



2023-25

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Progress Report

December 20, 2023

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1. General

1.1 Description of Farm Credit Canada

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is a federal Crown corporation, reporting to Canadians and Parliament through the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. We provide flexible financing, AgExpert business management software, information and knowledge to more than 102,000 customers. Our customers include primary producers and agribusiness and agri-food operators who provide inputs or add value to the agriculture and food industry. We're a team of more than 2,300 employees, operating from 103 offices located primarily in rural Canada and our corporate office in Regina, Saskatchewan.

1.2 Statement of commitment

FCC is committed to helping make Canada barrier-free by 2040. We take our responsibilities to Canadians seriously, and this includes Canadians with disabilities. We are committed to becoming more accessible because we understand the importance of our work to Canadians. Canadians depend on our customers

to get food to their tables, and our customers depend on us. As such, we are committed to noticing, naming and removing barriers to accessibility in our workplace and in how we serve the industry that feeds the world.

We believe all employees and teams at FCC play a role in making FCC more accessible and inclusive. Our Director, Employee Experience and Inclusion, along with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team, are FCC's designated lead on ensuring we take action as outlined in the Accessibility Plan and this Progress Report to meaningfully remove accessibility barriers for our workforce and our customers.

1.3 Contact information and feedback process





FCC welcomes feedback from our employees, customers and members of the public about accessibility at FCC and about our Accessibility Plan or this Progress Report. We're committed to reviewing this feedback and taking steps to address identified and recognized barriers. Feedback can be submitted anonymously.

What feedback can you provide?

You can provide feedback on the barriers you experience when interacting with FCC or feedback that will help to inform work laid out in our Accessibility Plan. If your feedback is about a particular issue, make sure to be descriptive and include details such as the date, location, platform, webpage or program/service you are discussing.

How will your feedback be used?

Your feedback will be considered as part of the continuous improvement work in our accessibility plans and our changes. Some feedback may be addressed right away, and some may be addressed in the development of our future accessibility plans. The feedback we receive and how we take it into consideration are included in this progress report.

How to provide feedback	Contact information
 Mail	ATTN: Diversity and Inclusion, HR Farm Credit Canada 1800 Hamilton Street Regina, SK Canada, S4P 4L3
 Telephone	Monday to Friday 7 a.m.– 7:30 p.m. ET Toll-free (Canada only): 1-888-332-3301
 Feedback form on our website	Feedback form
 Email	accessibility@fcc.ca

Confidentiality

The feedback you provide is meant to help us identify, remove and prevent barriers. All feedback submitted through the feedback form is anonymous unless you wish to receive a response from FCC. If you request a response, we will require your name and contact information. Your feedback won't be associated with your name and will only be shared with those FCC employees directly involved in furthering our accessibility efforts or those responding to your specific request. We therefore urge you to be as honest and detailed as possible to help us take better actions in support of growing accessibility at FCC.




Alternative formats

Assistive technology-compatible versions of the Accessibility Plan and Progress Report are available at: [Accessibility | FCC \(fcc-fac.ca\)](https://www.fcc-fac.ca/accessibility)

The following formats are available upon request within the timeframes indicated:

- Print – 15 days
- Large print – 15 days
- Braille – 45 days
- Audio – 45 days

Alternative formats of the Accessibility Plan and Progress Report can be requested by:

 Telephone	Monday to Friday 7 a.m.– 7:30 p.m. ET Toll-free (Canada only): 1-888-332-3301
 Feedback form on our website	Feedback form
 Email	accessibility@fcc.ca

1.4 Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this report:

Disability: Any impairment or difference in physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning or communication ability. Disabilities can be permanent, temporary or can change over time.

Barrier: Anything that might hinder people with disabilities' full and equal participation. Barriers can be architectural, technological, attitudinal, based on information or communications, or can be the result of a policy or procedure.

Accessibility: The design of products, devices, services, environments, technologies, policies and rules in a way that allows all people, including people with a variety of disabilities, to access them.

