



Accessibility Plan 2023-2025



Canadian Space
Agency

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Canadian Space Agency

Accessibility Plan 2023-2025

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

We are very pleased to share the Canadian Space Agency (CSA)'s first-ever three-year Accessibility Plan – a robust plan that lays the groundwork for creating a more inclusive and accessible workplace.

The Government of Canada set an ambitious goal of a barrier-free Canada by 2040. At the CSA, we are familiar with contributing to long-term, seemingly unreachable goals, such as missions like the James Webb Space Telescope. Bold, aspiring goals are what help humankind and societies evolve, and we are confident that the *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)* will do just that.

The creation of our Accessibility Plan was guided by the key principle “Nothing for us without us.” Employees with disabilities, the Accessibility Champion and the Accessibility Network were directly involved in the consultation process and provided insights and feedback that shaped the plan. The outcomes of this engagement process demonstrated how much accessibility issues touch us all and how crucial it is to tap into the unique strengths and talents of people with disabilities to open up new perspectives and ways of working.

We need to do more to remove stigma and recognize that, for some people, speaking about their disability may be very difficult. As managers and colleagues, we need to show more empathy and compassion and take the time to listen and understand the lived experiences of people with disabilities. We need to be creative and flexible in finding ways to support various types of disabilities and ask ourselves some important questions, such as: What steps can I personally take to improve accessibility in our workplace? How can I show up for my team members and colleagues with disabilities to improve accessibility for them? How can we adapt our ways of working and expectations to create better conditions for a colleague who may need support?

Just like with Webb, it will take time and the collective efforts of many to create a barrier-free Canada. And just like with Webb, this long-term vision and our investments will bring about fundamental shifts and advancements, for the benefit of all.

Lisa, Luc and Mary

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMPION

Working for the Government of Canada over the past 20 years, I experienced many changes, seized or missed opportunities, worked on challenging projects, participated in important initiatives, and met extraordinary people. Yet, I never realized until recently that all of this has been readily accessible to me. Beyond my successes and failures, my strengths and weaknesses, I have always had the possibility (and the chance) to navigate my work environment and to integrate and interact with ease, unhindered by any physical, mental or sensory limitations.

I experienced this realization in 2017 when I agreed to be the Quebec Region Champion for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Leading up to this Day, I got involved, met people with disabilities and became informed. I realized not only the extent of the challenges that people with disabilities could experience, but even more so the importance of doing everything from an individual, organizational and societal point of view to maximize the accessibility of our living and working spaces.

It is with these issues and challenges in mind that I was pleased and humbled to take on the role of Champion for Persons with Disabilities at the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and launch the Accessibility Network. Collectively, we will mobilize people to dismantle barriers to accessibility.

Let's work together to support people with disabilities and all employees who face barriers, even if they don't consider themselves disabled. Let's embrace the cause all together to give employees with disabilities the tools, support, knowledge and corporate culture they need to contribute fully. The measures in our first Accessibility Plan are designed to help all employees put accessibility first and to make it work for everyone, and that is why I am so proud of it!

Thank you for your support.

Janin Huard
CSA Accessibility Champion

INTRODUCTION

“A disability is but the shadow of a strength. The trick is to harvest the strength while giving some accommodation for the cost.” This quote from a Canadian Space Agency (CSA) employee with a disability points to the high importance and value of striving to make our workplace inclusive and accessible for all. The CSA’s first three-year Accessibility Plan aims to create the conditions for CSA employees with disabilities to be supported and able to contribute their full potential.

To help meet the Government of Canada’s target of a barrier free Canada by 2040, the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA) and its [regulations](#) require all federal government departments and agencies to publish and submit a three-year accessibility plan to the [Accessibility Commissioner](#) by December 31, 2022, as well as subsequent annual progress reports. The CSA’s Accessibility Plan 2023-2025 is comprised of the following sections (as required by ACA regulations):

- A. General
- B. Areas of Focus, which covers the seven mandatory Areas of Focus (Note: An additional area of focus is included in this plan to align with the [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#), which includes a priority on culture and accessibility confidence)
- C. Consultations

The ACA puts forward a **new definition** of disability, which is now defined as **any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society** (see Appendix A for a list of different types of disabilities). In addition, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) provided [definitions](#) for all seven Areas of Focus, which informed the work done on each area.

The Accessibility Plan was developed in collaboration with the Accessibility Plan Working Group, a multi-disciplinary team covering all Areas of Focus, and in consultation with the CSA’s Accessibility Network, comprised of employees with disabilities and allies. As well, CSA employees were asked to fill out an online survey and employees with disabilities were invited to take part in focus groups. Each Area of Focus includes a goal as well as sections outlining the current status, feedback received, identified barriers, planned actions over the next three years, targets and the teams responsible for implementing the actions.

A word of thanks and appreciation to everyone involved in the creation of this plan, whether it was by filling out the survey, taking part in the focus groups, participating in the Working Group meetings and discussions and by providing feedback on the draft version of this plan – or all of the above. Accessibility matters because when we focus on accessibility, we can “harvest the strengths” of everyone. As author and neurologist Oliver Sacks said: *“I wish for a world that views disability, mental or physical, not as a hindrance but as unique attributes that can be seen as powerful assets if given the right opportunities.”*

A. GENERAL

DESIGNATED OFFICIAL

Lynne Laramée, Executive Director, Human Resources

CONTACT INFORMATION

Request a copy of the accessibility plan in an alternate format and/or to request a copy of the feedback process description in an alternate format. In addition, you may use the same contact information to provide feedback.

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B. AREAS OF FOCUS

1. EMPLOYMENT

GOAL

Employees and job seekers with disabilities have increased access to employment and promotional opportunities, can contribute to their full potential and regard the CSA as an employer of choice.

