

Elections Canada's  
**Accessibility Plan**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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- General.....3**
- Accessibility at Elections Canada.....4**
- Consultations.....6**
  - Accessibility Barriers ..... 7
  - Legislative Barriers..... 9
- Our Accessibility Commitments..... 11**
  - Promoting Literacy on Accessibility and Enabling Delivery of Accessible Products and Services..... 11
  - Employment..... 12
  - The Built Environment..... 14
  - Information and Communication Technologies ..... 15
  - Communications ..... 16
  - Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities..... 17
  - Design and Delivery of Programs and Services ..... 18
  - Transportation..... 22
  - Election Delivery through Field Operations in Electoral Districts..... 23
- Reporting .....25**
- Glossary..... 26**

# GENERAL

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To request a copy of Elections Canada's Accessibility Plan in print, large print, braille, audio format or another accessible format, receive information about our feedback process, or send us feedback to improve our services, please contact:

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# ACCESSIBILITY AT ELECTIONS CANADA

The *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)*, which came into force on July 19, 2019, requires that organizations under federal responsibility work toward identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility. Its goal is to create a barrier-free Canada by 2040. The ACA identifies seven priority areas where organizations must ensure the full and equal participation of people with disabilities:

1. employment;
2. the built environment (buildings and public spaces);
3. information and communication technologies;
4. communication, other than information and communication technologies;
5. the procurement of goods, services and facilities;
6. the design and delivery of programs and services;
7. transportation.



As an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to the Parliament of Canada, Elections Canada's mandate is to deliver federal elections, by-elections and referendums and to administer the financial provisions of the [Canada Elections Act](#) (CEA). We work to make sure that all eligible Canadians can exercise their democratic rights to vote and to be a candidate. We are committed to making sure that our services are inclusive of, and accessible to, all Canadians, including employees of Elections Canada and members of the public with disabilities.

We are also committed to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the electoral process, which is to be achieved through the removal of barriers by 2040, as required by the ACA. We are, therefore, pleased to present our roadmap on the steps that we will be taking toward greater inclusion of people with disabilities.

Elections Canada is made up of close to 500 core employees working mostly in the National Capital Region under a flexible hybrid work model. During a general election or referendum, returning officers recruit more than 235,000 election worker positions filled across the country.

A returning officer is appointed to administer the election in each electoral district.<sup>1</sup> The CEA distinguishes between the role and powers of Elections Canada and those of returning officers. The latter are not employees of Elections Canada or the public service. Under the CEA, they find and lease buildings for local offices and polls and appoint and train local office staff and poll workers. While Elections Canada provides general oversight and can set policies, we do not control all aspects of how an election is delivered, and the CEA may limit our ability to address or remove certain barriers.

**The commitments outlined in this first Accessibility Plan fall under four themes:**

- 1.** Creating an organization that is literate when it comes to accessibility

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- 2.** Developing services and processes that are accessible to, and inclusive of, employees with disabilities

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- 3.** Making sure that new products and services are user-friendly and accessible

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- 4.** Improving the accessibility of our programs and services for Canadians

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<sup>1</sup> Currently there are 338 electoral districts.

# CONSULTATIONS

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Following the principle of “Nothing Without Us,” we developed this Accessibility Plan in consultation with the [Advisory Group for Disability Issues \(AGDI\)](#), which has been Elections Canada’s main consultation body on accessibility matters since 2014. In March and September 2022, we held online meetings with the AGDI where we discussed the Accessibility Plan. We focused on validating barriers that were touched on in the Plan and the strategies we would use to address them in each of the priority areas set out in the ACA. On top of engaging the AGDI on the scope of the Accessibility Plan, we also had several in-depth consultations on specific projects and initiatives that are included in it, such as:

- the project on the technology used to help blind and partially sighted electors to vote;
- our civic education program;
- the initiative on the Future of Work and Workplace Transformation;
- the recruitment of returning officers;
- voting and registration services.

We also formed a user group to advise the agency on the needs in voting technology of blind and partially sighted electors. We will continue to engage the AGDI and other stakeholders as we implement the Plan and prepare our progress reports.