2. Areas described under Section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)*

FCC has taken steps towards improving accessibility across the organization. These include working on a culture of inclusion and building our knowledge on accessibility. Employee mental health is a priority at FCC. Because this is a priority, FCC has taken multiple steps to support accessibility and inclusion, including creating programs and resources around mental health for our employees and our customers. Our employees and customers shared with us that they appreciate that mental health is a focus for FCC, and shared feedback about how we can do even more to support a culture of well-being and inclusion.

We are proud of these and other steps we have taken to make FCC accessible. However, we know there's more work to do to advance accessibility across FCC. This report outlines how FCC moved forward on the goals set out in the Accessibility Plan from December 2022.

2.1 Organization-wide initiatives

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
By 2023, FCC will launch a way for customers, employees and stakeholders to provide feedback related to the FCC Accessibility Plan and to identify any accessibility barriers they have experienced.	FCC launched its accessibility feedback mechanism along with its first Accessibility Plan. The feedback mechanism is available to employees, customers and the public through different means as described in our feedback mechanism description.	Completed
In 2023, FCC will develop a strategy on the ongoing engagement and consultations with people with disabilities, internally and externally to FCC.	FCC's Accessibility Consultation Guidelines have been approved as of December 1, 2023.	Completed
In 2023, FCC will begin implementing our engagement and consultations strategy for people with disabilities.	FCC held consultations with people with disabilities. The findings were consolidated into a report that impacted the development of the Consultation Guidelines, as well as guiding communications to the business at large.	Completed

Next year, FCC will continue to advance accessibility by acting on the following goal:

- In 2024, FCC will create a way for customers, employees and stakeholders to request information in alternative formats. We will also make sure that we have a process to fulfil those requests.

2.2 Employment

Over 2,300 people work at FCC. Currently, 3.6 percent of employees identify as having a disability but we anticipate others have not self-declared their disability or accommodation needs formally at this time. Some employees communicated that they would like to see an increase in knowledge about disability to reduce stigma, and we've included this feedback in Section 4 of this progress report.

We need to prioritize accessibility so that all our employees can work without barriers. This includes improving training and providing employees with resources and knowledge about disability and accessibility.

The following table outlines the accessibility progress achieved on the employment goals:

Accessing employment:

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
In 2023, FCC will add statements to our Careers landing page and our job postings reflecting our commitments to being an equal opportunity employer. FCC will also add information on how to access accommodations in the hiring process.	A statement written in plain language has been added to the Careers landing page, as well as to all job postings.	Completed
In 2023 and beyond, FCC will create and implement a talent sourcing strategy about how we find and hire people. This strategy will include tactics to increase the recruitment, retention and advancement of people with disabilities.	Phase 1 of FCC's multi-year Talent Strategy is underway, which includes enhancing accessibility in the talent acquisition process. This involves reviewing the job application platforms, assessments and interview process to ensure inclusion for people with disabilities. Additionally, efforts are ongoing to enhance capacity to attract and hire people with disabilities.	In progress

Employee development:

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
<p>In 2023, FCC will assess internal learning and knowledge gaps around accessibility. This will include a focus on three specific groups: leaders (people-managers); employees who have a role in accessible services and service delivery; and all employees.</p>	<p>A gap analysis and review of the learning needs for the three groups have been performed, and new learning outcomes have been identified. Consultation with FCC's learning partners and accessibility training vendors has begun with the purpose of creating new training materials.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>Continuing in 2023, FCC will ensure all new learning content is developed according to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards.</p>	<p>The process of developing new learning content has been upgraded to ensure that all new content reflects the WCAG.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Next year, FCC will continue to advance accessibility by acting on the following goals:

- In 2024, FCC will implement disability awareness knowledge sharing and support for managers and senior leadership. This will include awareness and learning for managers related to mental health inclusion and support.
- In 2024, FCC will implement disability awareness knowledge sharing and support for all employees. This will also be built into FCC's onboarding process for all new employees.
- In 2024, FCC will begin updating pre-existing training modules on a priority basis considering WCAG standards and feedback from people with disabilities.