CURRENT STATUS

At present, the CSA has not met its Workforce Availability Target (WFA) for persons with disabilities. A number of actions already underway will help the CSA reach its target of hiring 20 employees with disabilities over the next three years:

- A new 3-year recruitment strategy, co-created with the CSA's Advisory Committee on Employment Equity and Diversity, includes targeted processes for employment equity groups, including managers and executives, to close the hiring gap.
- A review of the CSA's HR employment systems is underway to evaluate HR practices and policies to identify potential employment-related systemic barriers. This review will provide a thorough analysis of all stages of the hiring process, identify ways to better support and remove potential barriers to accessibility and assess whether documents are accessible and written in plain language. A report will be completed by the end of December 2022 and shared in early 2023.
- The CSA requires all delegated managers and board members to complete bias-free selection training.

- The CSA is collaborating with the Public Service Commission (PSC) to create a targeted pool for persons with disabilities for the BI-02 classification group and would be interested in pursuing potential future opportunities.
- CSA managers are delegated to hire students and have access to two programs: Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities and the PSC's Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities.

The CSA has begun to identify barriers to the promotion and career progression of employees with disabilities with a preliminary analysis of the selection process. In addition, the HR Team has started discussions with the Advisory Committee on Employment Equity and Diversity to better understand the specific needs of employees with disabilities with regards to career support and progression.

The CSA's current workplace accommodation model is decentralized to managers. The need for better tracking was identified in the CSA's Management Accountability Framework 2021-2022 report. The HR Team is in preliminary discussions to adopt the [Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) approach to facilitate better tracking, increase timeliness and quality of service. This important initiative is already listed in the HR Team's strategic planning documents and all HR-related actions identified in the Accessibility Plan will also be included.

FEEDBACK

Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) 2020 results show that employees with disabilities face barriers that they feel negatively impact their career progression, such as:

- **Conflict between their work obligations and family and personal obligations:** 34% (23% for employees without a disability).
- **Access to learning opportunities:** 34% (19% for employees without a disability).
- **Discrimination:** 23% (11% for employees without a disability).
- **Accessibility or accommodation issues:** 21% (3% for employees without a disability).

A recent internal survey on accessibility asked a series of employment-related questions. Eighty-nine percent of respondents (89%) (employees with disabilities) said they did not experience barriers during a staffing process and 11% answered yes. When asked if they have experienced barriers to promotion and/or career progression, 74% answered no and 18% answered yes. Over the past 5 years, 42% of respondents with disabilities asked for an accommodation/adjustment and 58% did not. In terms of their overall satisfaction with how their request was handled, 43% were very satisfied and 57% were somewhat satisfied.

Employees with disabilities participated in focus groups and raised various issues:

- There are inconsistencies in addressing accommodation requests (e.g. timeliness, access to requested equipment, supervisor support or documentation), with some participants stating that requests are dealt with fairly quickly and others mentioned delays.

- Hiring practices need to evolve by removing rigid and unnecessary employment criteria and having tools and approaches that support candidates with disabilities, instead of inadvertently creating barriers. Participants encouraged managers to hire people with disabilities and focus on the skills and strengths they offer.
- Unrealistic workload, inflexible work hours, deadlines and expectations can have harmful, negative impacts for employees with disabilities such as exacerbating health issues and creating barriers to career progression.
- There are also systemic barriers to career progression for employees with disabilities, such as assumptions about competence or capacity due to the disability and/or accommodation measures.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Feedback noted above point to various issues that create barriers for employment and/or career progression:
 - o Conflict between work and personal obligations, lack of access to learning opportunities, discrimination and accommodation issues.
 - o Unrealistic workload, inflexible work hours, deadlines and expectations.
 - o Rigid and unnecessary hiring criteria and practices.
- Feedback also highlighted inconsistencies in addressing accommodation requests.
- Like other teams offering support to employees with disabilities, the HR Team will require additional awareness and training sessions to continue to increase their knowledge and understanding of the needs of people with disabilities and enhance their ability to provide advice to managers to help prevent and remove barriers to accessibility.

ACTIONS

Year 1 (January – December 2023)

- Present the HR Team’s annual plan to the Accessibility Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Continue working towards adopting the new GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport and ensure consultations take place with CSA’s Accessibility Network.
- Develop a transition plan to support employees with disabilities and managers in adapting to the GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport.
- Research learning content for accessibility module(s) for future “LearnHR” sessions for managers.
- Implement Year 1 of 3-Year Recruitment Strategy. Present mid-year update to Accessibility Network.
- Fully leverage the guidance documents prepared by the Public Service Commission on accessible staffing practices as well as staffing flexibilities available to hiring managers.
- Include more diverse board members for selection processes, especially for EX positions.
- Conduct research on best practices for improving HR practices and procedures to better identify and resolve barriers, based on the results of the HR employment systems review.

- Update HR procedures to better track data at all stages of the employment cycle from recruitment to retention and promotion.
- Establish a mechanism to track the hiring of students through the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities programs or employees from the Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities at the Public Service Commission.
- Work with Ombuds to update employee stay/exit interviews questionnaire to better identify workplace retention barriers and gaps for employees with disabilities.
- Review onboarding practices for accessibility to help new employees feel supported.
- Research awareness and training options on accessibility and incorporate into the HR Team's learning plan to increase knowledge and capacity to provide guidance.

Year 2 (January – December 2024)

- Present the HR Team's annual plan to the Accessibility Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Implement and promote the GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport.
- Implement the transition plan to support employees with disabilities and managers in adapting to the GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport.
- Design and deliver accessibility module(s) for "LearnHR" sessions for managers.
- Revise, as needed, and implement Year 2 of 3-Year Recruitment Strategy.
- Undertake awareness and training sessions on accessibility.