Along with the AGDI, we consulted employee representatives from various employment equity-seeking groups, among them, those whose members self-identify as persons with a disability. Key decision-making groups that were involved in developing the Accessibility Plan included representatives of people with disabilities. Also, our internal initiative on employment equity, diversity and inclusion held a speaker series where persons with disabilities shared their experience and expertise on creating an inclusive culture. These sessions provided key information on ableism, micro-aggressions, accommodations and intersectionality, which influenced the direction of this plan.

To identify barriers, we also consulted with people within the agency, using assessment tools from the Office of Public Service Accessibility; feedback and complaints from members of the public; as well as some of our [post-election reports and studies](#) on the voting experience of people with disabilities. We also used reports by Statistics Canada from the [Canadian Survey on Disability](#) to further understand barriers faced by employees of the federal government and members of the public.

To make sure that, when developing this Accessibility Plan, we considered the perspectives of local field staff who deliver elections, we convened a group of election administrators (returning officers and field liaison officers) from across the country to advise Elections Canada on barriers faced at the local level. The group included three election administrators from Quebec, two from Alberta, and one each from Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, British Columbia and Ontario, some of whom identified as having a disability or who said they were interested in, or had previous

experience with, accessibility. Election administrators gave insight on accessibility, based on their experience in delivering elections locally, in different geographic settings (urban and rural) as well as in contexts that were diverse in terms of language and culture.

Moving forward, Elections Canada will continue to engage on this plan with the AGDI, employees and stakeholders to make sure that it evolves with changing accessibility needs. This plan also outlines how, when enhancing accessibility, we will more consistently consider user testing as feedback in order to meet the needs of end-users.

## Accessibility Barriers

### Training and awareness

As staff become more aware of accessibility barriers through initiatives of the Government of Canada and Elections Canada in accessibility and employment equity, diversity and inclusion, they are also more aware of gaps in training and knowledge when it comes to making services and programs more accessible. A key component of the plan will be to increase literacy on accessibility within the agency and develop support tools for staff to incorporate accessibility by design.

### Inaccessible applications and legacy systems

Over the years, Elections Canada has developed a wide array of IT systems, databases and applications that are not fully accessible and are becoming obsolete. While the accessibility of our digital products and services for external users has been a top priority, there is work to be done within the agency to make sure that all new systems and digital assets, whether they are meant to be used by the public or our staff, meet accessibility standards. As such, many of our accessibility initiatives will be aligned with our Digital Transformation Strategy, whereby all new digital tools and services should be accessible by design.

### Employment

Currently at the headquarters of Elections Canada, 4.2% of staff, or 39 individuals, identify as a person with a disability. This figure includes indeterminate employees and term employees of three months or more. Employees on leave without pay, casual employees, students and employees who are seconded into the agency or contracted resources are not included in this figure. According to the estimated availability of the workforce in the public service, as provided by the Treasury Board Secretariat, Elections Canada would need to onboard 47 more people with disabilities to close the gap. To effectively meet or exceed gaps in representation in its workforce, the agency will need to address barriers that people with disabilities face through their employment journey, from the process of recruitment, hiring, career development, and accommodation request to self-identification.

## **Built environment**

Of Elections Canada's three workplace locations, two are considered accessible and subject to continual audits and improvements. However, a major barrier in these locations is the separation of responsibility between the landlord and the tenant; we can only make changes to the physical environment directly inside of the space that we lease, which does not account for parking, elevators, or other common areas. The Distribution Centre at 440 Coventry also has significant physical barriers, such as a lacking passenger elevator, narrow stairs, little to no natural light, leveling issues, air circulation issues, no accessible washrooms and inaccessible equipment. The building was constructed in 1968 and looks like a typical warehouse of that era and, as such, the agency may need to use another location.

## **Polling locations**

After an election is called, returning officers are required to find and lease polling stations that are accessible to electors with disabilities, as required by the CEA. Returning officers use a list of 39 accessibility criteria—15 of which are mandatory—to assess whether potential polling stations are suitable. Polling stations must be confirmed quickly so that voter information cards can be printed and mailed to electors. In some places, there may be few available polling places that are accessible, which may mean that returning officers can only lease inaccessible voting facilities. When facilities do not meet the mandatory accessibility criteria, returning officers must get authorization from the Chief Electoral Officer before they can sign a lease. Returning officers who cannot lease polling locations that meet all mandatory accessibility criteria must also consider whether they can take steps to mitigate the accessibility issues, such as posting more staff at a door that does not have an automatic door opener. The CEA allows for electors with disabilities to vote in another accessible location by way of a transfer certificate, although this creates a barrier for those who may have to travel farther to get to an accessible polling station.

