



Accessibility Standards Canada

2024 Accessibility Progress Report

December 2024



Accessibility Standards Canada: 2024 Accessibility Progress Report, December 2024.

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Government of Canada catalogue Number AS1-5E-PDF

International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) 2817-9021

Accessibility Standards Canada is committed to ensure the highest standard of accessibility for people with disabilities. We aspire to provide all Canadians, regardless of technology or ability, equal access to our reports.

This report is also available [online](#). To request this document in another format, please [contact us online](#), or call 1 833-854-7628. Large print, braille, audio cassette, audio CD, e-text diskette, e-text CD and DAISY are available on demand.

Introduction

In 2022, Accessibility Standards Canada published its first [Accessibility Plan](#). The organization publishes annual progress reports to provide updates on the commitments outlined in its Accessibility Plan. Every 3 years, the Accessibility Plan is updated to build on previous achievements. The first update to our Accessibility Plan is due in 2025. To develop the Accessibility Plan and these progress reports, we must consult Canadians with disabilities.

This progress report presents the steps taken by Accessibility Standards Canada towards achieving the set goals and objectives in its [2022 to 2024 Accessibility Plan](#).

Overall, the implementation of our [Accessibility Plan](#) is progressing very well. Of the 24 actions identified in our three-year plan:

- 96% of our planned actions are currently fulfilled;
- 7 are completed one-time actions;
- 16 are ongoing actions that we are committed to working with now and in the future; and
- 1 is planned for completion in 2025.

We received positive feedback and high levels of satisfaction from people who interact with our organization. The consultation, led in September 2024, also identified some barriers and areas for improvement, which we will be addressing.

General

Alternate formats

You can request alternate formats of this report, for example:

- print or large print
- American Sign Language (ASL) / *Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ)* / Indigenous Sign Language video
- Braille
- audio format

- electronic format compatible with adaptive technology intended to assist people with disabilities.

To request alternate formats of this report:

- call us at 1-833-854-7628
- email us at info.accessibility.standards-normes.accessibilite.info@canada.gc.ca

Consultations

In line with the [Accessible Canada Act](#) and [Accessible Canada Regulations](#), we held a consultation on our progress in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility. The consultation took place from September 9 to 23, 2024.

Consultation results will be shared, along with this progress report, with management. This will allow us to make further adjustments to maintain the high level of accessibility of our organization. Comments will also be taken into consideration when updating our [Accessibility Plan](#).

Who we consulted

We chose to consult people with lived experience who often interact with us, to better understand and identify the barriers that they face when dealing with our organization. These groups include:

- employees of Accessibility Standards Canada
- members of the Board of Directors
- members of our technical committees who are responsible for drafting accessibility standards
- recipients of research funding from our Grants and Contributions Program.

We sent an invitation to complete our survey to a total of 273 people.

Consultation methods

We sent the survey invitation to participants by email. This was the most direct way to reach our target audience. Participants could complete the survey online or by:

- email
- telephone (including Video Relay Service)
- ASL or LSQ (by sending a video by email).

We asked participants to respond to 18 questions about their interactions with us. Participants had the possibility to write comments on many questions.

The questions were organized into five sections. A summary of the responses received is as follows.

What we heard

Section 1 – How do you interact with us?

We received a total of 14 responses. To help keep responses anonymous, we are not providing a breakdown of responses by targeted groups.

Section 2 – Have you experienced any barriers to accessibility in your interactions with Accessibility Standards Canada in any of the 7 areas below?

Employment

14% of respondents reported facing barriers. Comments included:

- Opportunities for career advancement and promotion for people with disabilities.

Built environment (our office)

No barriers or comments reported.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

7% of respondents reported facing barriers. Comments included:

- MS Teams has better closed captions than Zoom and fewer security issues with access. Preference for technical committee work.

Communication with us (other than ICT)

7% of respondents reported facing barriers. Comments included:

- Communication about technical committee work is not timely. Compensation (pay) is also not timely. This is a barrier because the organization does compensate experts with disabilities who are not compensated by their employer.

