goods, services and facilities
6. The design and delivery of programs and services
7. Transportation

1. Employment

The NCC strives to be an employer of choice, for all people. We want to give persons with disabilities equal access to employment and advancement opportunities. We also want to offer them access to accommodations they need so they can contribute at their full potential as employees. It is important that all employees feel they belong within the NCC.

Barriers: Employment	Planned actions: Employment
<p>Knowledge and awareness about accessibility is limited.</p> <p>Employees may not have enough knowledge or awareness to apply an accessibility lens fully and effectively in their work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement accessibility and disability awareness and training requirements for employees, including managers, Human Resources advisors, executives and specialists.• Implement training and awareness sessions on diversity and inclusion, and unconscious bias for all employees.• Develop plans to improve the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities.• Implement the Gender-based Analysis Plus Training and Tool kit, and the Gender-based Analysis Plus Pilot Project Guidelines.

Barriers: Employment	Planned actions: Employment
<p>Workplace activities may not fully consider and support the needs of employees with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a campaign to encourage current employees who are part of designated employment equity groups to self-identify. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update the definition of ‘Disability’ for self-identification purposes. - Determine additional actions to develop a representative workforce. • Continue to look for ways to improve workplace culture through human resources programs and services. • Continue to promote inclusiveness in the workplace. • Identify ways to make sure that employees with disabilities are considered and included in the development of workplace activities and special events.
<p>There is no official procedure for communicating the availability of accommodations for candidates in staffing processes. This could lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates missing opportunities to request and receive accommodations. • Managers and Human Resources Advisors not knowing how to provide accommodations to candidates who have disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communications to applicants on how to request accommodations. • Improve communications to managers on how to provide accommodations to candidates during staffing processes. • Add information about the accommodations process into the onboarding process. • Explore the possibility of adopting the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport.

Barriers: Employment

Some human resources policies, procedures and employment systems use outdated language, approaches or practices that could contribute to systemic barriers to accessibility.

Planned actions: Employment

- Review the policies, procedures, programs technology systems, etc. and make recommendations on how to improve them.
 - Based on the recommendations, develop a plan to modernize Human Resources policies, programs and services to remove and prevent systemic barriers and to build trust with persons with disabilities.
- Include and consult committees and persons with disabilities in the redevelopment of Human Resources programs and policies.

Information technology used for staffing and performance management may not be fully accessible.

- Develop plans to remove and prevent barriers in systems used for staffing.
-

2. The built environment

The NCC is the primary federal urban planner and largest landowner in the National Capital Region. As such, we collaborate with stakeholders to use and develop the Capital’s natural and cultural character, with accessibility and environmental sensitivity, sustainability and best practices in mind.

We care for and protect vital public spaces that are unique to our nation’s symbolic, natural and cultural heritage. Our assets include Gatineau Park, the Greenbelt, the Rideau Canal Skateway, urban lands and parks, pathways, scenic parkways, real property and heritage buildings, agricultural and research facilities and commemorative monuments. We also care for the six official residences, their grounds and their ancillary buildings.

Barriers: Built environment

Inaccessibility in public spaces and assets:
Certain public spaces and assets (including trails, greenspaces, parks and boardwalks) have hazards and/or limited accessibility that require updating and/or restoration.

Planned actions: Built environment

- Include universal accessibility principles to design, construction and restoration of parks and green spaces.
- Apply universal accessibility standards to certain trails.
- Add a platform to the Mer Bleue boardwalk to improve accessibility.
- Continue to present all major build projects to the Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility and consider their input to make them more accessible.
- Create a template for accessibility assessment of NCC assets.
- Assess accessibility of five existing NCC buildings or sites.
- Make Accessibility Certification Training available as required.
- Continue to identify and monitor NCC lands and assets, including buildings and public sites for additional barriers.

Barriers: Built environment	Planned actions: Built environment
Barriers to accessibility have been identified on some public parkways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make public parkways more accessible through pilot projects.
There are physical barriers in the NCC's current headquarters. These barriers include the boardroom set-up, building entry points and the layout of floor plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate and work with persons with disabilities to ensure they can access the NCC headquarters safely.• Continue to monitor for additional barriers in NCC workspaces.• Follow universal accessibility design guidelines for the new NCC Headquarters.
Inaccessible work equipment: Equipment used by employees in the workplace may not be fully accessible or not meet accessibility standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consult staff on accessibility needs, requirements and equipment for the NCC's new Headquarters.• Inform managers of the process for requesting accessible equipment for employees.