Equitable and inclusive workplace:

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
<p>In 2023, FCC will continue to improve its Employee Writing Centre to feature the best practices available for increasing accessibility at FCC.</p>	<p>In 2023, four plain language writing Tips & Tricks communications and four plain language training sessions were delivered to employees. Recordings of these sessions have been made available to all staff.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>In 2023, FCC will review our accommodations policies.</p>	<p>The policies and procedures have been reviewed, and gaps have been identified and updated to ensure that they are in accordance with current legislation.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>In 2023, FCC will establish internal resources and/or affinity groups. This will enable employees with lived disability experience, including mental health disability, to guide FCC, share their experiences and support each other.</p>	<p>Affinity groups have been created within FCC. This includes group descriptions and terms of reference. Invitations were sent to champions and an open invitation was shared for all staff to participate. FCC's Accessibility/Disability Employee Resource Group (ERG) recently held its kickoff meeting. The group is currently in the process of enlisting volunteers for leadership positions within the ERG.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>In 2023, FCC will review, update and formalize our remote work/flexible work policy to include accessibility considerations.</p>	<p>The remote work/flexible work policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect accessibility requirements where required.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
<p>In 2023, FCC will include gaps related to representation of employees with disabilities into our annual DEI strategy update. We use that data to inform ongoing talent, retention and advancement strategies.</p>	<p>FCC's DEI strategy was reviewed, gaps were identified and new targets for employees with disabilities have been added.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Next year, FCC will continue to advance accessibility by acting on the following goals:

- In 2024, FCC will update its employee and manager handbooks to include plain language and process maps around requesting and providing accommodations.
- In 2024, FCC will review employee benefits to determine which benefits are highest priority, and which employee benefits may need to be adjusted to reduce barriers.
- In 2025, FCC will work with our health benefits provider to identify whether any improvements to the employee benefits package are possible.

2.3 The built environment

FCC has over 100 offices across Canada. Some are larger offices in cities, while most are in rural parts of the country. We lease all our office space, and offices have different levels of accessibility. The goals outlined in the Accessibility Plan were created to make our current offices more accessible. We have prioritized our larger corporate and regional offices and are working to improve accessibility in all offices.

Another step FCC has taken to be more accessible is focusing on built-environment accessibility. In the last few years, three facilities management staff became Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified. They are using their training to make FCC offices across Canada more accessible. We know there are still barriers to accessibility in some of our offices and have been working on the goals in this plan to reduce these barriers.

The following table outlines the accessibility progress achieved on the built-environment goals:

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
In 2023, FCC will, with guidance from the Rick Hansen Foundation certification program, determine and document our minimum accessibility standards for new office space.	FCC has created a minimum accessibility standard for all new offices. These will be embedded into the Facilities selection process to ensure that all new locations conform to or exceed the minimum standards.	Completed
In 2023, FCC will determine a schedule of inspection and maintenance of building accessibility features.	An inspection of accessibility features has been added to the FCC OHS checklist, which is completed in each FCC office monthly.	Completed

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
By the end of 2023, FCC will review emergency evacuation processes and procedures based on the Canada Labour Code Part II and the Government of Canada's guidelines for creating an accessible emergency response plan.	FCC has completed the review of current emergency evacuation processes and procedures based on the Canada Labour Code Part II and the Government of Canada's guidelines for creating an accessible emergency response plan and identified the gaps. A plan to close relevant gaps is in development with implementation to begin in 2024.	Completed

Next year, FCC will continue to advance accessibility by acting on the following goals:

- In 2024, FCC will assess the state of accessibility of its current office locations based on our newly created minimum accessibility standards and identify priority needs/gaps across the organization.
- In 2024, FCC will incorporate the updated minimum accessibility standards into the new office space processes and review criteria.

2.4 Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Web and electronic technology are important in the modern workplace. FCC has employees and customers all over the country, and web technology helps us to do our work and connect to our customers. Technology can make things more accessible, with certain features helping reduce barriers. But if technology isn't built with accessibility in mind or people don't know how to use it in an accessible way, it can create additional barriers.