Program and service delivery (our Grants and Contributions Program and services)

No barriers or comments reported.

Transportation (finding our office and accessible parking spaces)

7% of respondents reported facing barriers. Comments included:

- Cars often park in the accessible walkway.

Procurement (buying goods and services)

No barriers or comments reported.

Section 3 – Progress Towards Our Accessibility Plan: How are we doing overall in implementing our plan in each priority area?

We include participants who chose “Satisfactory,” “Very Satisfactory,” or “Outstanding” as being satisfied. Participants who responded “Poor” or “Unsatisfactory” are counted as being unsatisfied.

Employment

Our objective: To enhance recruitment, retention, training, advancement, job satisfaction and support of employees with disabilities.

100% of respondents were satisfied. Comments received included:

- It is important to see more people with disabilities in leadership positions and front-facing positions.
- The organization provides positive accommodations for people with a range of disabilities.

Built Environment (our office)

Our objective: To offer the highest level of accommodation for employees and guests with disabilities, including the Board of Directors and technical

committee members, to use the facility based on available technology and standards.

100% of respondents were satisfied.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Our objective: Employees and stakeholders can use ICT to engage in their work.

100% of respondents were satisfied.

Communication with us (other than ICT)

Our objective: Employees and stakeholders have the knowledge they need to do their work.

93% of respondents were satisfied.

Program and service delivery (our Grants and Contributions Program and services)

Our objective: Canadians are able to access and experience our programs.

100% of respondents were satisfied.

Transportation (finding our office and accessible parking spaces)

Our objective: Employees and guests can access our premises autonomously.

100% of respondents were satisfied. Comments received included:

- More wayfinding in the building is required.
- It is fairly easy to access the office and parking. There is plenty of accessible parking.

Procurement (buying goods and services)

Our objective: To embed accessibility into our procurement philosophy.

100% of respondents were satisfied.

Section 4: Further Suggestions – Do you have any further suggestions or feedback to share about our Accessibility Plan, the accessibility of our organization, or otherwise?

Comments included:

- The indicators in the 2023 Progress Report are very clear.
- The Accessibility Plan shows the publication date but does not indicate the years of the plan (2022 to 2024).
- The organization held focus groups on the user experience of its website. The organization led the best experience so far with this type of exercise with groups of people living with disabilities. This information is invaluable to the organization.

Section 5: Other Demographic Questions

- 57% of respondents identified as people with a disability, including:
 - physical
 - sensory
 - mental
 - cognitive
 - intellectual
 - learning
 - other
- There was representation from Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador
- 86% of respondents lived in urban areas, 7% of respondents lived in rural areas, and 7% of respondents did not choose an option.

Other feedback received

We posted our [Accessibility feedback form](#) in December 2022. Canadians can use this form to share feedback on:

- our [Accessibility Plan](#)
- accessibility barriers faced when trying to access our services and information, on any of our platforms.

We received 10 submissions from November 2023 to September 2024. Canadians submitted their feedback in different ways:

- 2 used the feedback form

- 7 sent us feedback by email
- 1 sent us feedback using our [Contact form](#).

7 of the submissions came from external organizations and 3 came from individuals.

The submissions mostly included suggestions on the accessibility of our website and public documents. The submissions covered the following areas:

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Comments	Consideration and Action Taken
<p>Consider other ways for the public to provide comments on draft standards to increase accessible options in addition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online form (HTML) • Fillable PDF form <p>Consider changing the deadline for comments from 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time to the end of the day. This would increase flexibility.</p>	<p>We created an accessible Word form that Canadians can also use to submit comments. We received positive feedback about this new option.</p> <p>We also moved our standard deadline to 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time.</p> <p>We first did this for the public review of 2 standards in 2023 and 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services • Plain language <p>We will do this for future public reviews.</p>
<p>The colours of your website may need to be reviewed to make sure the colour contrast is accessible. 2 specific colour contrast issues were shared.</p>	<p>We chose colour combinations using the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4.3 of the Web Compliance Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AAA Standard. <p>This means a colour contrast ratio of 7:1. We aim for the highest accessibility. We created a guide for the organization to follow.</p>

