



Office of
the Intelligence
Commissioner

Bureau du
commissaire
au renseignement

ACCESSIBILITY PROGRESS REPORT

DECEMBER 2023

Office of the Intelligence Commissioner (ICO)

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General

GENERAL

The *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)* came into force in 2019 with the goal of making Canada barrier-free by 2040. As defined in the ACA, a barrier is anything that prevents persons with disabilities from fully participating in society.

One of the ACA requirements is that organizations under federal responsibility identify barriers, develop and implement actions to remove barriers to accessibility in 7 seven priority areas:

- employment
- the built environment
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- communication other than ICT
- the design and delivery of programs and services
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities
- transportation

In addition, organizations under federal responsibility must prepare and publish accessibility plans, implement a feedback process on accessibility and publish a progress report on their accessibility plan annually.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

The Office of the Intelligence Commissioner (ICO) has a designated feedback contact and process to accept feedback regarding accessibility and this progress report. Feedback can be sent to via various channels, including email, phone and mail. Individuals can submit anonymous feedback via the [online form](#) on the [ICO website](#).

Feedback will be acknowledged through the same means by which it was received unless it was received anonymously.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Executive Director and General Counsel

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Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5P6

613-992-3044

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/intelligence-commissioner.html>

ALTERNATE FORMATS

The following formats of the feedback process and this progress report are available on demand:

- large print
- print

You can order via email at Info@ico-bcr.gc.ca or by calling 613-992-3044

Summary

In December 2022, the ICO published its initial Accessibility Plan and started implementing actions to remove barriers to accessibility and foster a culture of inclusion. The purpose of this report is to document the progress made on the implementation of the initial plan, and on other accessibility-related progress that has been achieved which may not have been captured in the initial accessibility plan.

In July 2019, An Act respecting national security matters (known as the *National Security Act, 2017*) came into force and reshaped Canada's national security and intelligence accountability framework. This included a novel oversight function through the appointment of an Intelligence Commissioner, a unique quasi-judicial function in Canada, set out in the *Intelligence Commissioner Act*. The Intelligence Commissioner is responsible for performing quasi-judicial reviews of the conclusions on the basis of which certain authorizations are issued or determinations are made under the *Communications Security Establishment Act* and the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*.

Given the specific mandate, the ICO does not provide programs and services to the public. Although the ICO chooses to publish its decisions electronically and is committed to making them accessible, the ICO accessibility stakeholders are primarily its employees. The ICO is a micro agency with less than 10 employees. Given the size of the organization, in addition to consulting with its employees, the ICO consulted again this year with other organizations to help identify potential barriers and develop actions plan to eliminate them.

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Areas Described under Section 5 of ACA

EMPLOYMENT

The ICO is committed to consulting employees and seeking their involvement in improving their workplace to be more inclusive and barrier free.

Barriers

The ICO is a micro agency with less than 10 employees and therefore, it could be difficult for an employee with a non-visible disability to come forward and speak about the barriers and challenges they are facing. It is therefore important to foster an environment where employees feel comfortable while respecting their privacy and implement various ways for an employee to communicate their thoughts and concerns regarding accessibility.

Actions

Action	Description	2023 Update
Remove workplace barriers and awareness	Continue to work with other departments to identify accessibility barriers and available solutions, raising awareness about disability inclusion, and implementing initiatives to foster a more inclusive working environment for Persons with Disabilities.	Ongoing: The ICO continues to look at resources and publications regarding adaptations for current and future employees. The ICO is building a list of contacts and publications to access should any new requirements be needed such as accommodation for candidate with special testing needs.
Training	Promoting and encouraging all employees to take the applicable training offered by the Canada School of Public Service on disability and inclusions.	Ongoing: Senior management has been encouraging employees to take the applicable training.
Implement the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport	The Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport helps address the obstacles federal public service employees with disabilities face	Started in 2023 instead 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The ICO is currently looking into the implementation of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport (the Passport). This tool

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	<p>in obtaining the tools, supports and measures required to perform at their best and succeed in the workplace.</p> <p>Establish a forum for employees to have a confidential discussion with their manager (workplace passport or equivalent).</p> <p>Collect employee self-identification data to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies and initiatives.</p>	<p>would allow ICO employees to confidentially self-identify and update their information at any time via an accessible PDF form. Anonymous responses to the self-identification questionnaire will help guide the development of more inclusive services and programs, including for the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities, while safeguarding confidential information.</p>
Compliance with office accommodation standards	<p>Create an accommodations processes and accommodations budget to cover costs for varying employee accommodation requests.</p>	
Awareness and education	<p>Increasing awareness about accessibility and promoting education and support a positive change of attitude.</p> <p>Have regular communication or news bulletins about Accessibility within the ICO.</p>	<p>The ICO began drafting an accessibility awareness campaign which will be launch in 2024.</p>

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The ICO is committed to improve accessibility of the built environment and has already taken steps to towards this goal.

