Civilian Review and
Complaints Commission
for the RCMP

Commission civile d'examen
et de traitement des plaintes
relatives à la GRC

2023

Progress Report on the CRCC Accessibility Action Plan 2023-2026

Canada

Update on the Progress of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP's Accessibility Action Plan (2023)

Message from the Chairperson

As the Chairperson of the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP (CRCC), I am pleased to present the first progress report highlighting the important work underway at the CRCC to achieve a just and equitable workplace and programs for persons with disabilities, and to play a role to implement *Nothing Without Us: An Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada* across the federal public service.

In November 2022, the CRCC published its first Accessibility Action Plan 2023–2026, which presented actions, in consultation with persons with disabilities and the Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee, to remove and prevent barriers faced in the workplace. The development and implementation of these actions will be undertaken over the course of three years.

This year's focus was on implementing initiatives to foster recruitment and hiring of persons with disabilities in the workplace, achieving a just and equitable workplace by improving inclusive hiring at the CRCC, providing training and thereby laying the groundwork for making better staffing decisions, and facilitating the movement of persons with disabilities into and within the CRCC.

This progress update highlights initiatives and practices of how we can remove barriers and create the conditions for employees with disabilities, and all employees, to succeed at the CRCC and the federal public service. Although some progress has been made in the areas of recruitment, hiring and training, much work remains to achieve our goals, and the CRCC will be continuing its work in addressing the measures outlined in its Accessibility Action Plan 2023–2026.

In the following pages, you will learn about initiatives and practices that were developed and integrated to build the most accessible and inclusive workplace, and for employees and managers to learn and recognize the full diversity of our workforce.

Michelaine Lahaie
Chairperson, CRCC

Message from the Diversity and Inclusion Champion

Last fall, I was named CRCC's Diversity and Inclusion Champion. It is a role that I respect greatly. I aspire to support equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, addressing harassment and discrimination, and promoting employment equity and official languages in the workplace.

According to the most recent employment equity report, 6.3% of employees in the CRCC (as of March 31, 2023) identified themselves as having a disability compared to 8.8% of the workforce availability (WFA) for persons with disabilities (based on Census 2016 and the 2017 Survey on Disability).

Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see that there is movement in the development and implementation of initiatives at the CRCC to remove barriers, advance diversity and inclusion, and hopefully it will assist in closing gaps for all equity-seeking groups, and particularly for persons with disabilities.

Roxane Bériault
Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Senior Director, Corporate Services, CRCC

1. General

a. Accessibility commitment

The CRCC is committed to being a diverse, inclusive and accessible federal public service employer by creating a barrier-free workplace that prevents, identifies, and removes barriers while creating more consistent accessibility experiences in the following priority areas:

- Improve recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities.
- Enhance the accessibility of the built environment (i.e. the physical work environment).
- Make information and communications technology usable by all.
- Equip public servants to design and deliver accessible programs and services.
- Build an accessibility-confident public service.

b. Feedback process

The CRCC is committed to creating an open and transparent feedback process for not only employees, but for all Canadians. The Chief of Staff at the CRCC ensures 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.

The accessibility feedback process and form were established in December 2022. Individuals can contribute by giving their feedback on our Accessibility Action Plan and/or describing accessibility barriers that the individual has experienced with the CRCC. Individuals can provide feedback on accessibility to the CRCC in two ways:

- **Anonymous Feedback Form**
  All individuals can provide anonymous feedback through the form available on the CRCC website.

- **Mail**
  Feedback by mail can be sent to the following address:

  Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP
  P.O. Box 1722, Station B
  Ottawa, ON K1P 0B3

Through this accessibility feedback form, individuals can tell us about:

- barriers to accessibility at the CRCC;

- recommendations on how to remove and prevent barriers; and/or

- suggestions on how the CRCC can become a more accessible and inclusive environment for everybody, especially people with disabilities.

Accessibility is a general term for the degree to which a product, service, program or environment is available to be accessed or used by all.

A barrier means anything—including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal—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. This may include a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment, or a functional limitation.