	Regarding the 2 specific issues raised, we will reevaluate our use of colours and adjust our combinations as needed to ensure they meet accessibility requirements.
Your website does not allow users to zoom in 200% and navigate horizontally without scrolling to the end of the webpage.	We have escalated the issue to our web expert who will address it as soon as possible. Ensuring that our website meets accessibility standards is a top priority for us.
The PDF version of your Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services standard is not accessible. Specific issues with tags, bookmarks, and links were shared.	We have since posted an updated PDF version. It has been reviewed and remediated to meet AODA (<i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i>) requirements. We also offer online (HTML) and Word versions of the standard.
The PDF version of your Roadmap to 2040 is not accessible with the Nonvisual Desktop Access (NVDA) screen reader.	We will make sure future PDF versions of the Roadmap to 2040 are accessible with NVDA. The Board of Directors reviews this document every 3 years.
Your newsletter could be improved so that it is accessible with the NVDA screen reader. 5 specific issues were shared.	We are currently reviewing the format of our Quarterly Newsletter. We will incorporate the suggestions whenever feasible and appropriate to enhance accessibility.
There were issues using the one-tap phone number you provided to join your 2024 Annual Public Meeting (APM) by phone.	We will take steps to make sure our 2025 APM is accessible for participants who want to join using a one-tap phone number.

Communication with us (other than ICT)

Comments	Consideration and Action Taken
<p>Translate draft standards posted for public review into ASL and LSQ. You already accept comments on draft standards in ASL and LSQ.</p>	<p>We now post ASL and LSQ summaries of draft standards as part of public review. We did so for the public review of 3 standards in 2023 and 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services • Plain language <p>We will do this for future public reviews.</p>
<p>Translate your newsletter into ASL and LSQ.</p>	<p>We focused on adding more ASL and LSQ videos to our website in 2023 and 2024. We will consider translating our newsletter.</p> <p>Additionally, we are exploring other communication methods to enhance accessibility, such as video clips and infographics, to accompany our content.</p>

Internal feedback

The internal feedback received this year was positive. The organization will continue to monitor and seek internal feedback. When feedback is received, it will be addressed in a timely manner. Based on past feedback, we continued to work with providers to minimize delays for future technology accommodations.

Overview of progress

In 2024, we continued the implementation of our [Accessibility Plan](#), based on the previous year's report, and we set out to fulfil our commitments. For each commitment, we:

- clarified who is accountable
- established a deadline
- developed indicators
- started to monitor progress.

Progress under the *Accessible Canada Act's* 7 priority areas

Employment

Barrier 1: Inflexible and often inaccessible application and hiring procedures within Government.

Action 1: Applicants can submit documents to us in their preferred format. **Completed in 2023.**

Action 2: We will provide the name and position of the person to contact for more information about the job poster. **Completed in 2023.**

Action 3: We will provide accommodations throughout the application and hiring process. **Ongoing.**

- Since 2023 we are systematically providing accommodations throughout the application and hiring processes.
- Our employees are all required to complete the training on "Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility."

Indicators	Target state	2024 data
% of staffing processes where accommodations were offered at each step.	100%	100%

Average time to get accommodations.	1 month	1 month
% of Board members obtaining the accommodations they need for meetings.	100%	100%

Barrier 2: Not reaching out to potential candidates with disabilities.

Action: Our human resources department will fine-tune the recruitment strategy to broaden our talent pool to include more people with disabilities.

Ongoing.

- Our hiring managers are asked to consider staffing options to support employment equity criteria when establishing their hiring strategy. This includes hiring from existing public service pools of candidates having self-identified as people with disabilities.

