



Canada Economic  
Development  
for Quebec Regions

Développement  
économique Canada  
pour les régions du Québec

# 2023 Accessibility Progress Report

His Majesty the King in Right of Canada as represented by the Minister of Tourism  
and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the  
Regions of Quebec, 2023

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This report highlights progress made since the implementation of the Accessibility Action Plan 2020–2023 for the promotion of accessibility and inclusiveness at Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED).

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## General information

If you wish to obtain the progress report or the feedback process in a different format, or if you would like to provide feedback or have questions regarding barriers, the Accessibility Action Plan or this report, please contact us by mail, email or telephone:

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- 1-800-561-0633 (Toll-free)
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Online: Submit your feedback using our [online form](#).

### **Requesting an alternate format**

Available formats:

- Print
- Large print (larger, clearer font)
- Braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers)
- Audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud)
- Electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technologies

## Aspects covered

### Employment

#### 1. Increase the departmental representation of people with disabilities within CED

CED is pursuing its efforts to increase the representation of people with disabilities within the department. The People, Culture and Workplace Branch (PCWB) is responsible for noting gaps, and informing managers thereof and making sure they are aware of their obligations and commitments. Managers are informed and made aware that the representation of people with disabilities must be in line with workforce availability (WFA), and of the expected commitment to achieve the common goal of 5,000 new hires across the public service by 2025.

The launch of the new self-identification form has been postponed indefinitely. A self-identification campaign has been planned to accompany the launch. The goal is to increase representation by defining and de-stigmatizing membership in this equity group. This measure will be implemented in the upcoming Accessibility Action Plan 2024–2026.

In response to amendments to the *Public Service Employment Act*, the PCWB has developed tools to help managers improve the accessibility of their assessment strategies and methods. Hiring managers and Human resource specialists are required to identify, mitigate or eliminate any potential bias or barriers in their assessment tools and when using these tools. This will allow members of designated groups to fully demonstrate their qualifications, thus making it easier for them to be hired.

The department has set concrete targets for hiring new employees with disabilities by 2026. CED uses [The Virtual Door to Talent with Disabilities](#) process, which gives managers access to a list of graduates of the [Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities](#) (EOSD) program. This program is intended for students who have self-declared as persons with disabilities.

#### 2. Provide training and awareness activities for managers

The PCWB updated CED's learning roadmap in January 2023. The new *Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce* course is now mandatory for managers.

#### 3. Inform employees about tools, training and activities

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Accessibility champions, the Mental Health Champion, and the PCWB invited employees to take part in various events, including:

- “*Learn from Yesterday, Change Today, Enhance Tomorrow: Building an Accessible Public Service Together*” (National AccessAbility Week)
- 2023 *Let's Talk* campaign
- Mental Health Week
- Tea and TED on GBA Plus awareness.

The Work Place Health and Safety team has a Teams “Mental health” channel, where it promotes *Lifespeak* training and the various tools available to employees.

## Built environment

### 1. Provide training

An ergonomics workshop was given in June 2023 to all CED staff. A certified kinesiologist presented the risk factors associated with working at a computer and the best strategies for adjusting your workstation. Interactive tools developed by the kinesiologist were also made available to employees.

- 95 employees participated in the training virtually; 10 people attended in person.
- 12 ergonomics assessments were carried out over the past year.
- The Administration, Security & Accommodations Directorate purchased 130 new ergonomic chairs as part of the hybrid work model.

### 2. Accommodate

An internal directive on the accommodation request mechanism was put in place, along with a new request form developed by the PCWB.

- Labour Relations was consulted on six occasions in cases where disabilities required the implementation of accommodation measures.

### 3. Identify issues related to the work environment

Accessibility assessments are planned for the Val-d'Or, Drummondville, Sherbrooke and Gatineau business offices to ensure compliance with the requirements of the new *Accessibility Act*. Discussions are under way with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).

Renovations were done in 2022 to make the Trois-Rivières office bathrooms accessible.

### 4. Take invisible disabilities into consideration

The PCWB developed tools for the adoption of the hybrid work model. Employees are encouraged to become more aware of environmental triggers in the workplace and to consult the following resources:

- *The Hybrid Work Model: Preparing to Work at a Government of Canada Office (CSPS)*
- *Environmental sensitivity and scent-free policies: What you need to know (CHRC)*

## Information and Communications Technologies

### 1. Rollout of Office 365

Office 365, with its built-in accessibility features, was rolled out in 2020–2021.

### 2. Make new corporate projects accessible

The CORTEX application, which was rolled out in 2021, is CED's new grant and contribution management system. CORTEX integrates all business processes and manages relationships with CED clients and partners. The application is based on Office 365 tools and built-in accessibility features. Training was given to assist users with the various accessibility features.

For the development of the transactional portal (client space), a standardized template was used that was specifically developed for federal departments, and which complies with government web ergonomics and accessibility standards. In addition to the use of the template, our IT team conducts an additional assessment to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.

### 3. Provide training on accessibility, accommodation, and adaptive computer technology

The Information and Technological Solutions Branch (ITSB) gives peer learning sessions known as "Meet the Geeks." These training sessions on the software used at CED address the various accessibility

features, and are an opportunity for employees to ask their questions in a safe, informal and open environment.