Year 3 (January – December 2025)

- Present the HR Team's annual plan to the Accessibility Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Monitor implementation of GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport.
- Continue supporting employees with disabilities and managers in adapting to the GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport.
- Continue delivering accessibility module(s) for "LearnHR" sessions for managers.
- Revise, as needed, and implement Year 3 of 3-Year Recruitment Strategy.
- Continue undertaking awareness and training sessions on accessibility.

TARGETS

- The CSA has met or surpassed its Workforce Availability Target by December 2025.
- The following PSES results relating to the career progression of employees with disabilities will all have improved from PSES 2020 results over the next three years: conflict between their work obligations and family and personal obligations, lack of access to learning opportunities, discrimination and accessibility or accommodation issues.

RESPONSIBLE

Human Resources Directorate

2. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

GOAL

The accessibility of the CSA's built environment is enhanced to ensure employees and visitors have barrier free access.

CURRENT STATUS

The majority of CSA employees work out of three locations: John-H. Chapman Space Centre (Headquarters in St-Hubert, Québec), David Florida Laboratory (Ottawa, Ontario) or the Gatineau office (Québec). There are approximately 15-20 CSA employees working at NASA in Houston and one CSA employee in Washington, DC and one in Paris, both located at the Canadian Embassies. As of November 2022, 207 employees have chosen to telework full time.

A full assessment of the John-H. Chapman Space Centre's physical accessibility was completed in 2019 and an action plan was developed. It was noted that compliance issues could be addressed during major retrofits and no immediate actions were required. The recently completed Universal Changing Room project addressed several compliance issues identified in the action plan, as did the recent elevator refit project. The study also recommended that various complimentary studies take place to address other compliance issues. These additional studies have been included in the Service Management and Administration Team's planning process. It should be noted that one of the lessons learned from a 2018 library upgrade was the importance of consulting employees with disabilities. Since then, the Real Property Management & Facilities Modernization Team has consulted employees with disabilities during the design phase of each new project.

Physical accessibility at the David Florida Laboratory was evaluated in 2012 as part of the building condition report. This assessment may be outdated as it relied on 2004 standards. At the time, it was noted that compliance issues could be addressed during major retrofits and no immediate actions were required. Accessibility improvements were incorporated during several major retrofits of the facility. Plans are underway to conduct a new assessment.

The Gatineau office falls under the purview of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). PSPC issued a survey as part of their technical accessibility assessment of a portion of its Crown-owned portfolio. The CSA's Designated Official for the Accessibility Plan sent an email to all CSA employees working at the Gatineau location to encourage them to share their feedback on accessibility in their workplace.

FEEDBACK

PSES 2020 survey results, 48% of respondents with disabilities felt that their physical environment (e.g. office, workspace) was suitable for their job requirements, a substantial decrease from 2019 results of 93%, and an important difference when comparing with the 2020 results of employees without a disability (73%). This result could be linked to particular challenges faced by employees with disabilities during the transition to telework during the

pandemic. The PSES also asks to what extent the physical work environment causes stress at work. In 2020, 6% of employees with disabilities felt that the physical work environment causes stress at work, a decrease from 2019 (13%).

In a recent internal survey on accessibility, 84% of respondents (employees with disabilities) indicated that they were very satisfied/satisfied with the ergonomic and/or adaptive equipment they have been provided to do their work. Eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents (employees with disabilities), felt that the accessibility of their office building, based on their own needs, was very accessible/completely accessible, with 12% responding somewhat accessible and 3% responding not accessible. Some respondents provided comments highlighting issues, such as flexible work stations that are not personalized, which creates difficulties for some employees with disabilities, as well as flagging other accessibility issues for specific doors, elevators and paths.

Focus groups were held for CSA employees with disabilities. In terms of what's working well, it was mentioned that there is an openness with the Real Property Management & Facilities Modernization Team and their support with adapted offices is appreciated. A number of accessibility issues were flagged during the discussions, such as the cafeteria not being fully accessible for people with mobility disabilities or the lack of access to different parts of the CSA (e.g. the outdoor cafeteria deck and the library deck make it challenging to access designated meeting places in case of emergencies). Participants were eager to be included and consulted on accessibility matters to ensure needs and solutions are aligned.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Various barriers in the built environment have been identified in previous assessments as well as in survey and focus group findings, as mentioned above.
- Like other teams offering support to employees with disabilities, Real Property Management & Facilities Modernization staff will require additional awareness and training sessions to continue to increase their knowledge and understanding of disability issues and needs and enhance their ability to support employees with disabilities.

ACTIONS

Year 1 (January – December 2023)

- Prioritize existing plan's actions into yearly milestones.
- Present the CSA's Built Environment Action Plan to the Accessibility Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Complete an accessibility study at the David Florida Laboratory (DFL) in compliance with Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)/Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) standards for real property.
- Research awareness and training options on workplace accessibility and incorporate into the Real Property Management & Facilities Modernization Directorate's learning plan.

Year 2 (January – December 2024)

- Revise and present the CSA's Built Environment Action Plan to the Accessibility Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Implement tasks defined in the action plan.
- Incorporate the findings and recommendations of the accessibility study at the David Florida Laboratory into the action plan.
- Undertake awareness and training options determined in the previous year.

Year 3 (January – December 2025)

- Revise and present the CSA's Built Environment Action Plan to the Accessibility Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Implement tasks defined in the action plan.
- Continue undertaking awareness and training options on workplace accessibility.

TARGETS

- 100% of the tasks identified in the action plan are carried on schedule with all deviations justified and documented.

RESPONSIBLE

Real Property Management & Facilities Modernization Directorate

3. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

GOAL

Accessibility is incorporated and prioritized in the CSA's IT projects and processes to enable employees to have access to the electronic and software tools they need to do their work while adhering to security requirements.