## **Election campaigns**

During federal elections, people with disabilities often report barriers to accessing information from candidates and political parties. While Elections Canada provides guidance to political participants about how to make their communications and events accessible, and has made recommendations to Parliament that have resulted in the adoption of an accessibility expenses regime for candidates and parties, political participants are responsible for adopting accessibility best practices and standards. Still, Elections Canada will continue to engage with political participants to promote accessibility throughout the electoral process.



## Voting process

One key priority for the agency is to remove barriers that prevent the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in exercising their right to vote. At this time, the independent verification of a marked ballot remains a barrier for people who are blind and partially sighted. There are also issues with assistance in marking a ballot, proving identity, voting by special ballot and inaccessible voting locations. These often create more challenges for people with disabilities when voting. While Elections Canada has made much progress in making voting more accessible, at times there is not enough flexibility to effectively accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. Prescriptions in the CEA related to the use of paper ballots and the procedures for voting by special ballot, for example, reflect the consideration of competing interests, which may result in barriers for electors with a disability or hinder the use of adaptive measures.

## Legislative Barriers

Elections Canada also analyzed the CEA to identify accessibility barriers resulting from legislation. The agency is a statutory body, meaning that it is created by the CEA and can only exercise the powers and fulfill the roles given to it by that Act. Barriers that result from the CEA itself can only be removed by Parliament and not by Elections Canada. Some legislative barriers have been highlighted in past recommendations reports of the Chief Electoral Officer to Parliament and specific recommendations have been made to Parliament to remove or reduce certain barriers to voting. However, while the Chief Electoral Officer can make recommendations, only Parliament can decide whether or how to act on these recommendations. We have identified the following barriers and potential barriers:

- Sections 26 and 29 together mean that there must always be an assistant returning officer in each electoral district. An assistant returning officer who cannot fulfill their duties must be discharged and replaced, even if the inability to work is related to a disability and is temporary. The lack of authority to appoint a temporary or acting assistant returning officer means that the assistant returning officer cannot take disability leave.
- During an election, the person in control of a building with many dwellings can deny entry to election officers if they think that the residents' physical or emotional well-being may be harmed by letting the election activities go on, even if the person is basing that decision on stereotypes, thereby limiting the electors' right to vote (section 43.1(2)).
- Sections 115 and 116 together create a requirement for paper ballots, which limits the accommodation measures that Elections Canada can offer for voting.
- Sections 121(4) and 151(1) require that the ballot be marked by hand, which limits the accommodation measures Elections Canada can offer for voting.
- Section 127 limits the ways to vote to voting in person or by special ballot, which limits the accommodation measures Elections Canada can offer for voting.

- A number of provisions require that someone voting by special ballot vote by writing the first and last name of their preferred candidate, which may create a barrier for people who are blind, those with limited use of their hands, and those with intellectual or learning disabilities (sections 213(2), 227(2) and (3), and 258(2)).
- Some sections that allow for someone to help an elector mark their special ballot include specific requirements for the person who is helping to mark the ballot, even if the elector is able and wants to mark the ballot themselves (sections 216(1), 243(1), 243.1(1), and 259(1)).
- Forms 3 and 4 of Schedule 1 are images that show how the ballot and special ballot must look, and Elections Canada has very limited discretion to make changes.

# OUR ACCESSIBILITY COMMITMENTS

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## ✓ Promoting Literacy on Accessibility and Enabling Delivery of Accessible Products and Services

A top priority for Elections Canada is to promote literacy on accessibility across the organization. This is to make sure that staff have the knowledge and tools they need to effectively identify, remove and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of employees and members of the public with disabilities. To this end, we will:

### By 2024:

- Include learning objectives into plans on employee performance and learning and create an inventory of upcoming training opportunities on accessibility;
- Create an accessibility office to support the implementation of the Accessibility Plan by:
  - Offering guidance and expertise on accessibility standards and regulations, beginning with digital accessibility standards for Web products and forms;
  - Supporting the design of accessible and user-centric products and services through accessibility and usability testing;
  - Regularly sharing with staff information and resources on accessibility to educate them on the needs of persons with disabilities and to help in the design of products, programs and services that respond to accessibility needs;
  - Streamlining the process to receive and track feedback, complaints, and accommodation requests from members of the public and employees of Elections Canada;
  - Viewing through an accessibility lens the drafting and review of corporate policies, guidelines and directives;
  - Reviewing and/or updating key policy instruments with links to accessibility, including but not limited to Elections Canada's regulatory policy instruments on the [selection of suitable polling places](#) and the [accessibility policy and service offering](#).
  - Reviewing internal and external forms based on accessibility standards and user testing and develop guidance on creating new forms;
  - Building relationships with other departments and electoral management bodies to keep best practices for digital accessibility up to date;

### Performance indicator:

- Staff have access to the training, expertise, resources and tools they need to integrate accessibility into their processes.

## Employment

To address the gaps in representation at all levels of the agency and promote the hiring, retention and development of people with disabilities, Elections Canada will implement a strategy for Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI). It will also aim to reduce barriers in attitudes by creating an environment where employees feel welcome, included and safe. To this end, we will:

### By 2024:

- Address the barriers people with disabilities face through the newly launched EEDI recruitment strategy that focuses on having more people from all employment equity-seeking groups at all levels of the agency.
  - There are three key EEDI recruitment priorities: (1) increase awareness and engagement at all levels; (2) improve planning processes in recruitment and tools; and (3) focus recruitment based on workforce data.
  - Recruitment efforts for headquarters staff of Elections Canada will need to use the newly developed EEDI recruitment matrix to identify the appropriate measures to implement, based on the individual gaps of each team.
  - Once the new self-identification form is in place, we will conduct a blitz to update our data on employment equity-seeking groups.
  - Broaden our communication channels to reach communities that would otherwise not be informed about our recruitment efforts.
  - The outcomes of the employment systems review may require that we refine our recruitment efforts.
- Conduct an employment systems review of our policies and practices to identify barriers that are systematic and attitudinal among headquarters employees. Once these are identified, they will serve as the basis for a review of the problems identified. We will then update policies, materials, processes and procedures and address the barriers to systematically remove them and create more accessible and inclusive processes.
  - We will consider as barriers unnecessary job requirements, inappropriate screening and selection criteria, issues with the duty to accommodate, physical and technological barriers.
- Begin to integrate programs and tools in accessibility that are being developed at the public service level, such as the Workplace Accessibility Passport and the Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities.
- Implement a program on leadership development for middle managers that gives priority to people from equity-seeking groups.
- Continue to raise awareness about the perspectives of people with disabilities in the workplace via the EEDI speaker series that is driven mainly toward creating a more inclusive culture.

## Performance indicators:

- Elections Canada closes the representation gap of employees with disabilities and there is an increase in self-identification rates.
- Staff have the accessible tools and accommodations needed to conduct their work.

## The Built Environment

**Note:** Elections Canada buildings can be grouped into two general categories: the buildings and facilities that Elections Canada headquarters is occupying in the long term; and those leased for short periods during an election (including polls and local Elections Canada offices across Canada). These two categories involve different accessibility considerations. This section deals specifically with the buildings and facilities of Elections Canada headquarters.

Through the strategy called “Future of Work and Workplace Transformation,” Elections Canada will address access barriers at workplaces and facilities of Elections Canada headquarters by adapting them based on up-to-date accessibility standards. We will also aim to improve the accessibility of Elections Canada workplaces and the on-site experience of people with disabilities by gathering evidence to make informed decisions. Facilities, through daily operations in collaboration with Occupational Health and Safety, Security Services, the property manager and owner, will monitor accessibility standards and continue to implement improvements. To this end, we will:

### By 2024:

- Ask for feedback on accessibility to assess employee satisfaction with the accessibility of our workplaces;
- Inform employees and managers about how to report through the [National Service Call Centre](#) accessibility issues faced at facilities of Elections Canada headquarters;
- Review the evacuation plan of the agency against the latest accessibility standards in order to improve the on-site experience for people with disabilities;
- Consult people with disabilities on future workplace enhancements and develop a plan to address accessibility issues with the built environment that cannot be easily fixed.