The following table outlines the accessibility progress achieved on the ITC goals:

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
<p>In 2023 and beyond, FCC will continue to offer learning sessions to all employees on the use of accessibility features embedded in internal systems and tools.</p>	<p>FCC organized sessions to teach employees about the tools for accessibility and inclusivity in Microsoft 365. The sessions covered topics like live captions and Immersive Reader in Microsoft Teams.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>In 2023, FCC will implement learning paths for relevant IT staff to increase their knowledge on how to provide accessible solutions for employees, customers and others.</p>	<p>Many developers and analysts have taken the required training as of Q4 2022.</p> <p>FCC has created learning paths that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify which roles require accessibility knowledge. • Specify the accessibility information required for the roles. • Incorporate the accessibility information as part of the onboarding process for new IT employees. • Develop a mechanism to track completion of the learning paths. 	<p>Completed</p>

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
In 2023, FCC will develop a prioritized list of older systems to review and update to WCAG standards.	Technology Solution leadership has prioritized in-house developed web apps to determine the level of remediation required and develop a prioritized list.	Completed
Starting in 2023, accessibility reviews will be built into all new user experience design and testing, and to all plans to update older systems. FCC will continue to conduct accessibility reviews on other existing older systems to understand gaps.	IT has incorporated accessibility into the development framework for in-house developed web-based applications.	Completed

Next year, FCC will continue to advance accessibility by acting on the following goals:

- In 2024, FCC will update onboarding process for IT employees who play a role in delivering technology solutions and improving accessibility. These updates will include formal accessibility learning and clear guidance on internal IT accessibility policies and processes.
- In 2024, IT and its partners will have a documented formal governance and process for accessibility review of existing older technology. This will enable FCC to prioritize work related to existing older systems.
- In 2025, FCC will have improved and increased accessibility with prioritized web tools.

2.5 Communication, other than ICT

Sharing information with our customers and others in the agriculture industry is part of how we support a vibrant and strong Canadian agriculture industry, and our ability to share information and knowledge with our employees is key to helping them do their best work in support of our customers. We want to make sure everyone has access to the information we share so they can grow and thrive.

The following table outlines the accessibility progress achieved on the communications goals:

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
Continuing in 2023, all new FCC internal website/ intranet content will be developed to be accessible.	FCC has documented its process to ensure that accessibility guidelines are part of the editing process. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added accessibility checks of documents in Word and Excel to the quarterly intranet content review processes.• Continued to publish content that appeals to and engages various audiences through polls, quizzes, videos and pages.• Continued to post internal content to be accessible by using headings and subheadings, descriptive labels, fonts, colours and white space to make content stand out and scannable online.	Completed

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified an accessibility tracking tool that will allow FCC to identify accessibility issues and gaps on SharePoint sites, including the intranet. • Scheduled accessibility training courses for the Employee Digital Experience team in accordance with WCAG 2.1 standards. 	
<p>In 2023, FCC will continue to migrate our internal policy and permanent communications content to our new SharePoint site. FCC will make sure that content is posted with a focus on clear, concise and plain language.</p>	<p>FCC documented processes to ensure that new content is clear, concise and in plain language.</p> <p>FCC communicated the availability of current accessibility tools, ensuring that content posted to the intranet is reviewed for plain language.</p> <p>FCC will continue to migrate and restructure all internal content to the modern SharePoint environment to be accessible.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>In 2023, FCC will investigate how and where described video can be used to enhance the accessibility of FCC video content.</p>	<p>FCC has completed its investigation and has discovered that YouTube and other platform technologies now support descriptive video, which will allow us to achieve greater accessibility by utilizing these features.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
Starting in 2023, FCC will add alt-text (descriptions of the image) to images in all new social media posts.	FCC has updated its process and validation software to ensure that alt-text accompanies every image that is added to social media posts.	Completed
By 2024, FCC will complete an update of our brand and communication standards. These standards will ensure current accessibility guidelines and future considerations are considered and applied in the creation and production of FCC resources and materials.	FCC continues to investigate best practices in accessibility and is incorporating these best practices into the creation and production of branded materials. We write directly and concisely with accessible language that is free of unnecessary words and jargon. From a design perspective, we are mindful of accessibility needs and continue to implement new learnings into our materials. We will complete a full update of the Brand and Communications Playbook (our guidelines) by the end of 2023.	Completed

FCC's communication team will continue with the following goals in 2024:

- FCC will investigate options to improve the accuracy of captions on all external videos by the end of 2024.