CURRENT STATUS

There are a number of activities already in place that support accessibility on the information and communications technologies (ICT) front. For instance:

- The IM/IT Team has developed a 3-year strategy which outlines its vision and priorities, including accessibility requirements.
- The IM/IT Team provides coaching services to educate project teams that have a digital component on Standard 6 (Build accessibility from the start) as well as the GoC Guideline on Making Information Technology Usable by All.
- The IM/IT Team adopted an ICT accessibility testing policy that requires WCAG 2.1 AA.
- The IM/IT Team taps into the services offered by Shared Services Canada's Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology team (AAACT) and refers employees and managers to seek advice and solutions. Some solutions offered by AACT have not been workable due to security considerations.

- The IM/IT Team also takes various steps to make accessible ICT products and services available, such as consulting with the employee in question and/or their specialists' recommendations or, as mentioned above, working with the AACT to identify viable solutions.

Although the IM/IT Team tracks ICT-related accessibility issues and as well as its inventory of accessible and ergonomic products (e.g. headsets, mouse, keyboard), there is currently no formal feedback mechanism.

While resources are presently not allocated for training on how to develop and deliver accessible and inclusive ICT solutions, members of the IM/IT Team attended an AACT training session in spring 2022.

FEEDBACK

PSES 2020 results show that CSA employees with disabilities have a level of satisfaction of 66% with the tools, technology and equipment they need to do their work, compared to 86% of employees without a disability. An internal survey conducted in fall 2022 indicate that 84% of respondents (employees with disabilities) felt very satisfied/satisfied with the IT ergonomic and/or IT adaptive equipment they have been provided with and 16% were not very satisfied/very unsatisfied. In terms of the level of satisfaction with the support provided by IT specialists when there are questions or concerns regarding accessible software and technologies they are using, 93% of participants were very satisfied/somewhat satisfied. Some respondents provided comments flagging issues regarding timeliness or ability to respond to specific types of accommodation requests. Some respondents acknowledged that technological limits and security constraints can sometimes impact the IM/IT Team's capability to fulfill specific requests.

In the same survey, 88% of respondents (all employees) were very satisfied and 11% were somewhat satisfied that virtual meetings and events are fully accessible to them. However, in focus groups held for employees with disabilities, some participants raised concerns about the lack of accessibility for people with hearing disabilities, particularly during bilingual gatherings like all-staff town halls.

In focus group discussions, it was mentioned that there is an openness within the IM/IT Team and their support with assistive equipment is appreciated. While the introduction of MS Teams is seen as positive, accessibility barriers for people with hearing disabilities was raised as an issue.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Given the nature of the CSA's work, various security considerations must take precedence, which can at times limit technology options and hinder full accessibility.
- Fear of stigma may lead some employees with disabilities to hesitate or decline to inform their managers or colleagues of their situation, which can make it challenging for IM/IT staff to fully support them.

- Bilingual gatherings, particularly on MS Teams, present barriers to accessibility for employees with hearing disabilities.
- Like many teams offering support to employees with disabilities, IM/IT will require additional awareness and training sessions to continue to increase their knowledge and understanding of disability issues.

ACTIONS

Year 1 (January – December 2023)

- Research IM/IT accessibility best practices and new trends in both technology and service delivery to inform the annual update of IM/IT 3-year strategy.
- Present the CSA's IM/IT 3-year strategy to the Accessible Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Prepare inventory of systems, software and equipment to assess level of accessibility
- Develop a plan to ensure compliance with new TBS Web Accessibility Standards (Phase 1), which are expected by end of fiscal year 2022-2023.
- Develop service standards for responding to accessibility accommodation requests.
- Research options to overcome technological limits that hinder accessibility.
- Develop a mechanism to collect, track and analyze accessibility-related ICT feedback.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure that the integrated architecture team can support project teams in building in accessibility from the start, either by setting up a committee or by involving another existing committee.
- Research awareness and training sessions on accessible ICT and incorporate into the IM/IT Team's learning plan to ensure all aspects of IM/IT are considered.

Year 2 (January – December 2024)

- Research IM/IT accessibility best practices and new trends in both technology and service delivery to inform the annual update of IM/IT 3-year strategy.
- Present the CSA's IM/IT 3-year strategy to the Accessible Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Prepare an action plan and begin implementing to address accessibility issues identified while creating the inventory of systems, software and equipment.
- Implement the plan to ensure compliance with new TBS Web Accessibility Standards (Phase 1), which are expected by end of fiscal year 2022-2023.
- Launch service standards for accessibility accommodation requests and establish baseline.
- Continue to research options to overcome technological limits that hinder accessibility.
- Implement mechanism to collect, track and analyze accessibility-related ITC feedback, and include findings in IM/IT planning exercises on an annual basis.
- Undertake awareness and training sessions on accessible ICT.

Year 3 (January – December 2025)

- Research IM/IT accessibility best practices and new trends in both technology and service delivery to inform the annual update of IM/IT 3-year strategy.

- Present the CSA's IM/IT 3-year strategy to the Accessible Network for input and feedback and provide an annual progress report.
- Continue to implement the action plan to address accessibility issues in systems, software and equipment.
- Continue implementing the plan to ensure compliance with new TBS Web Accessibility Standards (Phase 1), which are expected by end of fiscal year 2022-2023.
- Report on service standards for accessibility accommodation request.
- Continue to research options to overcome technological limits that hinder accessibility.
- Evaluate mechanism to collect, track and analyze accessibility-related feedback, and amend as required. Continue to include findings in IT planning exercises.
- Continue to undertake awareness and training sessions on accessible ICT.

TARGETS

- Starting in Year 1, the number of accessible systems, software and equipment will increase.
- Increase the level of satisfaction that CSA employees with disabilities have the tools, technology and equipment they need to do their work (PSES).
- Increase the level of satisfaction that CSA employees with disabilities with the IT ergonomic and/or IT adaptive equipment they have been provided with (internal survey on accessibility issues)
- Maintain the high level of satisfaction with the support provided by IT specialists when there are questions or concerns regarding accessible software and technologies they are using (internal survey on accessibility issues).