More information about accessibility in Canada is available on the [Employment and Social Development Canada's website](#).

c. Roles and responsibilities

The development and implementation of initiatives and practices underlined in the Accessibility Action Plan for 2023–2026 falls on each employee at the CRCC. The chart below outlines the specific roles and responsibilities:

- **Diversity and Inclusion Champion:** The champion advises and supports the project sponsor identified as a key player in delivery of change, 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 CRCC Accessibility Action Plan for 2023–2026. The measures that fall under its responsibility include improving recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities. In collaboration with the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee (IDEAC), it will ensure that the actions and measures outlined in the Plan are assigned to the appropriate groups and lead to frequent progress check-ins. The Human Resources Directorate will also lead the development of the Key Performance Indicators, in collaboration with the IDEAC, to ensure that progress is monitored and opportunities for improvement are identified.

- **IDEAC:** The Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee has key roles in the overall implementation of the Plan, including to:

  - identify priorities and actions to be included in the Plan;

- o provide advice on disability issues, inclusion and accessibility that will be used in the Plan;

  - o review and provide feedback on the drafts of the Plan; and

  - o review the feedback received and make changes to the Plan, as necessary.

- **Governance:** The CRCC corporate governance will be consulted periodically to provide strategic direction or make recommendations, as required, about actions set out in the Plan. The governance bodies consulted include the:

  - o CRCC Senior Management Committee; and

  - o IDEAC.

- **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 and liaison agents, as well as active promoters of accessibility.

- **Employees:** All employees play a part in the success of the CRCC Accessibility Action Plan. To foster an accessible culture within our workforce, employees should:

  - o adopt the behaviours encouraged in the Accessibility Action Plan;

  - o advocate change by soliciting interest and support; and

  - o openly communicate with management about any concerns/barriers, or potential opportunities.

2. Progress and Challenges in 2023

This is the first year since the launch of the CRCC's three-year Accessibility Action Plan 2023–2026. The senior management team, the Diversity and Inclusion Champion, and the Human Resources Directorate have continued to work together to support employees with disabilities. Their joint effort made it possible to implement several actions over the past year.

a. Diversity and inclusion at the CRCC

The current organizational Accessibility Action Plan was developed based on the goals identified in the Government of Canada's Accessibility Strategy on the key priority areas (employment, built environment, information and communications technologies, programs and services). The Plan outlines three specific objectives:

a. Inclusive Hiring at the CRCC: A proactive approach.

b. Unconscious Bias Training: Laying the groundwork for making better staffing decisions.

c. Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport: Facilitating the movement of persons with disabilities into and within the CRCC.

The CRCC continues to implement tangible actions to increase awareness, change behaviours, and address systemic barriers. As part of its mandatory training, the CRCC has added to its list the following online courses from the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS): W005 (INC105) – Understanding unconscious bias (for all employees at all levels) and H205 (COR120) – Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce (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 regarding their staffing decisions.

The CRCC has also implemented the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport (the Passport) to help federal public service employees get the tools, supports and measures they need to perform at their best and succeed in the workplace. The Passport facilitates recruitment, retention, and career advancement for persons with disabilities.

This year, the CRCC also made progress on hiring students with disabilities from the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP). The employment opportunity features an onboarding process, training, activities and support services for both students and hiring managers. The CRCC will continue to utilize this pool for future hires and other available pools of candidates with disabilities to staff vacant positions.

b. Improve recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities

This area of action includes workplace-specific aspects, such as hiring interviews, training, performance evaluations, and requests for accommodation. Examples of obstacles in this area include job offers that are not formatted for use by assistive technologies like screen readers, the assumption that a person cannot do certain types of work due to their disability or imposing job restrictions that do not recognize systemic barriers to access to higher education or specific experience and knowledge.