3. Information and communication technology

The NCC provides corporate-wide information and communication technologies tools and services, information management and geomatics expertise, designed to ensure efficient and effective operations.

In the procurement process for information and communication technology, software and equipment, the NCC includes a preference for solutions that comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA (Web Accessibility Standard). These guidelines provide technical specifications to improve the accessibility of web content, websites and web applications across all devices for people with a wide range of disabilities — including hearing, cognitive, neurological, physical, visual and speech disabilities.

Barriers: Information and communication technology

Inaccessible software: Certain software solutions are non-compliant or partially compliant with the Treasury Board Secretariat, Web Accessibility Standard.

Planned actions: Information and communication technology

- Assess all software systems for compliance with the Web Accessibility Standard.
- Develop a strategy to resolve partial and non-compliance with the Web Accessibility Standard.
- Develop a technology architecture standard for accessibility.
- Identify and procure a tool to test accessibility compliance.
- Replace or modify information technology solutions to meet or exceed the Web Accessibility Standard.

4. Communication (other than information communication technology)

The NCC communicates with the public through multiple media, such as through webpage content, blog posts, media advisories, media clippings, news releases, closure advisories, media invitations, radio and print ads in local newspapers, as well as digital ads in online platforms and through social media. The NCC also creates visual communication materials, including photos, videos, infographics, maps, brochures, posters and signs.

The NCC interacts with the public during public consultations using online surveys, workshops and hosts public virtual or in-person events, such as Open NCC.

Barriers: Communication	Planned actions: Communication
Signage and wayfinding materials at public sites have not been assessed to consider universal accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct benchmarking studies on inclusive signage and updated signage.
Information about the level of accessibility of NCC-owned lands and assets is not well communicated. This applies to information that is available online or on public sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication materials as required and share more information on the accessibility of public spaces on our website.
Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) requests can only be made in writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update online information about transparency at the NCC and the Access to Information and Privacy request process.
The language used in communications and consultations can be at a high-literacy level and not all communications use plain language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft guidelines for employee on using plain language.

Barriers: Communication	Planned actions: Communication
<p>Not all communications use inclusive language or are available in various accessible formats. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audio-only materials such as meetings or speeches.• Visual materials such as images, maps, presentations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the Gender-based Analysis Plus Working Committee and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to explore ways to improve the use of inclusive language when communicating.• Draft guidelines for employees on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Applying an accessibility, inclusion and intersectional lens to content.- Creating accessible communications products, including web content, documents and visual materials.- Providing accessible services.- Hosting accessible meetings and events.
<p>Digital communications, including documents available on the NCC website and intranet, do not currently meet the Web Accessibility Standard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update the content of the NCC public website and intranet to ensure compliance with the Web Accessibility Standard.
<p>Internal surveys and report designs may not be fully accessible or available in alternative formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine how to make sure that surveys, consultations and report designs are compatible with accessibility software and meet accessibility requirements.• Make sure that all new and updated planning documents and communications are available in accessible formats and meet the Web Accessibility Standard.

5. The procurement of goods, services and facilities

The NCC procures a diverse and wide range of goods and services; as such, an NCC Procurement Policy has been established to guide NCC employees.

Barriers: Procurement	Planned actions: Procurement
<p>The NCC’s Procurement Policy and the processes for procuring goods and services does not consider accessibility requirements. It does not refer to the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i>, which may have an impact on procuring accessible goods and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and update the Procurement Policy and related procedures to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Include accessibility criteria and requirements for the procurement process for goods and services.- Include reference to the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i>.

6. The design and delivery of programs and services

The NCC is responsible for the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region. The NCC plans, regulates, designs, approves changes and coordinates the use of federally-owned lands in the National Capital Region to ensure they inspire Canadians, meet the needs of government and reflect the role and significance of the nation’s capital. The design and delivery of programs and services are wide-ranging.

Barriers: Design and delivery of programs and services	Planned actions: Design and delivery of programs and services
<p>Lack of design guidance on universal accessibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Capital Design Guidelines which includes guidance on accessibility and Gender-based Analysis Plus. • Develop a new approach to address universal accessibility within plans, policies and guidelines required under section 10 of the <i>National Capital Act</i>.
<p>Internal Statements of Requirements for the delivery of programs and services do not currently require an accessibility analysis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new procedures and update Statements of Requirements for reviewing and approving projects to ensure compliance with accessibility standards, building codes and relevant legislation. • Update the Statements of Requirements template to require an accessibility analysis for all projects.