RESPONSIBLE

- IM/IT Team

4. COMMUNICATION, OTHER THAN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

GOAL

The CSA's communications tools, services, products and events are accessible and inclusive, available in plain language and free of biases and discrimination. The CSA's employees and leaders have an increased awareness of and ability to apply accessible communication best practices.

CURRENT STATUS

The Treasury Board Secretariat published new [Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#). An internal checklist was created to determine the CSA's current level of compliance to the new guidelines. Currently, the CSA Communications Team is meeting the majority of the new guidelines. It should be noted that the CSA's external website is fully accessible and compliant with federal government standards. However, the CSA's intranet is

not fully accessible at this time. Steps are being taken to increase accessibility (such as adding text when new images are posted) while a user experience assessment is planned to determine future actions. While there is presently no formal requirement for all documents and presentations to be accessible, the CSA's main documents and reports are accessible.

FEEDBACK

In a recent internal survey, participants (all employees) were asked about their current level of knowledge or ability to make documents more accessible, respondents answered as follows: high (10%), medium (42%), low (36%) and no current knowledge or ability (12%). In terms of plain language, 74% of respondents felt that the CSA's communications are written in plain language and 22% responded sometimes.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- The intranet's current accessibility issues create barriers for people with seeing disabilities.
- The low level of knowledge or ability to make documents more accessible creates barriers for people with seeing disabilities.

ACTIONS

Year 1 (January – December 2023)

- Develop a 3-year communications strategy to promote the CSA's Accessibility Plan and raise awareness of accessibility requirements and resources. Implement Year 1.
- Work with the Human Resources Directorate to develop and promote an annual "Top 5 Accessibility Tips" campaign (see Accessibility Confidence Pillar). Year 1 will focus on accessible communication tips that employees can adopt.
- Design a new Accessibility Hub on the intranet to offer a one-stop shop for all accessibility-related information, including accessible communications guidance.
- Include accessibility as part of the upcoming user experience assessment of the intranet and establish next steps to ensure greater accessibility and compliance with new TBS Web Accessibility Standards (Phase 1), which are expected by end of fiscal year 2022-23.
- Initiate intranet revamp based on user experience assessment findings.
- Assess training options for creating accessible documents and develop plan for delivering training to internal teams (e.g. HR, Procurement, Service Management and Experimentation and Policy).
- Assess measures needed to meet remaining [Guidelines for Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#): 1) American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ), 2) Audio descriptions or text descriptions for videos and 3) Real-time speech-to-text interpreting service such as communications access real-time translation (CART). Specifically, research options and costs to incorporate CART into All-Staffs and Accessibility Network meetings.
- Actively participate in the Community of Practice for Accessible Communications to stay well-informed of the latest information and share best practices.

Year 2 (January – December 2024)

- Revise and implement Year 2 of the Accessibility Plan’s communications strategy.
- Work with the Human Resources Directorate to develop and promote Year 2 of the CSA’s Top 5 Accessibility Tips campaign.
- Roll-out and launch the new Accessibility Hub on the intranet.
- Complete revamp of the intranet site.
- Begin delivering training to internal teams on creating accessible documents.
- Implement measures needed to meet the remaining [Guidelines for Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#), as required.
- Actively participate in the Community of Practice for Accessible Communications.

Year 3 (January – December 2025)

- Revise and implement Year 3 of the Accessibility Plan’s communications strategy.
- Work with the Human Resources Team to develop and promote Year 3 of the CSA’s Top 5 Accessibility Tips campaign.
- Continue delivering training to internal teams on creating accessible documents.
- Continue implementing the measures needed to meet remaining [Guidelines for Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#), as required.
- Actively participate in the Community of Practice for Accessible Communications.

TARGETS

- Internal survey results demonstrate that more employees have a higher level of knowledge and ability to produce accessible documents.
- Accessibility Hub on the intranet is consulted by employees.

RESPONSIBLE

- Communications and Public Affairs Directorate
- Human Resources Directorate

5. PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

GOAL

Accessibility requirements are woven into various aspects of procurement, from the procurement documents for suppliers to the purchase processes, to reduce and prevent barriers to accessibility.

CURRENT STATUS

CSA’s Requests for Proposals template includes a dedicated section on accessibility standards that is in accordance with the Treasury Board Contracting policy and the Accessible Canada Act. It requires business owners to provide accessibility needs in their Statement of Work. The Procurement Team integrates identified accessibility requirements into subsequent

procurement documents. The CSA's internal procurement request tool includes a data field (yes/no) for identifying accessibility requirements. The CSA procurement team also implements the use of external tools and resources to adhere to industry best practices as it relates to accessibility.

FEEDBACK

The CSA does not currently have a mechanism in place to regularly seek input or feedback from persons with disabilities such as an advisory committee or stakeholder networks that can provide advice, direction, or guidance on procurement's accessibility.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- The level of accessibility of procurement tools and templates is currently unknown.
- Potential suppliers may not feel comfortable requesting accessibility accommodations out of fear of stigma.

ACTIONS

Year 1 (January – December 2023)

- Create an inventory of procurement tools and templates for internal clients. Conduct an accessibility assessment of this inventory to 1) determine level of accessibility of the tools and templates and 2) ensure accessibility is included as a requirement and/or consideration in procurements.
- Conduct research on best practices for making complex procurement documents accessible (e.g. large documents containing multiple tables) for potential bidders.
- Actively participate in the Agents of Change for Accessible Procurement group to stay well-informed of the latest information and share best practices.