### Performance indicator:

- Employees with disabilities are satisfied with our workplaces, based on employee surveys and complaints.

## Information and Communication Technologies

Elections Canada will cast a lens that is based on accessibility by design and new digital products and services, and, where doable, will implement accessibility enhancements for existing digital products.

We will continue to:

- Enable, where possible, approved accessibility features that are aligned with the accessibility standards currently available on IT systems and solutions;
- Continually assess and test our IT services and solutions to meet accessibility standards;
- Make available assistive technology to employees with disabilities who request accommodation;
- Leverage the process of procurement and contracting to deliver the most accessible IT solutions possible.

### Performance indicators:

- Employees with disabilities have access to accessible IT equipment, software and tools to do their job.
- More IT products meet or exceed accessibility standards.

## **Communications**

During federal elections, the fully accessible website of Elections Canada informs electors on when, where and the ways to register and vote. We provide information in plain language in various accessible formats such as large print, braille, audio and ASL/LSQ video.

Moving forward, Elections Canada will make sure that communications with employees, members of the public, and political participants meet the current accessibility and plain language standards; and it will develop products that are accessible and easy to use. To this end, we will:

### **By 2024:**

- Have contracts with key service providers and suppliers to make information available in accessible formats and begin to offer more products in alternate formats outside the election period for all information campaigns (videos with ASL/LSQ, large print or braille);
- Continue to assess the agency's websites in order to meet the most up-to-date accessibility standards and develop a plan to make content more/fully accessible, where necessary;
- Follow Government of Canada guidelines for accessible communications;
- Review internal communications and their respective channels and develop a plan to make content accessible or more accessible, where applicable;
- Make sure that employees are informed of the communication tools and services available to make their products and content accessible by design.

### **By 2028:**

- Develop a corporate service to provide quality assurance for products developed in accessible formats across the agency;
- Make sure that Elections Canada is staffed to apply accessible design and plain language standards that result from the introduction of new accessibility standards;
- Develop a website and app design system.

### **Performance indicators:**

- Communication products, services and channels meet or exceed communication standards for accessibility.
- Information in alternative formats is available to electors who need it.



## **Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities**

Elections Canada will engage people with disabilities with respect to barriers in the procurement process and guide business owners at Elections Canada and external suppliers on integrating accessibility considerations and standards into the procurement of goods and services. To this end, we will:

### **By 2024:**

- Complete an accessibility assessment when making new procurement requests;
- Seek feedback through consultations on the accessibility of the procurement process;
- Leverage relationships with other departments, share process improvements, tools and training.

### **By 2028:**

- Review procurement documents for standards on accessibility and plain language;
- Review the procurement process in terms of accessibility in order to meet or exceed best practices that have been set out for federal departments and agencies;
- Develop strategies and tools for procurement that include socio-economic considerations in determining best value of proposals, including provisions for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups;
- Work with the accessibility office of Elections Canada to implement internal governance in order to develop strategies to mitigate procurements that cannot meet accessibility standards;
- Analyze data on the inclusion of considerations in accessibility for all procurements and develop a plan to implement enhancements.

### **Performance indicator:**

- Accessibility assessments are completed and new procurement requests comply with accessibility standards.

## Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

### Registration and Voting Services

Elections Canada will continue to make registration and the voting experience more accessible for electors, following design principles that are inclusive and universal, as permitted by the CEA. To make voting more accessible for Canadians, we will:

#### By 2024:

- Test assistive technology for advance and election day polls that were designed to help voters who are blind or partially sighted to verify the mark on their ballot independently;
- Conduct a preliminary analysis of video interpretation services given to electors who use ASL and LSQ;
- Review operational and training manuals and resources for plain language and accessibility;
- Perform accessibility upgrades and usability testing on the [Online Voter Registration Service](#);
- Explore ways to make the paper voter information card more accessible and begin to assess the operational feasibility of an accessible electronic version.

#### By 2028:

- Subject to the necessary Parliamentary committee approval, pilot, in a by-election, alternative voting channels (for example, voting by telephone or videoconference) for electors who cannot vote in person;
- Perform a preliminary analysis to redesign the ballot and/or include party logos, party colours or photos of candidates on the ballot;
- Conduct a small-scale pilot to display at polling locations posters that show the list of candidates with their photos or party logos;
- Following an analysis and user testing, consider offering video interpretation services in ASL and LSQ where possible;
- Review the [Polling Place Suitability Checklist](#) to make sure that it is in line with the most up-to-date accessibility standards for the built environment;
- Review evacuation plans for polling locations against up-to-date accessibility standards to account for the needs of people with disabilities;
- Pilot an accessible electronic voter information card as an alternative to the paper version and, where possible, plan for broad implementation.