Indicators	Target state	2024 data
% of employees who self-identify as having a disability.	15%	30%
Number of employees who self-identify as having a disability who were offered promotions or acting opportunities at Accessibility Standards Canada or within the Government of Canada.	5	5

Barrier 3: Using outdated or inappropriate language when speaking about people with disabilities.

Action 1: We will continue to educate employees, especially those who are new to the organization, about disability awareness and appropriate terminology. **Training to be finalized in 2025.**

- Our employees are all required to complete the training on “Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility,” offered by the Canada School of Public Service. Accessibility Standards Canada created a Lexicon to raise awareness of certain terms related to people with disabilities and to harmonize their use in internal and external communications, as well as with the public, in both official languages. This document is shared with all employees and with every translation request made to an external service provider.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
% of employees who completed the training on “Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility”.	100%	In progress

Action 2: We will make inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility allyship (IDEA) as an organization-wide competency. **Ongoing.**

- The training on accessibility, disability inclusion and plain language was integrated in our list of mandatory trainings for all employees in 2023.
- Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport (the Passport) is one of the flagship initiatives under the Public Service Accessibility Strategy, and a key project under the Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund. The Passport directly applies the social model of disability, which focuses on removing barriers in society that exclude people with disabilities. The social model recognizes that people with disabilities may face barriers in the workplace such as inaccessible buildings, systems, or digital content. These barriers

vary according to personal circumstances and job responsibilities. Workplace accommodation tools and support measures can help overcome these barriers and create a level playing field for all employees.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
Passport presentation to employee following CEO approval for exemption	100%	100%

Barrier 4: Transitioning from education to employment for youth with disabilities comes with many challenges.

Action: Add accessible employment for youth with disabilities transitioning from school to work as a priority area for our research funding program. **Completed in 2023.**

The built environment

Barrier 1: Certain elements of the office may not yet be fully accessible to everyone, whether that be employees or guests.

Action 1: We will implement recommendations from employees taking part in the pilot return to the office project. **Completed in 2023.**

Action 2: We will feature our facility to other government departments (OGDs) and agencies to encourage a higher level of accessibility in future fit ups or new builds. **Ongoing**

- Our office tours have highlighted accessibility features of our office space that make workplaces more accessible to employees with disabilities. OGDs have taken advantage of our online [3D virtual tour](#) if they have not been able to tour our space in person.
- 2 out of our 4 quarterly newsletters this year proactively informed stakeholders and partners about our online 3D virtual tour of our workspace. This promotion has now been added to our newsletter template to be included in every issue.
- As a complement, the office tour available on our website was also

promoted on our social media platforms throughout the year.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
Number of visits and promotional activities for the accessibility features of our offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 visit per quarter • Inform OGDs about our office tour through our targeted newsletter every quarter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 visits per quarter • 2 mentions out of 4 newsletters

Barrier 2: Employees and guests are unable to locate the office in the shopping mall (initially listed under the “Transport” area).

Action: We will provide clear instructions and have an employee meet guests at the main entrance and guide them to the office entrance.

Completed in 2023.

Barrier 3: Insufficient parking or lack of accessible parking spaces nearby (initially listed under the “Transport” area).

Action: There is a commercial parking lot next to the office. We will ask management to add additional accessible parking spaces requiring a tag.

Completed in 2023.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Barrier 1: Lack of knowledge or experience in the latest accessibility technology, which is always evolving.

Action: IT employees have the resources they need to provide Accessible ICT. **Ongoing.**

- ICT Training is part of learning plans of employees providing ICT or advice on ICT.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
% of employees providing ICT or advice on ICT who access training on Accessible ICT.	75%	100%

Barrier 2: Procurement of software that is sometimes incompatible with the needs of people with disabilities.

Action 1: We will coordinate software procurement in consultation with the intended user. **Ongoing.**

- In 2024, 11 users requested and received specialized software.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
% of completed requests for specialized software.	100%	100%

Action 2: During the onboarding process, we ask employees if they need Accessible ICT (modified for greater clarity). **Ongoing.**

- In 2024, we hired 14 new employees. Every employee is asked whether or not they require Accessible ICT when onboarded.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
% of employees are being asked if they need specialized ICT during the onboarding process.	100%	100%

Communication, other than ICT

Barrier: Employees and stakeholders sometimes experience inaccessible information and cannot complete their work.

