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Building a **safe** and **resilient** Canada



# Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan 2023–2026

# Contents

Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan 2023–2026.....	1
1 Message from the Deputy Minister and the Associate Deputy Minister .....	4
2 Message from the Diversity and Inclusion Champion .....	5
3 General .....	6
3.1 Accessibility Statement .....	6
3.2 Background.....	6
3.3 Feedback Mechanism .....	8
4 Strategic Considerations .....	9
4.1 Snapshot of Disability in Canada .....	9
4.2 Public Safety Canada Structure and Workforce .....	10
4.3 Hiring Targets of Persons with Disabilities .....	11
4.4 Public Safety Canada Accessibility Readiness (April 2022).....	12
4.5 Diversity and Inclusion at Public Safety Canada .....	14
4.6 Roles and Responsibilities .....	15
5 Consultations .....	17
6 Pillars and Actions.....	18
6.1 Employment.....	18
6.2 Built Environment.....	21
6.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).....	23
6.4 Communication (other than ICT: non-web documents and other non-ICT communications).....	25
6.5 Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities .....	27
6.6 Design and Delivery of Programs and Services .....	28
6.7 Transportation.....	30
7 Monitoring Progress .....	30
8 Annexes.....	31
8.1 Annex A: Definitions.....	31



Read this publication online at:

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/dprtmntl-ccssbliy-pln-2023-26/index-en.aspx>

This plan presents actions that will be taken by Public Safety Canada over the next three years, in collaboration with persons with disabilities (PWD), to remove and prevent barriers faced in the workplace.

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# 1 Message from the Deputy Minister and the Associate Deputy Minister

As a federal public servant, each employee has the right to an inclusive, respectful and safe workplace with the right tools to succeed in their work. With that said, we are very proud to present our first Accessibility Plan.

This plan presents actions that will be taken over the next three years, in collaboration with persons with disabilities (PwD), to remove and prevent barriers faced in the workplace. We have taken a transparent, open and proactive approach in the development of this plan in order to create an inclusive design process, co-developed by public servants with lived experiences as PwD. Collectively, we must all work together to ensure that our workplace culture is one that supports and empowers all employees to reach their full potential.

As the Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister of Public Safety Canada, we take great pride in the work that is done at Public Safety Canada. We, along with the rest of our senior management team, are committed to prioritizing accessibility in our daily work including in programs and services to Canadians. Early actions have already been taken, including the identification of a departmental Champion for Diversity and Inclusion, Talal Dakalbab, Assistant Deputy Minister, Crime Prevention Branch. In collaboration, we will be holding ourselves accountable in ensuring we all take an accessibility-by-default approach in all areas.

Over the next three years, we will be focusing on generating momentum through the concrete actions identified in the plan, and ensuring that the voices of those most impacted are brought to the forefront. By committing to create a barrier-free workplace, we are in turn, supporting a happy, healthy and productive workforce at Public Safety Canada.



**Shawn Tupper**  
Deputy Minister,  
Public Safety Canada



**Tricia Geddes**  
Associate Deputy Minister,  
Public Safety Canada

## 2 Message from the Diversity and Inclusion Champion

As Public Safety Canada's Diversity and Inclusion Champion, my role consists of enhancing diversity and inclusion, addressing harassment and discrimination and promoting Employment Equity and Official Languages in the workplace. I truly believe that inclusion is a path towards peace and prosperity and as such, I am very passionate about this role.

By advocating for a diverse and inclusive workplace, we are bringing together individuals with different experiences, ideas and perspectives. In order to be an innovative, creative, and resilient team, we need a culture change. Unfortunately, persons with disabilities (PwD) are an underrepresented group in our organization, and more frequently face prejudice, discrimination and other barriers making it hard to equally prevail. Creating an accessible workplace means thinking about accessibility at all times; from the implementation of new tools or software, to the promotion of a new program, accessibility needs to be at the forefront.

It is our concerted duty to ensure that PwD have the tools, resources and policies in place to effectively and equitably succeed in our workplace. I am very proud to champion the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan for 2023-2026 and help promote the activities outlined. Our vision is to make Canada's public service the most accessible and inclusive in the world and I am truly thrilled to be part of the solution.



**Talal Dakalbab (he/him/il/lui)**

Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Crime Prevention Branch, Public Safety Canada

# 3 General

## 3.1 Accessibility Statement

Being a diverse, inclusive and accessible employer is a priority at Public Safety Canada. We are committed to creating a barrier-free workplace that will allow the full and equitable participation of persons with disabilities (PwD) in our workforce.

The desired end state through meeting the legislative requirements for Public Safety Canada is to:

- build strong, diverse teams;
- promote fairness, justice and equity;
- advocate for the full participation of PwD in the workforce; and,
- establish a barrier-free Canada.

## 3.2 Background

Beginning in July 2016, the Government of Canada consulted with more than 6,000 Canadians to find out what an accessible Canada meant to them, as part of the [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#)<sup>1</sup>, led by the Treasury Board Secretariat. As a result of these consultations, a clear goal was set, to make Canada’s public service the most inclusive public service in the world.

On July 11, 2019, the [Accessibility Canada Act](#)<sup>2</sup> came into effect, with the desired end state to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040. In order to achieve this goal, each federally regulated entity, including Public Safety Canada, is required to prepare and publish an accessibility plan by December 31, 2022.