## Starting in 2029:

- Subject to the necessary Parliamentary committee approval and the results of the by-election pilot, introduce, in a general election, alternative voting channels for electors who cannot vote in person;

## Performance indicator:

- Electors are satisfied with the accessibility of voting and registration services.

## Services to Political Entities

Elections Canada will make information about campaign expenses for accessibility and disability more readily available to political participants; it will also aim to reduce barriers to information that prevent people with disabilities from participating in the electoral process as candidates. While political entities are responsible for the accessibility of political campaigns, Elections Canada will continue to encourage them to run accessible campaigns. We will:

## By 2024:

- Use the Survey of Official Agents to get feedback on barriers faced by candidates in complying with the political financing rules;
- Reduce barriers to information for people who already face barriers to becoming a candidate through the stakeholder mobilization program, Inspire Democracy, which aims to reduce barriers for people considering running in a federal election;
- Continue to provide information to political entities through the Advisory Committee of Political Parties about accessible campaigns and accessibility-related campaign expenses.

## Performance indicators:

- Political entities are satisfied with the accessibility of political financing products and services.
- Political entities are aware of the tools that Elections Canada is using to make campaigns more accessible.

## Civic Education Program

Elections Canada will make sure that the resources and services of the civic education program that are provided to educators follow universal and inclusive design principles. To this end, we will:

### By 2024:

- Begin a dialogue with people with disabilities through consultations with the AGDI or through an expanded Advisory Circle of Educators, or both, so that an accessibility lens is used in programming;
- Obtain feedback in client surveys on the accessibility of civic education resources to make sure that our resources meet the diverse accessibility needs of students and educators.

### By 2028:

- Conduct an accessibility review of all program resources that are distributed through the [Elections and Democracy website](#) and other channels, in close collaboration with professionals specializing in delivery of content to students and educators with disabilities;
- Make sure that all content delivered through third-parties (such as the student parallel election program, [Student Vote Canada](#)) is inclusive of students and educators with disabilities.

### Performance indicators:

- Civic education resources meet accessibility standards.
- Students and educators are satisfied with the accessibility of products and services.

## Stakeholder Mobilization Program

Elections Canada will make sure that the resources and services of its external stakeholder mobilization program (Inspire Democracy)—which seeks to address barriers to electoral participation among Indigenous electors, people with disabilities, youth and new Canadians—follow universal and inclusive design principles that are based on the needs of end-users. To this end, we will:

### By 2024:

- Apply universal design principles for learning to Elections Canada’s [Inspire Democracy toolkits](#) for civic engagement: *Running in a Federal Election*, *Working at a Federal Election*, and *Registering and Voting in a Federal Election*.
- Work with the stakeholder network so that they can increase election content that is inclusive of participants with disabilities.

## **By 2028:**

- Develop and promote new or adapted resources with targeted information for electors with disabilities that complement toolkits;
- Make sure that most content delivered through stakeholders is inclusive of participants with disabilities.

## **Performance indicators:**

- Inspire Democracy resources meet accessibility standards.
- Stakeholders are satisfied with the accessibility of products and services.

## **Transportation**

Elections Canada does not generally provide transportation for electors when they vote. However, we do and will continue to work with organizations that represent people with disabilities in order to engage with public transit authorities. Doing this aims to reduce barriers to voting in person by providing accessible and reliable transportation on voting days. To this end, we will:

### **By 2024:**

- Expand the network of public transit authorities to increase awareness of barriers to voting and engage them in serving people with disabilities on voting days.

### **Performance indicator:**

- There is an increase in the number of engaged transit authorities that are reducing transportation barriers to voting.

