



Accessibility

Accessibility Plan for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

General

For the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (the Office of the Commissioner), the person responsible for receiving feedback on the accessibility plan is Johanne Morin, Director of Policy and Research, Policy and Communications Branch. All requests for accessible formats or about accessibility and barriers can be sent by email to johanne.morin@clo-ocol.gc.ca, by telephone to 1-613-894-9675 or by mail to 30 Victoria Street, 6th Floor, Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0T8.

Organization

The Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada is an agent of Parliament. The Commissioner reports directly to Parliament and is supported by the Office of the Commissioner.

The Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada has a mandate to take all measures within his power to ensure that the three main objectives of the Official Languages Act are met:

- Ensure the equality of English and French in Parliament, the Government of Canada, the federal administration and the institutions subject to the Official Languages Act*
- Support the preservation and development of official language minority communities in Canada.*
- Promote the equality of English and French in Canadian society.*

To fulfill its mandate, the Office of the Commissioner has 166 employees across Canada. Its head office is in Gatineau, Quebec, and it has five regional offices in Moncton, New Brunswick, Montréal, Quebec, Toronto, Ontario, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Edmonton, Alberta.

In the coming year, the Office of the Commissioner will launch initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion. The organization is currently under-represented in the following equity groups: visible minorities, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities. Delegated managers were individually encouraged in the spring of 2022 to take this into consideration when staffing. Among other initiatives, the Human Resources Directorate launched two processes/directories in the summer of 2022 that target employment equity groups so that managers have quick access to banks of resumé (transfer and casual).

The results of the 2020 Public Service Employee Survey showed that 88% of employees felt accepted as an equal member of the team and 92% felt that individuals in their work unit behave in a respectful manner.

The same survey results showed that 85% of employees thought that the Office of the Commissioner respects individual differences (e.g., culture, work styles, ideas, abilities). However, employees indicated that the organization could improve in implementing activities and practices that support a diverse workplace. Overall, 92% of employees felt

treated with respect at the Office of the Commissioner.

Accessible Canada Act

In 2018, the Government introduced Bill C-81: An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada (the Accessible Canada Act), which received royal assent in June 2019 and came into force on July 11, 2019. Its goal is for Canada to be without barriers by 2040.

Under the Accessible Canada Act, federally regulated entities must report to the public on their policies and practices in relation to the identification and removal of barriers by publishing their accessibility plans, feedback processes and progress reports.

The Accessible Canada Act takes a proactive and inclusive approach to identifying and eliminating barriers in the federal public administration. It includes seven areas for action:

- 1. Employment*
- 2. Built environment*
- 3. Information and communication technologies (ICT)*
- 4. Communication other than ICT*
- 5. Procurement of goods, services and facilities*
- 6. Design and delivery of programs and services*
- 7. Transportation*

Under this legislative initiative, the Office of the Commissioner is required to prepare and publish an accessibility plan by December 31, 2022, and to report annually on the plan's progress.

Methodology

The Office of the Commissioner's approach:

- Identify the project lead.*
- Identify a project representative in each branch or directorate.*
- Identify employees who could be consulted to ensure "nothing about us without us."*
- Identify existing practices and initiatives that are sector-specific and could be adopted as a best practice across the organization.*

- *Identify, remove and prevent barriers in the areas described in section 5 of the Accessible Canada Act*
- *Prepare an accessibility plan for the next three years.*

Action Plan

This document sets out the Office of the Commissioner's plan to reduce existing barriers and prevent new ones in the areas of focus in the Accessible Canada Act

The plan will be evergreen, as we work toward a more accessible organization from the perspective of our dedicated staff and of the Canadians we gratefully serve.

Although the Office of the Commissioner is recognized as having a workforce that is deeply committed to its mission and mandate, and as being an organization that embodies equity, diversity and inclusion, it is understood that there is always room for improvement. The following actions can therefore be viewed as ways to strengthen the Office of the Commissioner's fabric as it works toward being a more accessible organization.