It is understood that people who face barriers may not feel comfortable self-identifying as having a disability. This action plan therefore uses the terms “persons with disabilities” and/or “PwD” to refer to all persons who face barriers as a result of an identified or unidentified; visible or invisible; permanent, situational or temporary impairment of any type. This is in line

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/>

with the purpose of the *Accessible Canada Act* which is “to benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities”.

- [Consultations with public servants with disabilities](#)<sup>3</sup> have found that they:
- experience harassment and discrimination at rates that are higher than for other public servants;
- have significantly lower chances for promotion;
- frequently feel disrespected or marginalized where their voices would be critically helpful;
- lack mentorship and role models;
- face extensive barriers to securing a public service job in the first place;
- too often have to explain and justify even the most basic adjustments repeatedly as they move through the public service;
- expend significant energy in order to have even minimally suitable working conditions; and
- have an exit rate that is almost twice the hiring rate across the federal government.

Public Safety Canada is committed to preventing, identifying, and removing barriers for the people who face them and to create more consistent experiences of accessibility in the following priority areas:

- employment;
- the built environment (i.e. the physical work environment);
- information and communications technologies;
- communication, other than information and communication Technologies;
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities; and
- the design and delivery of programs and services.

Through a “[Nothing Without Us](#)”<sup>4</sup> approach in the development of the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan for 2023-2026, we are striving for advances in the areas of transparency, collaboration and proactivity. Throughout the Spring of 2022, a collaborative, co-design approach was undertaken via an intradepartmental working group that consisted of Public Safety Canada employees in the National Capital Region and in the regions, including PwD, internal services partners as subject matter experts, and allies. Through these discussions,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc/accessibility-strategy-public-service-introduction.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc/progress-report-implementation-nothing-without-us-2019-20.html>

successes, barriers, and opportunities have been identified in the priority areas listed above. The Terms of Reference for the Working Group are available upon request.

### 3.3 Feedback Mechanism

Public Safety Canada is committed to creating an open and transparent feedback process for not only employees, but all Canadians. The Senior Advisor in the Values, Inclusion, Ethics and Wellness team under the People and Culture Directorate at Public Safety Canada will ensure all feedback is:

- organized;
- analyzed;
- shared with the relevant teams in the organization for their consideration;
- preserved; and,
- used to prevent and remove barriers in a timely manner.

There are three ways that individuals can provide feedback on accessibility to Public Safety Canada:

- **Anonymous Feedback Form:** All individuals can provide anonymous feedback through the form available on Public Safety Canada public website.
- **Mail:** Feedback by mail can be sent to the following address:

Public Safety Canada  
Human Resources - Values, Inclusion, Ethics and Wellness  
269 Laurier Avenue West  
15<sup>th</sup> floor mailroom  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0P8

- **Telephone:** Feedback can also be provided by calling 1 (343) 998-4491. People who are deaf or are hard of hearing can provide feedback in American Sign Language (ASL), Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) or Indigenous Sign Language (ISL) via telephone using a Video Relay Service. These services are available to all Canadians at no cost. [Read more about how the Video Relay Service works.](#)



# 4 Strategic Considerations

## 4.1 Snapshot of Disability in Canada<sup>5</sup>

- In 2017, one in five (22%) of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over — or about 6.2 million individuals — had one or more disabilities.
- Women (24%) were more likely to have a disability than men (20%).
- Disabilities related to pain, flexibility, mobility, and mental health were the most common disability types.
- Among youth (aged 15 to 24 years), however, mental health-related disabilities were the most prevalent type of disability (8%).
- Among those aged 25 to 64 years, persons with disabilities (PwD) were less likely to be employed (59%) than those without disabilities (80%).
- Among those with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years who were not employed and not currently in school, two in five (39%) had the potential to work. This represents nearly 645,000 individuals with disabilities.

For further information on PwD in the public service, the Treasury Board Secretariat has developed [an infographic](#)<sup>6</sup> showcasing a snapshot of PwD working in the core public administration based on the [Government of Canada's Diversity and Inclusion Statistics](#)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Survey on Disability Reports A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/employment-equity-annual-reports/employment-equity-public-service-canada-2020-2021.html#toc-5>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/innovation/human-resources-statistics/diversity-inclusion-statistics.html>

## 4.2 Public Safety Canada Structure and Workforce

### 4.2.1 Overall Public Safety Canada Population<sup>8</sup>

Branch	Employees
Corporate Management Branch (CMB)	297
Crime Prevention Branch (CPB)	232
Deputy Minister's Office (DMO)	10
Emergency Management and Preparedness Branch (EMPB)	392
Internal Audit and Evaluation Directorate (IAED)	27
Departmental Legal Service Unit (LS)	8
National and Cyber Security Branch (NCSB)	202
Portfolio Affairs and Communications Branch (PACB)	198
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1366</b>