**Barriers: Design and delivery
of programs and services**

Persons with disabilities are not always consulted in the design of program and services plans, surveys, reports and policies.

**Planned actions: Design and delivery
of programs and services**

- Implement a procedure for NCC planning initiatives to provide for consultations and to identify who will be consulted before consultations.
 - Develop a consultation review process for NCC long-range planning initiatives that includes a standard list of local and national stakeholders, partners and groups representing persons with disabilities.
-
- Refine and apply the accessibility checklist for public events.

Public events organized by the NCC may not fully consider accessibility requirements in their design and delivery.

7. Transportation

The NCC maintains a fleet of vehicles. These vehicles are used by staff for the ongoing daily operations of the NCC’s mandate and emergency response.

The fleet is made up of a variety of different types of vehicles, including standard and electric vehicles and bicycles. The NCC also maintains electric vehicle charging stations.

Barriers: Transportation

The NCC currently has enough vehicles in its fleet, but ongoing supply issues may make it difficult to obtain additional accessible vehicles and bikes if new needs are identified.

Planned actions: Transportation

- Continue to consult employees who use vehicles in the current fleet to identify accessibility issues and make modifications, as required.
-

III. Consultations

The Human Resources and Facilities Management Branch coordinated the consultation efforts on behalf of all branches of the NCC. All branches of the NCC contributed to the identification of barriers, the development of actions to resolve the barriers and the development of the NCC's Accessibility Plan.

We have consulted persons with disabilities in the preparation of this accessibility plan.

Internal experts on research and consultation helped develop the consultation plans.

Consultation process

Consultation activities:

- In past years, the NCC consulted with Council of Canadians with Disabilities on addressing barriers for people with disabilities within the NCC.
- The NCC has conducted multiple public surveys and studies that took accessibility into account over the last few years:
 - Two surveys (2021 and 2022) on the Active Use Program to make sure the program takes accessibility into account, as well as a separate study of similar programs across Canada.
 - Two studies that assessed how pathways are used, including by visitors who were travelling with a mobility aid.
 - A survey on the use of the Gatineau Park Summer Shuttle, which included a question on whether users have a disability.

- August 2022: Update provided to the Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility (ACUA) on the implementation of the Accessibility Plan and feedback was provided and taken into consideration.
- ACUA was provided with an opportunity to review and provide comments on the first draft before it was reviewed by the NCC's management team.
- October 2022: The NCC developed and conducted an internal survey that asked all staff about barriers and what solutions they would propose to address these barriers.
 - 76% of employees responded to this survey.
 - The results were used to validate barriers and the actions planned to address the barriers.
 - Employees were also given an opportunity to identify if they wanted to participate in focus groups related to accessibility and barriers in the NCC.
- Through October 2022, the first draft of the plan was provided to various internal committees such as the Labour Management Consultation Committee, Occupational Health and Safety Committee, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the Gender-based Analysis Plus Working Committee.
- In November 2022, the NCC's Executive Management Committee was consulted on the plan after it underwent a plain language review.
- In December 2022, the Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility was given another opportunity to provide feedback, prior to final approval.

This plan has been approved by the NCC's Executive Management Committee.

Continued consultation:

The NCC is committed to continued consultation with members of the public and employees who have disabilities and the organizations that support persons with disabilities, on their perspectives and experiences with the NCC. The consultation process will be ongoing. In the short-term, the NCC is planning to conduct focus groups and interviews with participants of the above-mentioned survey who expressed an interest in continued consultation. Results from the survey and focus groups will inform future consultations, progress reports and accessibility plans.

Glossary

Accommodation refers to any change in the working environment that allows people 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 person’s workspace.
- The ability to work from home.
- Reallocation or exchange of some non-essential tasks for others.
- Time off for medical appointments.

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

Attitudinal barriers 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.

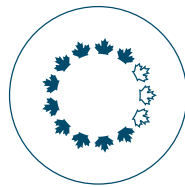
Barrier means anything — including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice — that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

Disability is 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.

Types of disabilities in the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability

- Seeing
- Hearing
- Mobility
- Flexibility
- Dexterity
- Pain-related
- Learning
- Developmental
- Mental health-related
- Memory

Inclusion is the act of including someone or something as part of a group. An inclusive workplace is fair, equitable, supportive, welcoming and respectful. Inclusion recognizes, values and leverages differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce Canada’s evolving human rights framework.



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