In 2022–2023, 23 clinics were held (805 attendees) on the following topics:

- Cybersecurity
- Excel
- OneNote
- Polycom (videoconferencing)
- FlexiDesk (workstation reservation)
- Planner
- Word
- Outlook
- PowerPoint
- Setting up a workstation
- Planning / Shift
- PexIP / Hibou (videoconferencing)
- Surface Hub

## Communication, other than ICT

### 1. Post documents that everyone can access (intranet and Internet)

A guide to intranet best practices is available to content publishers. It includes resources for creating accessible content in SharePoint Online, and standards for the use of images and the addition of detailed text descriptions for pictures and diagrams.

Monthly meetings are held with the intranet publishers' community. Communication advisors guide publishers and provide accessibility support, based on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), level AA compliance. Intranet pages are reviewed by communications advisors to ensure they meet accessibility criteria (H1/H2/H3, alternative text, subtitles, text contrasts, etc.) prior to publication. The creation of video content for the intranet is encouraged, and transcripts must be provided to ensure accessibility requirements are met.

## Procurement of goods, services and facilities

### 1. Embed accessibility into IT procurement

The Procurement team has informed technical authorities about accessible procurement:

- A training curriculum was developed for technical authorities. A presentation was given at a managers' forum in 2022, and was posted on the CED intranet.
- The informative video developed by PSPC entitled "What does it mean to consider accessibility in government procurement?" is shared with technical authorities when procurement requests are made.

A purchasing procedure has been developed and is available on the CED intranet. It includes considerations regarding accessible purchases, and links to pages with relevant information:

- Supply Manual
- "Justification on the inclusion of accessibility criteria in procurement (goods and services)" form
- Improving accessibility in procurement

## Design and delivery of programs and services

### 1. Determine the level of satisfaction of clients with our programs

Discussions were held about adding accessibility questions to the client survey. This measure will be implemented in the upcoming Accessibility Action Plan 2024–2026.

### 2. Design of CED programs

In 2021–2022, CED added definitions of under-represented groups, including people with disabilities, to its self-declaration form for clients applying for funding. This change has made it possible to incorporate best practices into data collection, such as improving the transparency and accessibility of information in order to facilitate the self-identification process for our clients, thus allowing us to better capture the profiles of our clients and the impact our initiatives have on them.

As of November 2022, all CED clients must declare their organizational EDI practices. To equip its clients, raise awareness and encourage the adoption of EDI practices from an economic growth and organizational resilience perspective, CED has posted some new tools on its [website](#).

Since 2020, CED has carried out or contributed to 11 GBA Plus projects in order to fully take into account the direct and indirect impacts and barriers faced by people from under-represented groups. This allows CED to tailor its intervention to mitigate the negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts on these people when implementing its programs. For example:

- One of the intervention priorities of the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) was to improve the accessibility of community infrastructure for people with disabilities.
- The Jobs and Growth Fund (JGF) includes a national component related to a more inclusive and equitable economic recovery for inclusive growth projects that support businesses owned or majority-led by members of under-represented groups, as well as projects that generate benefits for workers from these groups.
- In terms of designing the delivery of tourism-related initiatives by NPO clients, CED has started taking steps to make inclusive tourism a priority. This could be achieved through awareness and support activities for tourism businesses to ensure that their products and services reflect and take into account the diverse needs of the people and regions of Quebec.

### 3. Develop adaptive tools and forms

Communications advisors guide publishers and provide accessibility support, based on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), level AA compliance. Tools and forms are reviewed by communications advisors to ensure they meet accessibility criteria (H1/H2/H3, alternative text, subtitles, text contrasts, etc.) prior to publication.

Discussions were held about training on how to develop accessible documents and how to test them to verify their accessibility. This measure will be implemented in the upcoming Accessibility Action Plan 2024-2026.

### 4. Make the call centre accessible to the hearing impaired

The call centre's TTY service will also be used to receive feedback regarding accessibility. People who consult accessibility plans, progress reports or the accessibility feedback process will be encouraged to use this service if needed.

## Transportation

N/A

### Consultation and feedback

The “Nothing Without Us” approach recognizes the importance and added value of involving people affected by accessibility policies, programs and practices in the development thereof.

Virtual consultations were held with people directly targeted by the various aspects of the Accessibility Action Plan. HR, along with the various departments responsible for CED facilities; client experience; program management; systems development; information and technology solutions; procurement; and communications, were consulted to present details of the progress made.

The implementation of accessibility initiatives has a direct impact on the day-to-day lives of people with disabilities. The participation of, and consultation with, people with disabilities is a key element in the development of the Accessibility Action Plan 2024–2026. CED is continuing its efforts to build a network of EDI employees who will be asked to provide feedback and recommendations regarding the barriers they face.

No feedback has been received since the publication of the Accessibility Action Plan 2020–2023. New feedback collection methods have been put in place to improve the process. A new online feedback form was developed and published in 2023. Telephone calls have also been centralized. Employees, clients and the public can now contact the CED call centre (toll-free number) or TTY service.