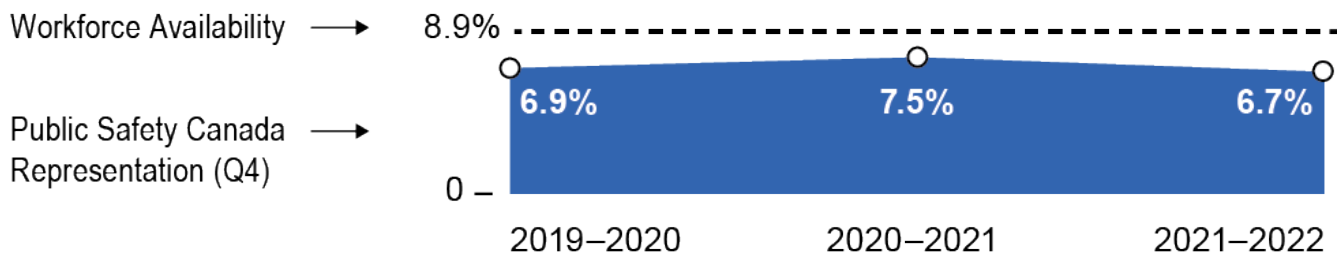
### 4.2.2 Public Safety Canada Representation Rates for PwD vs. Workforce Availability<sup>9</sup>

For the past three fiscal years, Public Safety Canada representation of PwD has been below the Workforce Availability, with a current gap of 2.2% as represented below. In this context, the Workforce Availability represents the share of the Canadian workforce of PwD that is eligible for federal public service work.

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<sup>8</sup> PeopleSoft Data as of April 2022, including Indeterminates, Terms, Casuals and Students

<sup>9</sup> PeopleSoft Data as of Q4, 2020, 2021, 2022



	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
<b>Workforce Availability</b>	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%
<b>Public Safety Canada Representation (Q4)</b>	6.9%	7.5%	6.7%

Note: Only the following employees are counted for Employment Equity purposes: indeterminate employees and terms greater than three months with an active or leave with pay status. The following employees are excluded from Employment Equity analyses: secondments-in, interchange-in, casuals, students, Ministerial Exempt Staff, agency personnel, employees on leave without pay, and the DM occupational group.

### 4.3 Hiring Targets of Persons with Disabilities

In early 2022, the Public Service Commission and Treasury Board Secretariat provided Public Safety Canada with updated PwD representation rates and hiring targets, as well as an update on progress towards the federal [commitment to hire 5,000 new PwD by 2025](#)<sup>10</sup>, taking into account attrition. By committing to these goals, the Public Safety Canada populating will see an increase the diversity in the lived experiences of those developing departmental programs, products and services and increasing the inclusivity to meet the needs and expectations of diverse audiences.

Public Safety Canada’s target recruitment of PwD required to achieve our departmental population increase by 2025, taking into account attrition, is estimated at 25, ranking our organization number 25 amongst federal Public Service organizations in terms of closing the gap between the Workforce Availability and representation of PwD. In order to succeed in

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc/accessibility-strategy-public-service-employment.html>

closing the gap by 2025, Public Safety Canada has identified feasible targets for new PwD hires for each Branch within the department, as represented below.

### 4.3.1 Hiring Targets of PwD per Branch (number of employees), by 2025

Branch	Hiring Target (# of employees)
Emergency Management and Programs Branch (EMPB)	7
Corporate Management Branch (CMB)	5
Crime Prevention Branch (CPB)	4
National and Cyber Security Branch (NCSB)	3
Portfolio Affairs and Communications Branch (PACB)	3
Department Legal Services Unit (DLSU)	1
Deputy Ministers' Office	1
Internal Audit and Evaluation Directorate (IAED)	1

In this vein, Public Safety Canada will continue to attend and participate in events, conferences, and recruitment initiatives for PwD to facilitate the achievement of this objective, such as the recently attended [Canadian Congress for Disability and Inclusion](#)<sup>11</sup> in May 2022.

### 4.4 Public Safety Canada Accessibility Readiness (April 2022)

The current organizational accessibility readiness in the key priority areas (employment, built environment, information and communications technologies, programs and services and

<sup>11</sup> <https://pheedloop.com/CCA2022/site/home/>

accessibility confidence) was assessed for Public Safety Canada through the [Accessibility Self-Assessment Tool](#)<sup>12</sup>, developed by the Office of Public Service Accessibility.

The self-assessment was completed in collaboration with key enabling sectors at Public Safety Canada, including:

- Human Resources;
- Information Technology;
- Information Management;
- Communications; and,
- Real Property and Facilities.

Overall, the results suggests that there is room for improvement in all key priority areas. The results are represented in the figure below and full outcomes of the assessment are available upon request.

#### 4.4.1 Public Safety Canada Accessibility Self-Assessment Readiness Results

Pillar	% Readiness
Employment	52%
Built Environment	58%
Information and Communications Technology	17%
Programs and Services	21%
Accessibility Confidence	53%

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Self-Assessment\\_Tool/\\_Outil\\_d%27auto-%C3%A9valuation](https://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Self-Assessment_Tool/_Outil_d%27auto-%C3%A9valuation)

## 4.5 Diversity and Inclusion at Public Safety Canada

Through the department's Strategic Framework on Diversity and Inclusion and the Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Recruitment Strategy, Public Safety Canada has set three focus areas, including:

- fostering an inclusive and accessible workplace;
- increasing the diversity of Public Safety Canada workforce; and
- building awareness and a culture of inclusion.