The ICO is located within a privately owned building that house many federal government entities. A private company ensures maintenance of the building but because the majority of

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tenants are federal government, the building must meet the accessibility standard of the Government of Canada. All entrances, elevators, restrooms, emergency exits, wayfinding and signage are under their jurisdictions.

The ICO does not provide any programs nor service to the public and therefore does not have nor requires public access counter.

Barriers

As the ICO does not have the pool of employees to create a significant and accurate picture of what employees with disabilities are facing at work, the results of other departments' consultations process were used to help identify potential barriers.

The ICO workplace is a highly classified environment and access is completely controlled and monitored. The ICO must respect specific rules in order to keep its designation. For example, no mobile devices are allowed within the workplace.

Actions

Action	Description	2023 Update
Compliance with office accommodation standards	Work with partners to evaluate and improve our built environment to allow for access and inclusion of people with physical disabilities in the workplace.	Discussions are ongoing regarding mandatory security requirements with a view of finding solutions to continue to be compliant with mandatory security requirements and being accessible to all employees.
Consultations	Consult/seek feedback from persons with disabilities before making modifications or new additions to the built environment.	The ICO is currently looking to conduct an evaluation of its physical space and make accessibility recommendations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Accessibility on the Web

The ICO relies on Service Canada as the authority regarding the Government of Canada's Standard on Web Accessibility for all canada.ca websites. The Government of Canada has adopted the WGAC 2.0 that was developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to

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make sure the web content is accessible to people with disabilities. The ICO does not have an internal website (Intranet) for its employees.

IT accommodations for employees

The ICO has a Memorandum of Understanding with PCO for delivery of IT services. The ICO is committed to provide employees access to information and communication technologies to support performance in their roles based on individualized needs and in a timely manner.

Barriers

Since the ICO does not provide services to the public, the ICO does not currently provide communication supports to people with disabilities on the public-facing website. Most of the documents published on the ICO website are available in pdf or HTML format. Documents are available in a variety of accessible formats, by request, such as print and large text.

Actions

Action	Description	2023 Update
Review of web content	Enhance accessibility and inclusion of the ICO documents by including alternate text for photos and the use of inclusive language in communications on the ICO website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All documents are reviewed prior to being finalized to comply with accessible standards such as plain language, font, size, colour of text, alternate text for tables and photos.• Launched a review of the web content to identify areas of improvement.• Started to publish documents in HTML content and accessible PDF
Accessibility standards – writing tools	Increase accessibility in communications with employees by including alternate text for all photos and plain text language in all communications as a standard practice.	Started in 2023 instead of 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ICO began drafting tools and guidelines to prepare various accessible documents for employees.• Created a list of terminology and descriptions of common images used by the ICO (EN/FR)• Created a list of useful links and resource documents (i.e., how to

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		create accessible documents (word, Excel, pdf, etc.); how to publish accessible information on GC websites).
Availability of documents in various format	Look at alternate format options to provide accessible documents and communications.	<p>Started in 2023 instead of 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ICO began to look at other alternate formats not currently offered by the ICO.

COMMUNICATIONS OTHER THAN ICT

Alternate communication formats of communications with our employees such as interpreters, translations, transcriptions in plain text, print copies are available upon request.

Barriers

The ICO need to develop relationships with a broader range of alternate communication format providers to provide timely access when needed. The ICO phones are not accessible for people with different types of disabilities and the use of video relay services (VRS) for internal meetings is not permitted in the workplace.

Actions

Action	Description	2023 Update
Awareness and education	Increase employee awareness of accessibility standards to foster a culture of accessibility and disability inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility standards have been discussed informally with employees. Information tools are being drafted.
Accessibility standards – writing tools	Provide and communicate toolkit to support plain language writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All documents are reviewed prior to being finalized to comply with accessible standards such as plain language, font, size, colour of text, alternate text for tables and photos.
Alternate formats of communication	Provide additional ways for the public to communicate with us in order to reach people with different types of disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ICO began to look at the feasibility of offering alternate formats of communications such as braille, MP3 (audio), e-text and DAISY formats on demand.