To improve the recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities, the CRCC indicated in its Accessibility Action Plan the implementation of the following actions:

- Closing the 2% gap between the workforce availability of persons with disabilities and their representation within the CRCC by March 31, 2024, by:
    - leveraging existing Government of Canada programs;
    - identifying persons with disabilities in existing pools to hiring managers; and

- - reviewing representation, identifying gaps in specific occupational groups, and creating targets.
- Informing employees about, and promote the use of, Shared Services Canada's Lending Library Service Pilot Project, which offers personalized supports for students and other short-term employees with disabilities or injuries, including adaptive technology, services and tools.
- Co-developing a Mentorship Plus Program with interested employees of employment equity and equity-seeking groups.
- Hosting speakers from the Federal Speakers' Forum on Diversity and Inclusion twice yearly.
- Increasing management awareness to ensure they are equipped to support their employees with disabilities in their work, performance and career aspirations.
- Ensuring persons with disabilities have equal access to career advancement opportunities.

Key figures for the CRCC as of March 31, 2023 reveal the following:

- Total population: 80 employees (increase of 5 employees from March 31, 2023)
- Workforce availability (WFA) for persons with disabilities (based on Census 2016 and the 2017 Survey on Disability): 8.8%
- CRCC representation of persons with disabilities: 6.3%
- Gap between WFA and representation: 2.5%
- Decrease of 0.4% compared to CRCC representation of persons with disabilities from 6.7% as of March 31, 2022

Although there is still a gap between the workforce availability of persons with disabilities and their representation within the CRCC, this year the CRCC has taken some actions to create awareness and support representation of persons with disabilities in the workplace by using specific pools of candidates and implementing the Passport.

The Public Service Commission creates pools of students with disabilities for job opportunities for the FSWEP. The CRCC will continue utilizing this pool for future student job opportunities as well as use other available pools of candidates with disabilities to staff vacant positions, especially in occupational groups with less representation of employment equity group and equity-seeking groups.

The CRCC has also integrated the Passport into its workplace accommodation processes. The Passport facilitates accommodation processes by ensuring that candidates and employees with disabilities receive the tools and support in a timely and efficient manner, so employees can succeed in the workplace.

Over the next two years, the CRCC will continue its efforts to **support and advance its goal for a barrier-free public service and in creating an inclusive and accessible workplace where no talent is left behind.**

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

Persons with disabilities report challenges in their workplaces, such as a lack of automatic door openers, poor signage and wayfinding. In the first survey on the development of the Accessibility Strategy, several respondents noted that the physical workspace does not take into account invisible disabilities. To enhance the accessibility of the built environment, the CRCC is committed to:

- Pursuing two approaches when considering how to meet the Accessibility Strategy and comply with the Accessibility Action Plan: applying requirements (directives, leases, etc.), and solicitating and considering practical and lived experiences.
- Determining and considering the exact relationships and stakeholders implicated by the current leases, to include, among others, the CRCC, the landlord, PSPC, employees with disabilities, clients with disabilities, and other government departments.
- Reviewing the terms of current agreements for built environments related to accessibility and ensuring that such terms are assessed against the standards cited by the Strategy and the Directive.
- Engaging with appropriate stakeholder groups about the overall built environment, to include persons with disabilities, to determine areas of concern, and to ensure the suitability of established standards, or to establish higher standards.
- Internally publicizing the efforts to engage with appropriate stakeholders and solicit their input.

The CRCC will progressively be reviewing, developing and implementing these practices and will be reporting on the advancements in the next progress reports.

d. Make information and communications technology usable by all

The Accessibility Strategy's overarching goal for communications and technology is that "Government of Canada clients and employees can access and use all information and

communications technology, regardless of ability or disability." The research done by the IDEAC identifies both barriers to use of technology, as well as an action plan to overcome these obstacles to make the CRCC a more accessible workspace.

Barriers to communications and technology have been identified by Canadians in the workplace through the [Accessible Canada – Creating new federal accessibility legislation: What we learned from Canadians](#) report. For example, information being impossible to access, read or understand, due to the way it is presented, or because of the technology and equipment being used to access it. Furthermore, civilians involved in the research pointed out that the purchase of computers and technology is an area where government spending creates some of the biggest barriers for persons with disabilities.