In particular, the Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Recruitment Strategy for 2021–2023 reinforced our department's commitment to address under-representation of our workforce and promote equitable, diverse and inclusive hiring practices to eliminate any procedural, behavioural, or systemic barriers in staffing process and decisions. The strategy outlines three specific objectives:

1. Unconscious Bias Training: Laying the groundwork for making better staffing decisions
2. GC Workplace Accessibility Passport: Facilitating the movement of PwD into and within Public Safety Canada
3. Inclusive Hiring at Public Safety Canada: A Proactive Approach

The department has implemented tangible actions to increase awareness, change behaviour and address systemic barriers. In fact, it has implemented the Canada School of Public Service unconscious bias series as mandatory training for all employees at all levels, as well as two additional mandatory courses for hiring managers and Human Resources advisors. These courses aim to increase awareness and ultimately assist hiring managers in reducing barriers in their staffing processes and to encourage self-awareness with regards to their staffing decisions.

Public Safety Canada is one of the early adopter departments of the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport and has communicated this important initiative through our employment equity committees, including Inclusive by Design Committee and the Workplace Consultative Committee, as well as to all employees through all-staff messaging. In 2021, the department endeavored to centralize its Duty to Accommodate process and in January 2022, it started processing cases using this new approach, which incorporates the Accessibility Passport. All new hires to Public Safety Canada are informed of their right to be accommodated through documents accompanying their letter of offer.

Another example of a tangible action is streamlining the collection process of self-identification data to ensure that all new hires and current employees receive and submit their self-identification form.

Public Safety Canada has also implemented the Mentorship Plus Program for employees from employment equity groups in order to strengthen equity and inclusion and increase opportunities for them. The first cohort includes 35 participants.

## 4.6 Roles and Responsibilities

The development and implementation of the Accessibility Plan for 2023–2026 falls on each and every employee at Public Safety Canada. The chart below outlines the specific roles, responsibilities and expectations over the course of the next three years.

**Sponsor:** The sponsor's role is to actively and visibly promote change, help manage resistance and communicate with employees. The project sponsor has the authority to provide funding, resolve issues, approve major deliverables and provide high-level direction. The project sponsor has a clear vision, identified goals and measurable outcomes for the change initiative.

**Diversity and Inclusion Champion:** The champion advises and supports the project sponsor in decision making. The champion is a key advocate for the plan and the changes that come with it. In addition, the champion must build employee morale, engage employees affected by the change and demonstrate desired behaviours.

**Human Resources Directorate:** The Human Resources Directorate is responsible for the development, promotion and implementation of the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan for 2023–2026. In collaboration with the project team and working group, they will ensure that the actions outlined in the plan are assigned to the correct groups and lead frequent progress check-ins. The Human Resources Directorate will also lead the development of the Key Performance Indicators, in collaboration with the project team, to ensure progress is monitored and opportunities for improvement are identified.

**Project Team:** The project team is an integrated group of employees, including subject matter experts in key enabling sectors (listed below) that oversees and executes most of the activities related to the plan. The team ensures timely and integrated delivery of the action plan, and a user-centric solution.

- Information Management
- Information Technology
- Security
- Human Resources
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Real property and Facilities

- Contracting and Procurement

**Working Group:** Members of the Accessibility Plan Working Group have key roles in the overall development of the plan, including to:

- participate actively and constructively at meetings by reading materials provided in advance of meetings;
- engage in an open discussion surrounding the development of the Accessibility Plan identifying barriers and strategic solutions to remove them;
- identify priorities and actions to be included in the Plan;
- provide advice on disability issues, inclusion and accessibility that will be used in the Plan; and,
- review and provide feedback on the drafts of the Plan.

**Governance:** Public Safety Canada corporate governance will be consulted, at various times, to provide strategic direction or make recommendations, as required, in regards to actions set out in the plan. The Governance bodies consulted include the:

- Departmental Management Committee;
- Resource Management Committee;
- Workplace Consultative Committee;
- Respect, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion Committee; and,
- Diversity and Inclusion Secretariat.

**Managers:** A manager's role will expand beyond daily operational duties. They play a vital role in employees' adoption and acceptance of a culture that supports accessible day-to-day operations. Managers will be communicators, advocates, coaches, liaison and active proponents of accessibility.

**Employees:** All employees play a part in the success of the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan. In order to foster an accessible culture within our workforce, they should:

- adopt the behaviours encouraged in the accessibility plan;
- advocate change by soliciting interest and support; and,
- openly communicate with management about any concerns/barriers, or potential opportunities.



**Networks:** In support of the co-creation of the Plan, it is important to have continuous collaboration with various networks within the department. This will provide an opportunity for ongoing feedback and identification of new barriers. The networks consulted include the:

- Accessibility Circle;
- Young Professionals Network;
- Administrative Professionals Network;
- Executive Network; and,
- Managers' Network.

## 5 Consultations

Collaborating with persons with disabilities (PwD) was a key factor in the development of the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan. Collaboration leads to an inclusive design process that provides constant input and feedback from the community throughout. Public Safety Canada sent out an open invitation to all employees to participate in a Working Group for the development of the plan. Ultimately, the Working Group consisted of Public Safety Canada PwD, internal services partners as subject matter experts, regional representation, and allies. As the work started during the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings were all held through a virtual platform (MS Teams), and hosted by the Director General, People and Culture.

The Working Group met on a biweekly basis in the Spring of 2022. Each meeting was focused on a specific pillar, i.e.:

- employment;
- the built environment;
- technology;
- communications;
- procurement;
- design and delivery; and,
- culture

in order to address the specific barriers and challenges that PwD faced within. Following each meeting, a summary of concerns and proposed deliverables was developed, and shared through the Working Group for feedback and approval. These summaries are available upon request, for all Public Safety Canada employees to view and consult.