2.6 The design and delivery of programs and services

Our customers are diverse and so are their needs. Our services need to be accessible so that everyone can have access to the services needed when they need them.

The following table outlines the Design and Delivery team’s progress achieved on the operations goals:

FCC’s commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
By the end of 2023, surveys and questionnaires looking for feedback about FCC will include a question or questions about accessibility.	In 2023, FCC’s Customer Insights team included two questions in their transactional survey to collect feedback on the accessibility barriers encountered when customers interacted with FCC. This survey is sent out to every customer after a loan is approved or they receive other types of in-person service. The FCC Events team has also added similar questions to their post-event surveys. Internally, the Learning team has added questions on accessibility barriers encountered when completing FCC-mandated training materials. Although we have not yet received feedback from these surveys, the information will be used to create better and more accessible services.	Completed

FCC's commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
<p>In 2023, FCC will investigate how to further advance accessibility through the expansion of FCC's digital offering (for example, chat for service functions, digital portals, etc.) for our small business offering.</p>	<p>FCC's first chat function has been launched for Lending's digital offerings sites and FCC will begin to implement the chat functionality on other sites in 2024. Online chat functions can help those with anxiety, neurodiversity and those who have sight impairment choose their communication channels and receive text messages, which gives them the option to call in or receive a call.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Next year, FCC will continue to advance accessibility by acting on the following goals:

- In 2024, FCC will begin the implementation of its advanced digital offerings for our small business segment to improve access for all customers and their varied accessibility needs based on results of the previous investigation.
- By 2025, FCC has increased accessibility of our services through expansion of our digital offering and channels.

2.7 The procurement of goods, services and facilities

When accessibility is considered at the start of any process, the number of barriers is reduced. Accessibility standards in procurement processes ensure that goods, services and facilities are ready to use by anyone who needs them.

The following table outlines the Procurement team’s progress achieved on the procurement goals:

FCC’s commitment	Progress/actions taken	Status
<p>FCC will continue to work as part of a group of Crown corporations focusing on procurement practices and improving accessibility. The group aims to ensure that third-party vendors increase their accessibility offering and they have a goal to enable equal access to companies who are led by or employ persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>FCC is the chair of the Crown Collaboration Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Procurement Committee, which is focused on supplier diversity, vendor climate initiatives and the Accessibility Canada Act. Meetings are held quarterly with a focus on sharing information and learning.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>Starting in 2023, FCC will consider accessibility as part of our end-to-end procurement review and assessment. The review will result in a re-write of the procurement directive, policies and procedures. New accessibility standards will be included in these directives, policies and procedures.</p>	<p>FCC is in the process of reviewing its procurement directives, policies and procedures to determine where accessibility requirements will be included.</p>	<p>In progress and ongoing</p>

Next year, FCC will continue to advance accessibility by acting on the following goals:

- By 2024, FCC will establish a source list for required accessibility services (for example, braille, digital audio, captioning, descriptive video, sign language interpretation).
- By 2025, procurement officers will receive training on how to incorporate accessibility into procurement.
- From 2025 onwards, accessibility will be explicitly considered in all procurements by either including accessibility requirements or by documenting the decision to not incorporate accessibility requirements.

2.8 Transportation

FCC does not provide transportation services to employees or customers. No goals have been created under the heading of transportation.