Employment

Best practices

The Office of the Commissioner has been accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities since long before the Accessible Canada Act came into force. In all of our staffing processes, employees are asked to identify whether they need accommodation to be able to participate fully and equally in the staffing processes and to ensure that employment is not a barrier for them. Delegated managers sometimes use the services of the Public Service Commission's Personnel Psychology Centre to best identify an accommodation measure based on the disability. In the 2020 Public Service Employee Survey, 91% of employees who had requested workplace accommodation measures were satisfied with the measures that had been implemented.

Our manager's checklist for new employees includes a box requiring the manager to discuss the employee's accommodation needs prior to their arrival. All the necessary actions are taken to meet the needs of employees who need accommodation.

As part of our delegation requirements, all staffing subdelegated managers are required

to take the Canada School of Public Service course called "Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce."

Self-identification occurs once in the appointment phase where future employees are encouraged to self identify.

The Office of the Commissioner has an Employment Equity and Diversity Advisory Group and a champion of Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The Human Resources team works with the Champion to publish numerous communications on diversity and inclusion all year round. There is also a wide variety of information for employees available from the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer's Centre on Diversity and Inclusion.

Barriers identified:

- *The Statement of Merit Criteria and method of assessment are not always accessible and inclusive.*
- *Managers and employees may have an unconscious bias.*
- *Human Resources forms and documents are not all available in an accessible format.*
- *Employees are not aware of their obligations related to accessibility.*

The following initiatives will contribute to moving toward a more accessible OCOL.

Year 1 - 2023

- *Require all employees to take the Canada School of Public Service's online course (mandatory for all employees): [Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility](#) (2 hours).*
- *Remind employees of the Office of the Commissioner's accessibility plan and encourage them to identify barriers to the identified personnel.*
- *Launch a new call letter for self-identification.*
- *Increase use of the available central agency Persons with disabilities inventories (e.g., FSWEP).*
- *Assign the accessibility function to the Champion of Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.*

Year 2 - 2024

- *Add a section to the Office of the Commissioner's intranet site to refer*

employees to all of the resources and information available on accessibility.

- *Implement the new requirement of the Public Service Employment Act related to assessment methods by using the Public Service Commission guide entitled Identification of biases and barriers in assessment methods.*
- *Remind employees of the Office of the Commissioner's accessibility plan and encourage them to identify barriers to the identified personnel.*
- *Repeat call letter for self-identification annually.*
- *Increase use of the available central agency Persons with disabilities inventories (e.g., FSWEP).*
- *Conduct an employment equity systems review of systems, processes and policies to identify gaps and address identified issues.*
- *Liaise with the Office of Public Service Accessibility to determine whether best practices can be adopted by the Office of the Commissioner.*
- *Research Federal Speakers Bureau on Diversity and Inclusion for a speaker to give a presentation to all staff (e.g., annual general meeting, GCWCC).*
- *Offer training to all staff on creating accessible documents/emails.*
- *Offer plain language training to all employees.*
- *Add to the manager's checklist on performance management a requirement to take the courses on plain language and creating accessible documents, if applicable.*

Year 3 - 2025

- *Review and modify employment documents (e.g., forms) to ensure they are in an accessible format.*
- *Remind employees of the Office of the Commissioner's accessibility plan and encourage them to identify barriers to the identified personnel.*
- *Repeat call letter for self-identification annually.*
- *Promote the LiveWorkPlay Program.*
- *Increase use of the available central agency Persons with disabilities inventories (e.g., FSWEP).*

Built environment

Best practices

Accessibility standards were taken into consideration when designing the 2022 office reconfiguration.

Administrative Services ensure that the building is accessible.

Administrative Services follow Health and Safety Committee recommendations regarding accessibility.