To raise awareness and discuss ways to make Public Safety Canada more accessible, the Accessibility Team attended various committee and network meetings, including the:

- Resource Management Committee;
- Departmental Management Committee;
- Inclusive-by-Design Committee (now a part of the Respect, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion Committee);
- Young Professionals Network;
- Administrative Professionals Network; and,
- Public Safety Canada Managers' Network (PSMN).

Externally, Public Safety Canada consulted with the Office of Public Service Accessibility at the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Accessibility and the Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology group at Shared Services Canada, in the development of the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan.

## 6 Pillars and Actions

Between March and June of 2022, the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan Working Group met biweekly to discuss each pillar and discuss the barriers faced by people — especially persons with disabilities — in the workplace, as outlined in the consultations section. Outlined below are the barriers identified in each pillar through these consultations, as well as concrete actions that will be taken to remove and/or prevent the barriers. A joint effort with the project team and the Human Resources Directorate will be taken to ensure that these actionable items are implemented over the course of the next three years (2023–2026).

### 6.1 Employment

- The 2020 Public Service Employee Survey indicated that employees with disabilities report having consistently higher levels of stress and lower levels of psychological well-being at work than their colleagues. The [Public Service Commission 2020–2021 Annual Report](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2020-21.html)<sup>13</sup> on the health and integrity of the staffing system of the federal public service, noted that:
  - Only persons with disabilities had a share of promotions (4.2%) below their workforce availability (9.0%). Members of visible minorities (19.9%), Indigenous peoples (4.9%),

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2020-21.html>

and women (61.1%) all saw their share of promotions exceed their workforce availability.

- persons with disabilities experienced the largest drop in representation of any of the employment equity groups during a selection process, with decreases at the assessment and appointment stages.

Through consultations with the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan Working Group, three main areas of focus were identified in the context of employment: Recruitment and Onboarding, Retention and Job Training.

### **6.1.1 Recruitment and Onboarding**

Biases in the hiring process lead persons with disabilities (PwD) to be underrepresented in the Public Safety Canada workforce.

#### **Actions to address barriers in recruitment and onboarding**

- Review Human Resources policies and processes, including:
  - a recruitment strategy targeting PwD;
  - training and guidance for managers, supervisors and executives on hiring PwD (e.g. design of selection processes to accommodate candidates who identify as PwD);
  - evaluation and interview processes;
  - performance agreements;
  - new employee forms; and,
  - flexible work arrangements.
- Broaden outreach activities to promote recruitment of PwD, through:
  - partnerships with community organizations representing PwD (e.g. Neil Squire Society, LiveWorkPlay, Ready Willing and Able);
  - leveraging existing GC programs (e.g. Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities, Federal Student Work Program, Virtual Door to Talent with Disabilities);
  - identifying PwD in existing pools to hiring managers;
  - creating a targeted recruitment process for PwD at Public Safety Canada; and,
  - reviewing representation, identifying gaps in specific occupational groups and creating targets.

- Review onboarding and accommodation process to improve integration of PwD in the workforce, through:
  - promotion of the centralized Duty to Accommodate process;
  - development of an anonymous online platform for PwD to exchange information and ideas on barriers and solutions; and,
  - providing full accommodation to employees within a reasonable timeframe.

### **6.1.2 Retention**

The developmental programs and other Human Resources practices offered in the workplace were not put in place with the barriers and needs of PwD in mind.

#### **Actions to address employment barriers in retention**

- Provide career support to PwD in order to ensure they have the capacity to reach their career goals through job mobility and promotions, by:
  - putting in place mentorship and developmental programs;
  - leveraging the talent map placements to promote internal talent;
  - increasing management awareness (e.g. through mandatory training, workshops, information sessions, etc.) to ensure they are equipped in supporting their PwD employees in their work, performance and career aspiration; and,
  - ensuring PwD have equal access to career advancement opportunities (assignment, promotions, developmental).
- Increase awareness of the issues surrounding workplace wellness for PwD, by leveraging a culture that understands, respects and promotes PwD in all aspects of the workplace through collaboration, inclusivity, and respect, by:
  - ensuring availability of flexible work arrangements;
  - creating recognition programs specifically for PwD;
  - seeking and implementing specialized training on barriers that PwD face, including available Canada School of Public Service training; and,
  - holding awareness campaigns that will attest to a culture of open discussion where PwD feel comfortable to self-identify.

### 6.1.3 Job Training

Training is not accessible or in the right format to support PwD.

#### Actions to address employment barriers in job training

- Ensure all training is accessibly to PwD, by:
  - providing training in alternative formats to accommodate alternative learning needs;
  - designing learning systems, platforms, tools, and content in collaboration with pWD to ensure their specific needs are met; and,
  - consulting PwD in order to identify specific training needs, including language training, within all types of disabilities (i.e. vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive, speech).

## 6.2 Built Environment

The built environment pillar focuses on the physical work environment, and the equipment and tools available within. All individuals deserve access to an equitable and safe work environment.

Public Service and Procurement Canada is responsible for managing and providing government organizations and parliamentarians with federal property and accommodation services. In support of this, Public Service and Procurement Canada is undertaking an evaluation of the physical accessibility of federal buildings in consultation with persons with disabilities.