3. Consultations

People with disabilities were an important part of FCC's accessibility planning. We consulted with people with disabilities throughout the process. We asked our employees with disabilities about barriers they have experienced while working at FCC, and we asked their perspectives on how we can make things more accessible. Employee feedback was important to help us focus our goals. We also worked with an independent accessibility advisory group made up of Canadians with different disabilities. They helped to bring a customer perspective to our planning.

3.1 Consultation method

To help FCC identify barriers to accessibility that employees or stakeholders with disabilities have experienced, two separate online surveys were conducted. We chose this strategy because our participants are spread out across Canada, and we want to provide them the flexibility they require to participate in the survey. The surveys were developed

by Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT), an accessibility organization we partnered with, and distributed to relevant parties by FCC. In addition, LTRT convened its Accessibility Advisory Group to assess and discuss accessibility at FCC, which helped us develop our organizational goals for our first Accessibility Plan. FCC also designed and conducted internal consultations to actively engage people with disabilities. As most participants requested, these sessions were conducted virtually.

3.2 Consultations with employees who have disabilities

All FCC employees were invited to take a survey on accessibility developed by our accessibility partner, Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT). We received responses from 40 employees with disabilities, 48 individuals close to someone with a disability, and other employees who wanted to share their feedback on FCC's accessibility. In addition to the survey, FCC conducted internal

interviews. Overall, employees reported positive experiences working for FCC and they appreciate our efforts towards accessibility. However, most employees cited reducing stigma and increased knowledge about disability as essential areas for improvement. Solutions to these and other barriers identified by employees are included in our accessibility goals throughout this report.

3.3 Consultations with stakeholders who have disabilities

A second survey was also sent to industry groups to share with their membership so that we could get customer and/or industry feedback. We didn't receive many responses, but we are committed to building a stronger approach to gathering customer and industry feedback.

We also requested and received feedback from an independent accessibility advisory group. The group

is made up of 10 Canadians with different kinds of disabilities. We asked the group to provide feedback on things like our website, our services, our job postings and job application process, and about general barriers they have encountered when working with and using the services of similar organizations. They provided feedback through a virtual roundtable discussion as well as through written notes.

Their suggestions were mostly about communications at FCC. They thought that some information on our website was not written in an easy-to-understand and accessible way. They also wanted to see more specific language about disability in our diversity and inclusion commitments, as well as in our job postings. Their feedback is included in the goals throughout our Accessibility Plan.

4. Feedback

FCC has established ways for individuals to submit feedback on its Accessibility Plan. However, as of the day of writing this report, FCC has not received any feedback explicitly connected to our Accessibility Plan.

The valuable feedback on the barriers individuals encountered while working with FCC has offered critical insights into areas that need to be improved. For instance, we received feedback highlighting issues with the accessibility of our website. As a result, FCC has conducted a thorough website accessibility assessment and is actively implementing the required adjustments to improve the online experience for all users.

Furthermore, the feedback received has revealed barriers with the physical accessibility of several FCC locations, including parking facilities, paths and accessibility features on entry doors. To address these issues, FCC is taking steps forward via renovations and enhancements, as well as partnering with the Rick Hansen Foundation, to ensure that people with diverse needs can navigate our physical spaces with ease.

In response to feedback received, FCC is taking deliberate and significant actions to remove communication barriers encountered by individuals. Our current initiatives include introducing sign language services, captioning for video content, and producing materials in braille and large print formats.

FCC has also received feedback regarding barriers encountered in our talent acquisition process. To address this, we are examining our talent acquisition process to allow more inclusive recruiting practices. We are committed to continuous awareness and training activities to remove unconscious biases within our talent acquisition team and leadership. In addition, to promote a more inclusive experience for all individuals interested in pursuing opportunities with FCC, we have included a diversity commitment statement on our Careers page and strategically placed accommodation instructions to ensure they are visible to all applicants.

5. Conclusion

Canadians rely on FCC's customers for their food, and our customers rely on us. We need to be accessible to our customers, the industry we serve and our employees so they can all do their very best work. Inclusion is part of our vision for a brighter future.



DREAM. GROW. THRIVE.