The IDEAC looks to courses like the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program as an opportunity for the CRCC's supervisory staff to undergo sessions on adaptive technology, job accommodations, accessibility testing and more. The AAACT Program's goal is to, "help integrate employees with disabilities, injuries and ergonomic requirements and who require access to systems, programs, information, computers and computer resources."

The range of services AAACT offers stretches from hands-on training for technicians, to web content evaluations, converting documents to multiple formats, and providing needs-based assessments. With this course being required of all supervisory staff, a collective understanding of adaptive computer technology would be the standard here at the CRCC. This would ensure that those seeking accommodations are met by colleagues who retain some background knowledge of adaptive computer technology, so that the "gatekeepers" of the accommodation process are comfortable and familiar with the range of technological accommodation possibilities.

Another way to ensure the CRCC is a comfortable and accommodating workspace is to embed accessibility into our standardized processes. The [Digital Accessibility Toolkit](#) is a great resource to rely on; for technology and communications, accessible standardized processes might look like:

- using standardized heading styles rather than bolding words;
- ensuring hyperlinks are titled rather than copy and pasted URLs;
- avoiding the use of text boxes;
- ensuring photos (e.g. emails, CRCC website) have "alternative text."

To make information and communications technology usable by all, the CRCC committed to:

- Requiring that its managers and IT staff attend comprehensive AAACT sessions to familiarize themselves with adaptations and troubleshoot their application to the CRCC's technology.

- Ensuring that the CRCC's webpage/InfoExpress is fully accessible through both desktop and mobile devices.

- Circulating and implementing new standards for shared documents in alignment with the Digital Accessibility Toolkit.

The CRCC will be implementing these measures over the next two years, and it will provide more information on these measures in the next progress reports.

e. Equip public servants to design and deliver accessible programs and services

To equip the CRCC's employees to design and deliver accessible programs and services, the CRCC has committed to:

- Considering the feasibility of developing a client-satisfaction data strategy for the services delivered directly to the public.

- Considering new ways to monitor how accessibility influences the discretionary functions of the CRCC's mandate when making decisions with respect to public complaints.

- Consulting with external organizations of persons with disabilities and disability advocacy organizations to assess the CRCC's current programs, with specific attention to service providers to the public.

- Continuing to consult with the above-indicated organizations and groups when designing and implementing new programs and services.

The CRCC will progressively be reviewing and developing these measures over the course of the next two years. More information on these advancements will be conveyed in the following progress reports.

f. Build an accessibility-confident public service

In an accessibility-confident public service, public servants will understand what accessibility means and why it matters, and have the resources to make the public service a more accessible and inclusive employer and service provider.

To build an accessibility-confident public service, the CRCC is committed to:

a. Developing and disseminating communication products to raise the awareness of CRCC employees.
b. Inviting the Accessibility Commissioner to present to the CRCC.
c. Ensuring all its processes relating to the employment, retention, and/or promotion of an employee with a disability use inclusive language and do not create barriers for persons with disabilities.

In the next two years, the CRCC will be organizing a presentation on accessibility and will also be posting various products on accessibility features, making them available to employees.

As for ensuring the CRCC's processes related to recruitment, hiring and retention of employees with disabilities, the managers, in collaboration with a Human Resources advisor, will utilize tools and mechanisms in place to enable them to use inclusive language and not create barriers for all equity-seeking groups, including access to a pool of persons with disabilities for student hirings, mandatory training on unconscious bias in recruitment for hiring managers (a course given by the CSPS) and use of a questionnaire to evaluate assessment methods for biases and barriers that disadvantage equity-seeking groups.

3. Consultations

A joint effort with the senior management team, the Diversity and Inclusion Champion, and the Human Resources Directorate contributed to the implementation of actions over the course of the first year of the CRCC's three-year Accessibility Action Plan 2023–2026.

Consultations can also take various forms; feedback or comments are often obtained from the employee having a discussion on the matter with their manager, or persons with disabilities that are members of the IDEAC providing their comments.

4. Feedback Received

The Accessibility Feedback Form has been available to the employees and the public since December 2022. The CRCC did not receive any feedback on actions identified or implemented in the past year.