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PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The ICO relies on Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) as the Government of Canada's common service provider for the procurement of goods, services and facilities for major projects.

Actions

Action	Description	2023 Update
Accessibility standards – procurement	Review procurement process, including documents, forms, templates, and communications to ensure accessible practices are reflected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The ICO uses PSPC tools which incorporate accessibility requirements directly into standing offers (for example, stipulating that supplier website functionality requirements must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0)).

DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The ICO does not provide programs or services directly to the public.

TRANSPORTATION

The ICO does not provide transportation to the public.

Consultations

For this progress report, we consulted with our employees through a confidential questionnaire to obtain feedback on the ICO's progress. As with the survey that was distributed in 2022, responses were anonymous. The 2023 survey respondents could self-identify as having a disability and were asked to describe barriers that they had encountered or observed. Of all the responses received no respondent self-identified as having a disability. However, many provided some recommendations and ideas for opportunities of improvement. We appreciate all the feedback and insight that was shared with the ICO.

The ICO is a micro agency and as such needed to consult a wider audience to obtain substantive findings to identify barriers faced by persons with disabilities and creating a barrier-free environment for the future.

The ICO consulted with other departments to assist in meeting the requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act*. The ICO benefited from the work performed and guidance from those departments in the development of the accessibility plan and the progress report to seek input on any known barriers and understand actions being taken by each of the respective organizations so that ICO could develop comprehensive action plan.

The ICO will continue to work with other departments to actively seek feedback from the persons with disability community to ensure that the report reflects the desired impact and results for those it is intended to support.

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Feedback

The ICO welcomes all feedback regarding its accessibility plan. Since publishing its plan in December 2022, the ICO received one feedback submission. The ICO designated official reviewed the feedback and determined that the feedback submission was out of scope.

	Number of feedback submissions
Received during the reporting period	1
Outstanding from the previous reporting period	N/A
Outstanding from more than one reporting period	N/A

Areas in section 5 of the ACA	Number of feedback submissions
Employment	0
Built environment	0
Information and communication technologies (ICT)	0
Communication, other than ICT	0
Procurement of goods, services and facilities	1
Design and delivery of programs and services	0
Transportation	0

Source	Number of feedback submissions
Online form	1
E-Mail	0
Mail	0
Phone	0

Glossary

Accessibility

The degree to which a product, service, program or environment can be assessed or used by all.

Accessibility Passport

The GC Workplace Accessibility Passport helps address the obstacles federal public service employees and applicants with disabilities face in obtaining the tools, supports and measures to perform at their best and succeed in the workplace. It facilitates recruitment, retention, and career advancement for persons with disabilities.

Accommodation

Any change in the work environment that allows a person with functional limitations to do their job. Accommodations can be temporary, periodic or long-term, including:

- adjusting the physical workspace
- adapting the equipment or tools
- working flexible hours or job-sharing
- moving the workspace
- working from home
- removing or changing some non-essential tasks for others
- time off for medical appointments

Barrier

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

Disability

Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or

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episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

Disability type

A form of limitation, be it physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory or other. In its 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, Statistics Canada used screening questions to identify the following 10 types of disability:

- seeing
- hearing
- mobility
- flexibility
- dexterity
- pain-related
- learning
- developmental
- mental health-related
- memory

The screening questionnaire also contained a question concerning any other health problem or condition that has lasted or is expected to last for six months or more. This question was meant to be a catchall in case the 10 disability types did not cover the respondent's situation. This question is associated with an 11th "unknown" disability type.

Employee

A person employed in the public service.

Inclusion

The act of including someone or something as part of a group. An inclusive workplace is fair, equitable, supportive, welcoming and respectful. Inclusion recognizes values and leverages differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce Canada's evolving human rights framework. (Source: Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion) Person with disabilities.

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Persons with disabilities

Persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who a) consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or b) believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment. Persons with disabilities include persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace. (Source: Employment Equity Act)

Self-declaration

Applicants voluntarily providing information in appointment processes for statistical purposes related to appointments and, in the case of processes that target employment equity groups, to determine eligibility. (Source: Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada for Fiscal Year 2017 to 2018)

Self-identification

Employees providing employment equity information for statistical purposes in analyzing and monitoring the progress of employment equity groups in the federal public service and for reporting on workforce representation. (Source: Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada for Fiscal Year 2017 to 2018)