Year 2 (January – December 2024)

- Begin implementing changes to procurement tools and templates (Phase 1) for internal clients, as identified in Year 1 accessibility assessment.
- Communicate and socialize updated procurement tools and templates (Phase 1) to help internal clients identify accessibility requirements, and provide additional guidance as required.
- Begin to implement best practices for making complex procurement documents accessible for potential bidders, as required.
- Actively participate in the Agents of Change for Accessible Procurement group to stay well-informed of the latest information and share best practices.

Year 3 (January – December 2025)

- Continue implementing changes to procurement tools and templates (Phase 2) for internal clients, as identified in Year 1 accessibility assessment.

- Communicate and socialize updated procurement tools and templates (Phase 2) to help internal clients identify accessibility requirements, and provide additional guidance as required.
- Continue to implement best practices for making complex procurement documents accessible for potential bidders, as required.
- Actively participate in the Agents of Change for Accessible Procurement group to stay well-informed of the latest information and share best practices.

TARGETS

- By Year 3, most procurement tools and templates are transitioned to accessible formats.

RESPONSIBLE

- Procurement and Contract Administration

6. DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

GOAL

The accessibility of CSA's programs and services is enhanced through increased awareness and knowledge of accessible and inclusive design and delivery.

CURRENT STATUS

The CSA's Service Management and Experimentation Team is currently working on a service strategy in relation to the Service and Digital Policy, which includes a requirement to "ensure client-centred service design and delivery from the outset, including access, inclusion, accessibility, security, privacy, simplicity and official language choice". As part of this work, the team has identified 19 external and interdepartmental services as part of the CSA's service inventory for 2021-22. One of the 19 services identified, the CSA's Class Grant and Contribution Program (G&C), is the only funding program to external stakeholders and is one of the CSA's main service offerings. All G&C processes are available online and via email or regular mail.

Training on how to develop and deliver accessible and inclusive programs and services with a specific focus on serving people with disabilities has not been provided to employees offering programs and services.

FEEDBACK

The CSA does not currently have a mechanism in place to regularly seek input or feedback from persons with disabilities such as an advisory committee or stakeholder networks that can provide advice, direction, or guidance on the accessibility of our programs and services.

The CSA has not yet developed data on client satisfaction from the perspective of persons with disabilities.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- There is very limited information on the potential barriers persons with disabilities may face when accessing the CSA's programs and services, including the Class Grant and Contribution Program.
- There is currently a general lack of awareness and knowledge among programs and services staff on how to develop and deliver accessible and inclusive programs and services.

ACTIONS

Year 1 (January – December 2023)

- Continue identifying external and interdepartmental services, monitor service standards according to different delivery modes and harmonize reporting exercises. Accessibility considerations will be included in Service Review checklists and other documents (e.g. guidance, monitoring, and evaluation).
- Explore opportunities to research best practices for assessing G&C service and program design to identify and remove potential barriers and biases and for designing and delivering accessible and inclusive programs and services.
- Research best practices to 1) develop data on G&C client satisfaction from the perspective of persons with disabilities and 2) to consult persons with disabilities to identify and remove barriers.
- Develop mechanisms to monitor the proportion of G&C recipients who have individuals who self-identify as persons with disabilities within their organizations.

Year 2 (January – December 2024)

- Identify internal services within CSA as part of the Service and Digital Policy directive.
- Assess G&C service and program design to identify and remove potential barriers.
- Share information on best practices for designing and delivering accessible and inclusive programs and services.
- Develop strategy to 1) develop data on G&C client satisfaction from the perspective of persons with disabilities and 2) consult persons with disabilities to identify and remove barriers, based on Year 1 best practices research findings.
- Implement mechanisms to monitor the proportion of G&C recipients who have individuals who self-identify as persons with disabilities within their organizations.

Year 3 (January – December 2025)

- Implement solutions to address potential barriers and biases raised in assessment of G&C service and program design.
- Implement strategy to 1) collect data on G&C client satisfaction from the perspective of persons with disabilities and 2) consult persons with disabilities to identify and remove barriers.
- Evaluate mechanisms to monitor the proportion of G&C recipients who have individuals who self-identify as persons with disabilities within their organizations.

TARGETS

There is currently no consistent data to establish proposed indicators. Based on this plan, by Year 3, the Centre of Expertise for Grants and Contributions will be in a position to begin collecting data and establish a baseline for future accessibility plans.

RESPONSIBLE

Service Management and Experimentation Team
Centre of Expertise for Grants and Contributions
CSA Service Providers

7. TRANSPORTATION

The Canadian Human Rights Commission defines the "[Transportation](#)" as follows:

This includes travel between provinces or outside of Canada by plane, train, bus or ferry. It also includes vehicles used by organizations that are regulated by the federal government (examples: Canada Post, television stations). Here are examples of barriers in this area:

- Planes and trains are not wheelchair accessible
- Airports that do not have braille signs

Given this definition, the CSA has deemed this Area of Focus not applicable.

8. ACCESSIBILITY CONFIDENCE

GOAL

CSA leaders and employees have a high level of awareness and understanding of accessibility and why it matters, and are committed to creating a more accessible and inclusive workplace.

CURRENT STATUS

A number of actions and activities are already underway that are helping to create the conditions for greater accessibility confidence at the CSA. For example, the CSA has:

- Identified the Accessibility Plan as a key activity in the CSA's Business Plan for 2022-23.
- Appointed the Human Resources Executive Director as the executive lead to coordinate the CSA's Accessibility Plan.
- Established a multi-disciplinary working group to leverage the subject matter expertise from across the organization to develop the Accessibility Plan. This working group also included the Accessibility Champion and employees with disabilities. It will remain active and meet monthly to provide updates on the plan's implementation.
- Identified a chair and champion for the Persons with Disabilities Chairs and Champions Committee (PwDCCC).