PwD report challenges in their workplaces, such as a lack of automatic door openers, poor signage and way-finding. [In the first survey on the development of the strategy](#)<sup>14</sup>, several respondents noted that the physical workspace does not account for invisible disabilities, such as:

- environmental sensitivities
- chronic pain
- anxiety
- autism

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc/accessibility-strategy-public-service-built-environment.html>

Through consultation with the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan Working Group, three main areas of focus were identified in the context of the built environment: Real Property, the Hybrid Workforce, and Policies and Procedures.

### **6.2.1 Real Property**

The current physical workplace does not meet the requirement of PwD at Public Safety Canada.

#### **Actions to address barriers in real property**

- Go above and beyond accessibility standards in the physical workplace, by (in collaboration with PwD):
  - ensuring employees have access to ergonomic equipment and/or equipment that falls under the Duty to Accommodate that they require in the physical workplace, regardless of their telework agreements;
  - offering PwD the opportunity to test and identify barriers of any modifications to the physical workplace prior to- and during the design and transition into the Hybrid Workforce;
  - reviewing and identifying areas in need of improvement, in consultation with PwD, where building service areas are not accessible (curbs, change in elevation, elevators, bathrooms, open building concepts, accessibility parking options, etc.);
  - piloting new technologies in the physical workplace;
  - identifying, in collaboration with Public Services and Procurement Canada and/or building owners, potential accessibility barriers in buildings (e.g. no ramp to access 340 Laurier); and,
  - reviewing emergency and business continuity planning procedures.
- Ensure regional offices are fully engaged and included in the workplace planning process, through:
  - continuous consultations with regional employees; and,
  - re-assessment of long-term space planning with Public Service and Procurement Canada to ensure regional offices meet requirements for users.

### **6.2.2 The Hybrid Workforce**

The transition to a hybrid workforce is full of many unknowns, which causes stress and anxiety.

## **Actions to address barriers in the hybrid workforce**

- Consult PwD to inform changes relating to the hybrid workforce, to:
  - identify and address barriers that Public Safety Canada’s physical offices and telework arrangements present for PwD;
  - assess the impacts on the transition to the hybrid workforce on PwD (e.g. through consultation, pulse surveys, etc); and,
  - develop Key Performance Indicators related to accessibility to measure the success of the organization in the return to work (RTW) process.

## **6.2.3 Policies and Procedures**

The policies and procedures in place are not conducive to PwD success in the built environment, whether that be virtually or in the physical workplace.

### **Actions to address barriers in policies and procedures**

- Ensure PwD are aware of and have access to all resources required to be successful in the workplace, by (in collaboration with PwD):
  - collaborating with the Human Resources Directorate in the promotion of the centralized Duty to Accommodate process;
  - providing full accommodation to employees within the established service standards timeframe;
  - reviewing the assessment, evaluation, training, technical support and available information related to individual accommodation; and,
  - developing best practices, training and guidance for efficient use of office space.

## **6.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

Procurement, development, design and use of information and communications technology hardware and software across the Government of Canada do not consistently reflect accessibility requirements. Many key applications and tools are not accessible (for example: Phoenix, PeopleSoft and GCDOCS).

[During consultations with employees](#)<sup>15</sup>, the Office of Public Service Accessibility heard that employees with disabilities:

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc/accessibility-strategy-public-service-technology.html>

- had challenges in accessing the information and communications technology they need to do their jobs, even when using adaptive technologies
- reported that accessibility features are often not enabled on commonly available software and hardware

Through consultation with the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan Working Group, three areas of focus were identified in the context of Information and communication technologies: Internal Training, Tools and Software, and Collaboration and Innovation.

### **6.3.1 Internal Training**

Not all IT professionals are equipped, or feel comfortable, to assist persons with disabilities (PwD) in workplace accommodation cases.

#### **Actions to address barriers in internal training related to IT**

- Take an accessible-by-default approach to equipping PwD in the workplace, by:
  - training IT employees to increase accessibility knowledge and sensibilization in order to adapt services and interactions;
  - consider assigning designated IT specialist(s) that are trained to work with PwD;
  - ensuring timely escalation within established service standards for cases relating to PwD;
  - delivering and promoting end-user training on using accessibility features on all available programs;
  - developing and promoting guidance and training material for IT professionals for working with PwD;
  - developing and promoting guidance and training documents for PwD (e.g. making items larger on a screen, activating reader on MS Word, activating closed captioning on MS Teams, etc.);
  - reviewing and improving the Web presence (internal and external) through consultations with PwD; and,
  - providing all information and document in multiple formats (e.g. RDIMS and InfoCentral, plain text, etc.).

### **6.3.2 Tools and Software**

Many of the tools and software used in the department have accessibility capabilities but are not being used in an accessible way.



## **Actions to address barriers in tools and software**

- Review organizational IT accessibility capabilities, including:
  - an inventory of IT systems used by the department to measure accessibility capabilities;
  - network security profiles; and
  - progressively introducing new accessibility functionality to IT systems.

### **6.3.3 Collaboration and Innovation**

IT solutions aren't implemented with an accessibility by default approach.