Action 1: The communications team will stay informed about new communications tools that could help us provide accessible information to employees. **Ongoing.**

- We participate in several communities of practice related to accessibility, including:
 - Community of Practice for Accessible Communications
 - Interdepartmental Accessibility Community of Practice
 - Community of Practice on Plain Language
 - Interdepartmental Social Media Working Group
 - Government of Canada Web Priorities Working Group
- We worked with various internal and external partners, including experts, to solve accessibility challenges with our website and to answer specific questions related to the accessibility of communications. This includes testing solutions with assistive devices and technologies such as a Braille display, screen readers and text magnifier.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
Number of relevant (accessible communications) communities of practice we take part in.	3	7

Action 2: We will monitor feedback and consult stakeholders on which format(s) and support(s) would meet their needs (modified for greater clarity). **Ongoing.**

- We made targeted efforts to actively offer alternate formats of call-to-action content and high value content on our web pages (sign language videos, PDF, and Word alternate formats, etc.)
- The organization also created sign language videos for all its call-to-action content on social media. All of our social media campaigns

now use ASL and LSQ to reach the Deaf and hard of hearing communities.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
% of active offers for alternate formats for new engaging web pages.	100%	100%

Action 3: We will continue to provide employee training on plain language and making documents accessible. **Ongoing.**

- In 2023, plain language training became mandatory for all our employees. We offered training to all staff in fall 2023.
- We are in the process of identifying a provider to deliver the mandatory training that will be offered to all new employees moving forward.
- We continue to encourage employees to write documents in plain language to a level 8 or lower on the Flesh-Kincaid scale (or equivalent on the Scolarius scale).
- We revised the suite of accessible templates created for employees to ensure they continue to meet the highest level of accessibility and best practices, and employees' needs.
- We learned from a 2023 partial review of our website and from comments made by the public. This includes:
 - evaluating new content with an accessibility lens
 - developing summaries of complex documents in plain language
 - translating into sign language videos call to action content and high value content
 - improving the overall user experience of our web pages
- We launched a website user experience review in summer 2024 to assess and improve our website's user experience and information architecture. We are seeking strategic recommendations to enhance the site's usability and organization, ensuring it meets the evolving needs of our various audiences, including people with disabilities.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
% of employees who completed training on plain language.	90%	Each new employee hired

Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

Barrier: Accessibility is not always considered during the procurement process due to lack of knowledge and understanding.

Action 1: We will equip employees involved in the procurement of accessible products and services with knowledge to understand the needs of people with disabilities. **(Action combined with action 2 below).**

Action 2: We will seek services from providers who have values in line with ours whenever possible.

For greater clarity and to combine with the previous action, this action was modified for:

We will embed accessibility considerations in our procurement processes. **Ongoing.**

- All of our procurement contracts take into account accessibility considerations to respect our mandate.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
% of procurement processes where accessibility was considered.	100%	100%

Action 3: Ensure all employees have the right equipment and products to be at their best. Replace items that are not accessible if possible (modified for greater clarity). **Ongoing.**

- Our organization created an Organizational Health and Safety Committee. The Committee continuously discuss the removal of

barriers highlighted by employees. This proactive approach will ensure that barriers are treated quickly, as opposed to waiting for a callout to staff.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
Number of callouts to all employees to ask them to report on any new barriers faced at work.	4 per year	Continuous discussions

Action 4: We will include information on the *Accessible Canada Act*, disability, accessibility, and human rights in our onboarding training. **Completed in 2023.**

Design and delivery of programs and services

Barrier: Shared information is not always provided in formats that meet the needs of all users.