- Established a new Accessibility Network in September 2022, led by the Accessibility Champion, which has 16 members. To enable the participation of employees with hearing disabilities, the Network alternates the language of its monthly meetings as the current technology does not adequately support bilingual meetings. Many of its members contributed to the development of the Accessibility Plan by responding to the internal survey on accessibility and taking part in focus groups. In addition, the Network was asked to provide feedback on the draft plan before it was finalized.
- Provides HR staff support to the Accessibility Champion and Network.
- Promotes events like National AccessAbility Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- Conducts an annual campaign to promote self-identification of employees with disabilities to improve reporting on the state of persons with disabilities in the Public Service. The last call was in March 2022 and future campaigns will place emphasis on the new disability definition.

FEEDBACK

The PSES 2020 results highlight a number of issues linked to accessibility confidence. Several responses from CSA employees with a disability were lower than CSA employees without a disability. For instance:

- 67% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that they receive **meaningful recognition for work well done** (employees without a disability: 77%)
- 68% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that they have **opportunities to provide input into decisions** that affect their work (employees without a disability: 83%).
- 44% of employees with a disability can complete **their assigned workload during their regular working hours** always/almost always/often (employees without a disability: 59%).
- 63% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that they are satisfied with **how interpersonal issues are resolved in their work unit** (employees without a disability: 72%).
- 77% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that, in their work unit, **every individual is accepted as an equal member of the team** (employees without a disability: 89%).
- 78% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that, in their work unit, **individuals behave in a respectful manner** (employees without a disability: 91%).
- 66% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that they have **confidence in the senior management** of their department or agency (employees without a disability (76%).

- 68% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that their department or agency **respects individual differences** (e.g. culture, work styles, ideas, abilities) (employees without a disability: 84%).
- 72% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that their department or agency **implements activities and practices that support a diverse workforce** (employees without a disability: 88%)

There were a few instances where responses from employees with a disability were higher than employees without a disability:

- 92% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that they are **satisfied with the quality of the supervision they receive** (employees without a disability: 86%).
- 80% of employees with a disability strongly agree/somewhat agree that **change is managed well in their department or agency** (employees without a disability: 64%).

In a recent internal survey on accessibility, participants were asked what the CSA should do to improve the knowledge, awareness and confidence of employees and supervisors/managers on workplace accessibility. The top five answers were 1) Information posted on the intranet, 2) Specialized learning events, 3) Mandatory training, 4) Learning resources and 5) All-staff town halls

Various topics related to accessibility confidence were discussed during focus groups organized for employees with disabilities. Participants spoke of the need for more learning opportunities for managers and all employees on many facets of accessibility, starting with the new and expanded definition of disability. It is important to increase awareness and understanding about the highly complex and nuanced nature of disability. Some disabilities are non-apparent, some are less commonly recognized or understood. Some people do not wish to have their disability known, some people have found ways to leverage their disabilities into a strength.

Another theme centered on the importance of greater understanding, acceptance, flexibility and adaptability to help create the conditions for people with disabilities to contribute at their highest potential. Managers and colleagues need to understand that it is often quite difficult for people with disabilities to open up about their situation out of the fear of stigma or being passed over for projects or opportunities.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- The limited awareness and understanding on the part of managers and colleagues about accessibility needs and requirements can contribute to systemic and attitudinal barriers for people with disabilities.

ACTIONS

Year 1 (January – December 2023)

- Create an Accessibility Tracker to monitor the implementation of actions included in the Accessibility Plan and keep track of feedback received from persons with disabilities on barriers and the plan's progress. The Tracker will be reviewed monthly by the Accessibility Plan Working Group and will help identify possible future actions for the next three-year plan. An annual implementation update will be provided to the Accessibility Network as part of the consultations for the progress report.
- Integrate diversity, inclusion and accessibility into the CSA's new Leadership Framework (in development) and its various components (Character-Based Leadership, recruitment, performance and talent management, succession planning, health and well-being, engagement and collaboration, and learning and capacity building).
- Include accessibility in the learning strategy for leaders and all employees, which stems from the Leadership Framework.
- Directly link to employee engagement strategy, to be co-created with the Employee Engagement Committee, to engage and equip employees and leaders on accessibility. Implement Year 1.
- Directly link the Accessibility Plan to the CSA's Mental Health Strategy and identify opportunities for collaboration between the Accessibility Champion and the Mental Health Champion.
- In partnership with Communications, develop and promote an annual "Top 5 Accessibility Tips Campaign".
- Launch "OneHR" monthly newsletter with a dedicated section on accessibility to help raise organization-wide awareness of disability-related issues and guidance.

Year 2 (January – December 2024)

- Provide implementation update to Accessibility Network using the Accessibility Tracker.
- Ensure ongoing integration of accessibility into the Leadership Framework's leadership programs, policies and initiatives, including the learning strategy.
- Implement Year 2 of the employee engagement strategy.
- Organize annual events co-hosted by Accessibility Champion and Mental Health Champion (e.g. National AccessAbility Week).
- Develop and promote Year 2 of Top 5 Accessibility Tips with the Communications Team.

Year 3 (January – December 2025)

- Provide implementation update to Accessibility Network using the Accessibility Tracker.
- Continue integration of accessibility into the Leadership Framework, including the learning strategy.
- Implement Year 3 of the employee engagement strategy.
- Organize annual events co-hosted by Accessibility Champion and Mental Health Champion (e.g. National AccessAbility Week).
- Develop and promote Year 3 of Top 5 Accessibility Tips with the Communications Team.

TARGETS

- Feedback provided in future Ombuds reports and monthly check-ins HR's Executive Director indicate an increase in accessibility confidence at the CSA.
- PSES results of employee with disabilities are significantly comparable to those of employees without disabilities (see Current Status section for the list of questions that will be tracked).

RESPONSIBLE

- Human Resources Directorate

C. CONSULTATIONS

CONSULTATION APPROACH

To help inform this plan, the CSA formed a multi-disciplinary working group which included employees with disabilities and the Accessibility Champion. The Accessibility Plan Working Group met regularly to help guide the consultation process as well as the development of the plan.