#### **Actions to address barriers in collaboration and innovation**

- Introduce innovative solutions and tools to create a more accessible workplace culture, by:
  - ensuring that accessibility is tested through the lifecycle of the use of any new tool introduced (this will help identify areas to train employees on accessible utilization);
  - developing a consultation process for PwD when introducing new tools or software to the organization;
  - exploring innovative solutions, tools and software (e.g. Statistics Canada pilot project for allowing text to speech on documents and web);
  - exploring the use of Video Remote Sign Language Interpretation for IT call centre;
  - exploring the possibility of a standing offer for sign language interpretation; and,
  - continuously leveraging the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology.

## **6.4 Communication (other than ICT: non-web documents and other non-ICT communications)**

Understanding that every person is able to access communications material through the same mechanisms, it is imperative that all Public Safety Canada employees have access and the ability to use all information and communications technology, regardless of ability or disability. With all disabilities presenting differently, having a broad range of communication options is essential.

Through consultation with the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan Working Group, two main areas of focus were identified in the context of Communication: Accessible Communication Standards and Training.

## 6.4.1 Accessible Communication Standards

Communication products shared in the workplace are not always accessible to PwD.

### Actions to address barriers in accessible communication standards

- Ensure all internal and external communication products meet accessibility standards, by (in collaboration with PwD):
  - reviewing and updating branding, including corporate templates for accessibility (e.g. briefing notes or PowerPoint templates);
  - developing examples of accessible communications best practices, including the use of accessible language;
  - developing guidance and a checklist for accessible communications and publications;
  - requiring that all employee communications, documents, briefing materials, and presentations be made and assessed for accessibility as part of the routing/approval process; and,
  - developing a feedback mechanism to address barriers in communication methods, tools or internal and external products.
- Provide alternative formats of communications for employees, including:
  - providing affordable language interpretation for employees;
  - providing communications alternatives for employees who don't easily have access to a computer/network; and,
  - developing and implementing best practices for communication products to increase the use of multiple, simultaneous and equivalent formats.

## 6.4.2 Training

Public Safety Canada employees do not have access to the knowledge or guidance required to create accessible internal and external documents.

### Actions to address barriers in training related to accessible communications

- Promote a workplace culture that supports and recognizes the importance of accessibility, by:
  - promoting information, workshops or training sessions on document accessibility, web accessibility, and plain language usage to all employees;
  - establishing a formal accessibility testing policy that complies with EN 301 549, the European standard for digital accessibility as it pertains to non-web documents;

- creating a centralized point of contact for guidance and advice on accessible communication and identifying ongoing accessibility learning opportunities for employees as standards and information change; and,
- encouraging managers to engage with employees to understand what accessibility needs they have, and ensure their teams communicate with those barriers at the forefront.

## 6.5 Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

The implementation of new accessibility requirements in the [Contracting Policy](#)<sup>16</sup> supports the Accessible Canada Act to ensure that the Government of Canada procures goods and services that are accessible to all Canadians through the identification and removal accessibility barriers and the prevention of new ones. The Treasury Board Secretariat Policy states that accessibility requirements are considered for all procurements. Contracting Officers and Clients include accessibility criteria as part of the specifications where applicable and ensure that documentation is on file confirming accessibility has been considered.

Through consultation with the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan Working Group, two main areas of focus were identified in the context of the procurement of goods, services and facilities: Internal Training and, Procurement Procedures.

### 6.5.1 Internal Training of Procurement Professionals

Not all procurement professionals are equipped, or feel comfortable, to assist PwD in workplace accommodation cases.

#### Actions to address barriers in procurement training

- Provide specialized training to procurement officers:
  - establish mandatory training for procurement officers to ensure accessibility is considered at the early stages of the procurement process;
  - create a framework for training which would include procurement accessibility awareness; and,
  - work with other organizations to develop training for procurement professionals (e.g. Public Service and Procurement Canada Better Buying Accessible Procurement videos about the importance of accessible procurement).

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<sup>16</sup> <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/policy-and-guidelines/supply-manual/section/2/21>

## 6.5.2 Procurement Procedures

The procurement procedures in place can cause barriers to PwD.

### Actions to address barriers in procurement procedures

- Develop requirements for accessibility considerations to be included from the start in all procurement processes, especially for information and communication technologies, by:
  - defining and identifying accessibility requirements clearly in tenders, requests for proposals, and contracts;
  - developing a mechanism to limit accessibility considerations in a procurement process only on an exception basis, with the exception explained and documented clearly and only authorized by senior management;
  - engaging with Public Service and Procurement Canada to simplify the procurement process and,
  - developing a list of contractors comprised of people with disabilities, requiring that during the bidding process, these contractors are included from the onset.
- Review the procurement process for goods purchased, through:
  - consultations with end-users or groups representing PwD by considering accessibility standards.

## 6.6 Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

There is limited data on the accessibility of the Government of Canada's programs and services to clients. However:

- findings from [Employment and Social Development Canada's 2017 Client Experience Survey](#)<sup>17</sup> revealed that clients with restrictions (whether hearing, seeing, mobility, cognitive/mental health or other) have a 67% overall satisfaction rate when accessing services, compared with 87% for all clients
- these clients report that they have more difficulties than other clients with ease, timeliness and effectiveness in accessing services
- During consultations for this strategy, many public servants expressed a need for more tools and training to better serve clients with disabilities.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc/accessibility-strategy-public-service-services.html>

- Through consultation with the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan Working Group, two main areas of focus were identified in the context of the design and delivery of programs and services: the Consultation Process and, Training and Resources.