## Election Delivery through Field Operations in Electoral Districts

One key priority for Elections Canada is to improve the accessibility of federal elections for election administrators (returning officers, assistant returning officers, field liaison officers and additional assistant returning officers) and other local election workers (people working in local Elections Canada offices and poll workers during an election). Unlike employees at Elections Canada headquarters, they are not members of the public service and are hired for the duration of an election or, in the case of poll workers, for one or a few days. We have a long-term vision of identifying and addressing barriers that will enable the recruitment, hiring and training of persons with disabilities at the local level. We are also committed to making sure that these local election workers are equipped to meet the needs of electors and employees with disabilities. To this end, we will:

### By 2024:

- Develop tools for election administrators, local staff and poll workers to self-identify; and begin collecting data on equity-seeking groups;
- Conduct an employment systems review of our policies and practices to identify systematic and attitudinal barriers for Elections Canada field staff, with the goal of identifying gaps in representation and providing a basis for addressing barriers;
- Develop a policy for field recruitment to promote the employment of people with disabilities;
- Develop messaging to field staff to further promote the use of diverse training methods in order to be flexible in meeting the needs of individual learners.

### By 2028:

- Develop a plan to address barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities and reduce the representation gap, using findings from the employment systems review;
- Inform election workers of available accommodations, products and services and how to request them, and track accommodation requests to better serve their needs;
- Assess in terms of accessibility the training portal, content and delivery method used to train election administrators.

### Starting in 2029:

- Explore alternate training methods and formats that may better respond to the needs of people with disabilities who want to access the training material;
- Publish information on accommodations that can be made for poll workers and office staff positions.

## Performance indicators:

- Elections Canada closes the representation gap for field staff with disabilities and there is an increase in self-identification rates.
- Field staff have access to accessible tools and accommodations to do their work.



# REPORTING

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Every year, Elections Canada will report on the progress made toward meeting corporate accessibility targets. The first progress report will be published in December 2023. As per the ACA, the report will outline: the steps taken toward meeting the commitments of the Accessibility Plan; the feedback received on accessibility and how it is being taken into consideration; and how people with disabilities were consulted when preparing the reports.

Elections Canada will expand on the performance indicators included with each priority area and validate the evaluation approach with members of the disability community before publishing the report.

# GLOSSARY

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## **Barrier**

A barrier is anything 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.

## **By-Election**

Election held in an electoral district to fill an empty seat in the House of Commons at any time other than during a general election.

## ***Canada Elections Act***

The [law that outlines the rules for holding and participating in federal elections](#) in Canada.

## **Candidate**

Person who wants to be elected as a member of Parliament for a specific electoral district.

## **Chief Electoral Officer**

Person who reports to Parliament and is responsible for the administration of elections, referendums, and important aspects of the electoral system. This person is appointed for a 10-year non-renewable term by the House of Commons.

## **General Election**

An election held simultaneously in every electoral district in Canada.

## **Election worker**

Someone who works for Elections Canada during a federal election.

## **Electoral district**

A place or territorial area that is represented by a member in the House of Commons.

## **Employment Systems Review**

An in-depth analysis of employment practices, policies and processes to identify systemic and attitudinal barriers faced by designated group members.

## **Expense**

Money that candidates spend. See the [Political Financing Handbook for Candidates and Official Agents](#) for more information.

## **Official Agent**

The official agent is responsible for administering the campaign's financial transactions and reporting those transactions to Elections Canada as required by the *Canada Elections Act*. The candidate may have only one official agent at a time.

## **Political entities**

A person or organization whose election-related activities are regulated under the CEA. There are six political entities that are covered by the political financing regime of the CEA: parties, associations, candidates, nomination contestants, leadership contestants, and registered third parties.

## **Political financing**

The rules for raising and spending money and using resources for an election campaign.

### **Political party**

Groups that support particular candidates in an election. They usually share similar values, priorities and a vision for Canada.

### **Polling station**

A public building where people go to vote in a federal election. It's often a school or a community centre.

### **Poll worker**

Poll workers work primarily at polling places, that is, where electors go to vote. During an election, poll workers are on the front line and make it possible for electors to vote in an orderly fashion.

### **Referendum**

A vote when a group of voters are invited to vote on a proposal or question.

### **Returning officer**

The person responsible for the delivery and control of federal elections, by elections and referendums in their electoral district.

### **Voter information card**

A card that Elections Canada sends during an election campaign to every elector whose name appears on the preliminary lists of electors. It tells electors when and where they can cast their ballots.