In addition, the CSA conducted an organization-wide online, accessible survey, open to all employees, and held focus group specifically for employees with disabilities to provide them with a safe forum to offer their lived experiences and suggestions. The internal online survey on accessibility was promoted on the intranet with a prominent banner as well as by the Accessibility Champion and HR Executive Director at multiple Directors' Network and Executive Committee meetings. In addition, the Accessibility Plan Working Group members and the Accessibility Network members were encouraged to help promote the survey with their teams and colleagues.

Finally, the Accessibility Plan Working Group and the recently-formed Accessibility Network, comprised of employees with disabilities and allies, was consulted on the draft plan before it was presented to the CSA's Executive Committee for final approval.

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

Online Survey

The accessible, confidential online survey was open for 2 weeks and drew a total of 170 participants, out of 798 CSA employees. Here's a snapshot of survey results (Please note that pillar-specific survey results were included under "Feedback" in section B. Areas of Focus):

- 23% of respondents identified as employees with disabilities.
- 71% of respondents were employees and 29% were supervisors/managers.
- 82% work at the John-H. Chapman Space Centre, 11% telework only and the remaining respondents work at the David Florida Laboratory (2%) or the Gatineau office (5%).
- Employees with disabilities were asked to specify the type(s) of disability (participants were invited to select all that apply). The results were as follows: mental health

disability (17), chronic health condition or pain (11), mobility disability (6), hearing disability (5). The following disabilities garnered fewer than 2 responses: seeing disability, speech disability, challenges with flexibility or dexterity, sensory or environmental disability, cognitive disability and intellectual disability.

- 36% of respondents who identified as employees with disabilities felt that they could “always/almost always” discuss their disability and/or the various barriers they experience at work with their current supervisor/manager, 25% answered “often”, 19% answered “sometimes” and 8% answered “never/almost never”.
- 70% of all respondents indicated that they did not encounter barriers or observed colleagues experience barriers. The remaining 30% of respondents indicated that they either experienced or observed barriers and were invited to check all that apply: physical barriers (21), communications barriers (24), technological barriers (22), systemic barriers (19) and attitudinal barriers (20).

Focus Groups

Forty-seven invitations were sent to employees who self-identified and self-declared as employees with disabilities and who granted their permission to be contacted by a representative from the HR team. A total of 6 employees took part in 3 separate focus groups (French, English and bilingual) and one employee requested a one-on-one interview. Focus group findings were included in the “Feedback” sections of each Area of Focus.

FEEDBACK AND FUTURE CONSULTATIONS IN SUPPORT OF PROGRESS REPORTS

As required by the Accessible Canada Act (ACA), the CSA will:

- Prepare and publish annual progress reports on the implementation of the CSA’s accessibility plan by December 31, 2023 and 2024, as required by the ACA.
- Consult persons with disabilities in preparing progress reports. Part of the consultation process will be to provide an update to the Accessibility Network on the plan’s implementation status, as outlined in the Accessibility Tracker.
- Notify the Accessibility Commissioner whenever the CSA publishes a progress report.
- Provide information in the progress reports about how the CSA consulted persons with disabilities as well as the feedback received through the feedback process.
- Describe in the progress reports how the CSA took that feedback into consideration.
- Make copies of the progress reports available in accessible formats upon request.

To comply with these requirements the CSA will:

- Confirm the Designated Official for the Accessibility Plan as the person responsible for receiving feedback and ensuring progress reports are published by December 31, 2023 and 2024.
- Create an Accessibility Tracker to monitor the implementation of the plan’s actions, which will be reviewed monthly by the Accessibility Plan Working Group, which includes the Accessibility Champion who convenes the Accessibility Network.

- Regularly monitor the email account accessibilite-accessibility@asc-csa.gc.ca, which was created to facilitate the consultation process for the development of the plan. It will remain active to collect feedback on the accessibility plan as well as new barriers.
- Create an online survey to receive feedback anonymously.
- Provide a response to questions or feedback received in the manner in which it was provided (mail, telephone, email)
- Provide a status update to the Accessibility Network as part of consultations for the CSA's annual progress report.
- Conduct survey(s) and focus groups to gather feedback on the implementation of the Accessibility Plan and to identify additional barriers.
- Analyze future PSES results concerning employees with a disability to assess the impacts of the Accessibility Plan's actions and to identify potential new barriers to accessibility.

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITIES

- **Seeing disability:** A seeing disability affects vision, including total blindness, partial sight, and visual distortion.
- **Hearing disability:** A hearing disability affects ability to hear, including being hard of hearing, deafness, or acoustic distortion.
- **Speech disability:** A speech disability affects ability to talk, including total speech loss, partial speech, and speech distortion.
- **Mobility disability:** A mobility disability affects ability to move your body, including the required use of a wheelchair or a cane, or other issues impacting your mobility.
- **Challenges with flexibility or dexterity:** Challenges with flexibility or dexterity affects ability to move joints or perform motor tasks, especially with your hands.
- **Mental health disability:** A mental health disability affects psychology or behaviour, such as anxiety, depression or social / compulsive disorder or phobia or psychiatric illness.
- **Sensory or environmental disability:** A sensory or environmental disability affects sensitivity to light, sounds or other distractions, as well as allergens and other environmental sensitivities.
- **Chronic health condition or pain:** A chronic health condition or pain affects ability to function on a regular or episodic basis due to migraines, Crohn's disease, colitis, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, and other disabilities or health conditions.
- **Cognitive disability:** A cognitive disability affects ability to carry out tasks involving executive functioning, such as planning and organization, learning information, communication, and memory, including autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and learning disabilities
- **Intellectual disability:** An intellectual disability affects ability to learn and to adapt behaviour to different situations.