Best practices currently in effect:

- *Review the emergency evacuation procedures and update as required to ensure that the buddy system is in place and working.*
- *Ensure that there is a volunteer system for workplace emergencies and provide the required training.*
- *Update the Fire Warden lists and ensure that training has taken place.*
- *Ensure that CPR training recipients are identified and trained.*
- *Ensure that regular occupational health and safety (OHS) monitoring is conducted and that incidents are properly recorded.*
- *Ensure that identified OHS safety issues are addressed.*
- *Ensure that the office redesign puts the latest accessibility standards into practice.*
- *Ensure that the list of mobility-impaired people is updated frequently.*

Barriers identified:

- *Some of the record rooms may not meet all accessibility requirements.*
- *Not all doors are equipped with handicap push plates.*
- *Buildings in the regions may not be completely accessible.*

Year 1 - 2023

- *Review signage and wayfinding design.*
- *Document evacuation plans for employees with disabilities.*
- *Develop accessibility checklist for inspections.*

Year 2 - 2024

- *Review building and workplace accessibility in all regions.*

- *Conduct a review of physical barriers on the premises.*

Year 3 - 2025

- *Analyze feasibility of reviewing built environment against the requirements of the most current version of CSA B651-18.*
- *Review building and workplace accessibility in all regions.*
- *Ask Public Services and Procurement Canada to ensure that smoke alarms, fire alarms and other emergency alarms are visual as well as auditory.*

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Best practices

The Office of the Commissioner follows the Treasury Board's Standard on Web Accessibility.

Workstations are equipped to accommodate employees' needs.

The Information Technology (IT) team responds quickly to all accommodation requests.

Barriers identified:

- *Some applications may not meet all accessibility standards.*
- *We may not know all of the accessibility standard requirements.*

Year 1 - 2023

- *Research available accessibility standards.*
- *Identify and adopt the accessibility standard that corresponds to the Office of the Commissioner's needs.*
- *Consult with the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology program on leading-edge technology.*

Year 2 - 2024

- *Conduct a gap analysis on the standards currently being used for applications and equipment.*

- *Require accessibility clauses to be included in technology acquisition contracts.*
- *Explore opportunities for more accessible collaborative technology, including Teams (e.g., closed captioning, recording).*
- *Help other branches, as required, if Canadians have technological difficulties in filling forms and accessing and leveraging services from the Office of the Commissioner.*

Year 3 - 2025

- *Develop a multi-year action plan to address the results of the gap analysis.*
- *Require accessibility clauses to be included in technology acquisition contracts.*
- *Consult with and join the GCconnex and GCcollab communities of practice to identify best practices and share lessons learned on complying with accessibility requirements.*

Communication other than ICT

Best practices

An external resource was contracted to review all of the interpretation bulletins published on the Office of the Commissioner's website to ensure that they all are written in plain language.

Our web content management system supports accessibility.

When publicly available on-line videos are posted, captions are integrated into the video or transcriptions are added when there is only text in the video.

Transcripts are available for web content and social media posts (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube).

Descriptions are now added to images on social media to make them more accessible.

The autogenerated forms on the Office of the Commissioner's website are designed for accessibility.

Colour contrast is taken into consideration when developing web content.

Appropriate headings are used to organize the structure of web content.

All web content can be accessed with a keyboard alone in a logical way.

Barriers identified:

- *Documents and presentations created by employees of the Office of the Commissioner, whether for internal or external use, are not always accessible.*
- *Meetings, events or training organized for internal or external use do not always take accessibility requirements into consideration.*

Year 1 - 2023

- *Avoid using GIFs and emojis in social media posts.*
- *Use colour contrast appropriately on social media platforms.*
- *Perform general website maintenance to ensure that material is current and determine whether it needs to be archived or brought up to standard.*
- *Follow the guidelines on making communication products and activities accessible, when appropriate.*
- *Ensure that communication products are developed with an accessibility lens.*

Year 2 - 2024

- *Create a checklist for employees to ensure that all documents posted on the Office of the Commissioner's website is accessible and written in plain language, where possible.*
- *Modify presentation and document templates so that they are compliant with accessibility requirements and post them on the Office of the Commissioner's intranet site.*
- *Avoid using GIFs and emojis in social media posts.*
- *Use colour contrast appropriately on social media platforms.*
- *Share accessible communications knowledge with other branches through awareness sessions and material (e.g., formatting, italics, columns, colour contrast, pictures, bullets, font size).*
- *Follow the guidelines on making communication products and activities accessible, when appropriate.*
- *Ensure that our webmaster uses ARIA roles on the website.*