Action 1: We will include accessibility requirements for accommodations in the Standards Development Operating Procedures used by employees to support the technical committees (reworded for better accuracy). **Ongoing.**

- All letters of offer shared with new technical committee members included a request to provide details of accommodation requirements. Reminders have been shared throughout the standards development process to ensure changes in accommodation needs are addressed. Members of technical committees have provided positive feedback about the organization’s positive and inclusive environment. Surveys indicate that the Standard Development team meets technical committee members' initial and evolving accommodation requirements.

Indicators	Target state	2024 data
Timeframe to offer accommodations to technical	We offer accommodation	100%

committee members.	to 100% of members when offering a position on a technical committee	
Level of satisfaction of recipients with the accessibility of our Grants and Contributions Program.	70%	100%
Level of satisfaction of technical committee members with the accessibility of our processes.	70%	80%

Action 2: We will provide guidance materials in plain language. Ongoing.

- We continue to ensure that documentation is in plain language, this includes call for proposals, forms, and templates for reporting.
- We added a new requirement in funding agreements so that recipients are now required to publish at the end of their project an executive summary of their research report in plain language.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
Reading level of documents for applicants to the Grants and Contributions program.	Grade 8 reading level or lower	100%

Action 3: We will publish standards in accessible formats. Ongoing.

- We continue to increase the accessibility of documents for technical committee members.
- We published all our standards in 3 accessible formats: PDF, Word, and HTML. Additionally, we provided a plain language summary in English and French in PDF, Word, and HTML. We provided the same

plain language summary in ASL and LSQ.

- We improved the process to fill out forms for our technical committee members. We continue to use DocuSign to maintain the accessibility for all users, including those using a screen reader.

Indicator	Target state	2024 data
All standards published in HTML, PDF, and Word. Additionally, we offer different formats by request.	100% active offers for standards	100%

Action 4: We will conduct future surveys with employees, technical committee members and the Board of Directors. Through the survey results, we will see how we can improve accessibility in the design and delivery of our programs and services. **Ongoing.**

- Based on the feedback received from the survey, the Grants and Contributions program team updates the documentation to ensure accessibility. This includes, for example, creating new additional format of budget form to provide more options for applicants.
- We will continue to collect feedback and conduct future surveys with employees, technical committee members, the Board of Directors, and Grants and Contributions recipients to measure the satisfaction level.

Indicators	Target state	2024 data
Level of satisfaction of technical committee members with the accessibility of our processes	70%	80%
Level of satisfaction of Grants and Contributions recipients with the accessibility of our	70%	100%

program and services.		
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Transport

Our [Accessibility Plan](#) initially identified 2 barriers for the “Transport” area. It was later determined that those barriers fell in the “Built Environment” area, and they were moved under that area. As a result, the organization does not have any barriers to address for the transport area.

Feedback process description

Feedback from the public

We value the lived experience of people with disabilities, and we aim to meet the highest level of accessibility.

You can submit feedback on:

- this report
- our [2022 to 2024 Accessibility Plan](#)
- any other barriers you encounter when dealing with Accessibility Standards Canada, including:
 - the accessibility of our services,
 - offices,
 - website,
 - support to technical committee’s members as well as the Board of Directors, and
 - any other issue.

Your feedback is important and necessary, and it will:

- be used to advance the objectives of our forthcoming [Accessibility Plan](#),
- be used to improve our overall accessibility, and
- be included in our progress reports.

How to submit feedback

The Human Resources Manager is responsible for receiving feedback from

the public. We will acknowledge all accessibility feedback we receive within 48 hours, except for anonymous feedback.

If you wish to remain anonymous, don't include your name when submitting your feedback.

To submit your feedback, you can:

- Use the [online form](#)
- Email us: info.accessibility.standards-normes.accessibilite.info@canada.gc.ca
- Call us: 1-833-854-7628
- Use Video Relay Services (VRS), which are free (ASL or LSQ)
- Send us mail at:

Accessibility Standards Canada
320, St-Joseph Boulevard
Suite 246
Gatineau, QC J8Y 3Y8