### **6.6.1 Consultation Process**

persons with disabilities (PwD) are not being consulted before the implementation of new programs and services.

#### **Actions to address barriers in the consultation process**

- Promote and leverage a mandatory consultation process with PwD during the inception phase of any new tool, program or service, by:
  - developing a forum consisting of PwD in core services (i.e. IT/IM, Communications, HR, Real Property, Security);
  - consulting PwD through workshops and other consultations to identify ways to make Public Safety Canada programs and services more accessible and inclusive;
  - adding accessibility statements to the terms of reference of all current governance groups (internal and external);
  - preparing a checklist defining the requirements for engagement of new tools, programs or services (e.g. sign language, alternative format, OL, etc);
  - reviewing the complete lifecycle of products or services provided in the department to understand and identify potential barriers to PwD; and,
  - exploring the implementation of a budget related to accessibility initiatives.

### **6.6.2 Training and Resources**

Operational employees do not always feel equipped or supported to engage with PwD in the department.

#### **Actions to address barriers in training and resources**

- Raise awareness on the importance of creating accessible programs and services in the department, by:
  - developing options for operational employees to collect and respond to client feedback (verbally, by email, by phone, through online surveys or feedback forms); and,
  - partnering with other government departments to develop tools to consider the lived experiences of PwD, including the intersectionality of their experience in relation to other aspects of their identity.

## 6.7 Transportation

It was found that the transportation pillar had minimal implications for Public Safety Canada employees, as the majority of employees do not rely on Public Safety Canada transportation as part of their daily job duties. To provide feedback on the status of this pillar, please contact the [Accessibility Team](#)<sup>18</sup>.

# 7 Monitoring Progress

The implementation of the Public Safety Canada Accessibility Plan for 2023–2026 is an important step in the department’s commitment to an equitable workplace for persons with disabilities (PWD), and creating an organizational culture that recognizes, understands and works together for, and in collaboration with PwD.

As we move forward, co-creation will continue with subject matter experts, internal and external stakeholders and the project team in order to ensure that the department is equipped with the right knowledge to implement the vision (the accessibility statement), eliminate barriers, and put the proposed actions into place. Successful implementation of the Plan will not only be measured through meeting the hiring targets by 2025, but through organizational performance.

Organizational performance is defined as the department’s implementation of the tools and activities as defined in the strategic framework. By 2025, the goal is to ensure that Public Safety Canada is transformed to reach the future desired state.

Data sources which will be used in the collection of data and the development of performance indicators include the:

- Accessibility Self-Assessment;
- Accessibility Survey;
- Public Service Employee Survey (PSES);
- Anonymous Feedback Mechanisms; and,
- Public Safety Canada Pulse Surveys.

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<sup>18</sup> [accessibility-accessibilite@ps-sp.gc.ca](mailto:accessibility-accessibilite@ps-sp.gc.ca)

The Human Resources Directorate will report on progress made on the Accessibility Plan to Public Safety Canada senior management on an annual basis as well as to Central Agencies when required.

## 8 Annexes

### 8.1 Annex A: Definitions

**Accommodation** refers to the modification of the workplace or working arrangements to meet the accessibility needs of its employees so that injured employees or employees with permanent requirements for accommodations can stay in the workplace and perform their jobs safely and efficiently.

**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. (obstacle)

**Disability** is a broad category of experience that encompasses a wide range and degree of challenges, barriers, and impairments that affect many people and goes far beyond traditional ideas and stereotypes. A disability can be visible or invisible. It can be permanent or temporary. It can also be episodic in nature. A disability and its required accommodations can be permanent or temporary (while you recover from an injury etc.) and the employer is required to provide accommodations to the point of undue hardship.

**Discrimination** means treating someone differently or unfairly because of a personal characteristic or distinction, which, whether intentional or not, has an effect that imposes disadvantages not imposed on others or that withholds or limits access that is given to others. There are 13 prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act (i.e., based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics (including a requirement to undergo a genetic test, or disclose the results of a genetic test), disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered).

The **Duty to Accommodate** is part of the Canada Human Rights Act and requires employers implement necessary measures to allow employees to perform their duties to the best of their

abilities. These measures need to be undertaken in a timely fashion while respecting the privacy of the individual who requires them.

**Harassment** is normally a series of incidents, but it can be one severe incident that has a lasting impact on the individual. Harassment is any improper conduct by an individual that is directed at and offensive to another individual in the workplace, including at any event or any location related to work, and that the individual knew or ought reasonably to have known would cause offence or harm. It comprises objectionable act(s), comment(s) or display(s) that demean, belittle, or cause personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat. It also includes harassment within the meaning of the Canadian Human Rights Act (i.e., based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics (including a requirement to undergo a genetic test, or disclose the results of a genetic test), disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered).

A **micro-aggression** is a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

**Onboarding** is the process of integrating an employee with a department and its culture, as well as getting the employee the tools and information needed to become a productive member of the team.

**Plain language** is a writing technique of organizing information in ways that make sense to the reader. It uses straightforward, concrete, familiar words. Plain language helps the writer adapt what they have to say to the reading abilities of the people who are most likely to read the document.

**Workforce availability** refers to the estimated availability of people in designated groups as a percentage of the workforce population. For the core public administration, workforce availability is based on the population of Canadian citizens who are active in the workforce and who work in those occupations that correspond to the occupations in the core public administration.