- *Make our web design responsive.*
- *Ensure that communication products are developed with an accessibility lens.*

Year 3 - 2025

- *Ensure that OCOL meetings/events/training take accessibility requirements into consideration by creating a checklist for organizers.*
- *Adapt existing presentations with the new presentation template.*
- *Avoid using GIFs and emojis in social media posts.*
- *Consider producing key documents in alternate formats—such as braille, large font, etc.—as required.*
- *Use colour contrast appropriately on social media platforms.*
- *Follow the guidelines on making communication products and activities accessible, when appropriate.*
- *Create a checklist to ensure that documents produced by clients are in an accessible format before being posted on the intranet site (e.g., news feeds).*
- *Ensure that communication products are developed with an accessibility lens.*

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

Best practices

The request for goods and services form includes an accessibility attestation section that helps employees identify accessibility considerations when specifying requirements for goods or services to ensure that deliverables include accessibility features. A checklist has been developed to help the organization's business owners identify accessibility requirements by providing different scenarios where accessibility could be considered.

Request for proposal documents used by the procurement team are accessible. The Office of the Commissioner uses Public Services and Procurement Canada templates that are in an accessible format.

Barriers identified:

- *Procurement forms and documents not all available in an accessible format.*
- *Business owners are not aware of their accessibility obligations when it comes to*

contracting for goods or services.

Year 1 - 2023

- *Liaise with Public Services and Procurement Canada to determine accessibility clauses that can be added to procurement documents.*
- *Keep abreast of Public Services and Procurement Canada improvements with respect to accessible procurement and implement them where possible.*
- *Review the accessibility attestation form used by the organization's business owners with a view to capturing more information.*
- *Network through the GCpedia community of practice to determine and adopt best practices.*
- *Research and participate in any Government of Canada training/event as it relates to accessible procurement.*
- *Take Canada School of Public Service courses on readability and converting documents into PDF for people with visual impairments.*
- *Explore contracting opportunities to access alternative accessibility services, as required, to address ad-hoc situations (e.g., sign language interpretation services, braille publication services).*

Year 2 - 2024

- *Keep abreast of Public Services and Procurement Canada improvements with respect to accessible procurement and implement them where possible.*
- *Monitor the Government of Canada's Accessibility Hub and adopt best practices, as appropriate.*

Year 3 - 2025

- *Keep abreast of Public Services and Procurement Canada improvements with respect to accessible procurement and implement them where possible.*
- *Monitor the Government of Canada's Accessibility Hub and adopt best practices, as appropriate.*
- *Review current procurement documentation with a view to simplifying where possible, enhancing readability and improving user friendliness.*
- *Review accessible procurement material on the intranet site and update, as required.*

Design and delivery of programs and services

Best practices

Various feedback options (in writing, by email) are provided after presentations/communications to federal institutions, staff and complainants.

Barriers identified:

- *Taking accessibility into consideration while ensuring that communication products are attractive and appealing to our younger audience.*
- *The current online complaint form and satisfaction survey do not include a question related to accessibility or special needs.*
- *Main points of contact with the public for investigations and follow-ups are not available in an accessible format.*

Year 1 - 2023

- *Review all templates and communication materials related to investigations and follow ups to address accessibility issues.*
- *Review our service points to ensure that they comply with accessibility requirements and use the satisfaction survey to ask whether any barriers to accessibility were identified.*

Year 2 - 2024

- *Modify the online complaint form to ask whether complainants have special needs or require accommodation.*

Transportation

Best practices:

Not applicable.

Barriers identified:

- *No barriers have been identified because the Office of the Commissioner does not have a transportation mandate.*

Consultation

The Office of the Commissioner consulted with its employees with disabilities in the preparation of this plan and gave them an opportunity to contribute.

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