

# **2023-2025 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

August 29, 2023

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# SUMMARY

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The National Film Board (NFB) has written an easy read summary of our Accessibility Plan. This summary includes the main information about our plan. The full, detailed version of our plan is available [here](#).

## INTRODUCTION

Our Accessibility Plan addresses six areas<sup>1</sup> that are important to running our organization. These six areas are outlined in the [Accessible Canada Act](#). When working on our Accessibility Plan, we looked at:

- Built environment (buildings, pathways, parking)
- Employment
- Technology
- Communications
- Buying goods, services and facilities
- Programs and services

To learn more about how to make these areas of our organization more accessible, we asked employees about accessibility at the NFB. We also asked freelancers, educators and audience members about barriers. We gathered this feedback through an online survey and used it to help us decide what to write in this plan. We also worked with accessibility professionals to consider other barriers at the NFB. We then thought about how we could remove these barriers and came up with the following goals for our Accessibility Plan.

## OUR PLAN

In the next three years, we will:

- develop strategies to consult with people with disabilities on a regular basis;
- provide training on disability and accessibility to employees;
- update our disability accommodations policy;
- review required personal qualities in job postings;
- have formal best practices for accessibility during meetings;
- update our employment equity statement to include information about how to ask for accommodations;
- have a documented accommodation process for people going through the hiring process;
- have built-environment accessibility specialists identify barriers in our offices;

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<sup>1</sup> The *Accessible Canada Act* covers seven areas. However, we did not include the seventh area, transportation, which does not apply to the NFB.

- liaise with building owners to see which recommendations from the built-environment accessibility specialists we can implement (for example, installing automatic door openers on bathroom doors).
- review evacuation plans in all NFB offices to include instructions on evacuating people with disabilities;
- begin removing barriers on our websites that have already been identified;
- have an accessibility specialist review our websites and apps and begin removing the barriers the specialist identifies;
- make it easier to see which films have closed captioning and descriptive audio;
- make sure new films have closed captioning and descriptive audio;
- think about how we can collect information on people with disabilities to improve inclusion in the production of our films;
- tell people who come to our workshops and events that they can ask for accommodations;
- create guidelines for including accessibility when we purchase items and services.

## FEEDBACK

We welcome feedback on our plan and about accessibility at the NFB. Please contact us by using any of the following communication channels:

**E-mail:** [accessibility@nfb.ca](mailto:accessibility@nfb.ca)

**Feedback form:** [Contact the NFB](#)

**Phone:** 1-800-267-7710 (toll-free in Canada)  
We are available to take your call Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)

**Mail:** National Film Board of Canada  
1501, Rue De Bleury  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 0H3

**Social media:** [Twitter-X](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[Instagram](#)

# 1. GENERAL

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## 1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

The National Film Board is an agency of the Government of Canada. We are Canada's public producer and distributor of films and other media. We have a large and growing collection of works, including award-winning creative documentaries, auteur animation (featuring the unique aesthetic of filmmakers who are intimately involved in crafting all aspects of their film), interactive stories and participatory experiences. We have approximately 400 employees based in offices across Canada.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The NFB has a new plan for accessibility for people with disabilities. This plan has been developed in accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act* and in consultation with the organization Left Turn Right Turn, who provided us with expertise and helped us connect with people with disabilities. It also reflects the broader goals of the NFB's commitments and objectives with respect to equity, diversity and inclusion, introduced in 2021.

Our plan is based on the principle that disability rights are human rights and the belief that universal access benefits everyone. It recognizes that the NFB cannot truly serve as Canada's public storyteller unless people with disabilities are full participants. Creators with disabilities have the right to tell their own stories and share their unique perspectives with all Canadians and people around the world, without barriers. Members of the public with disabilities should be able to connect with us and enjoy our works fully, whether virtually or in person. Current and future employees with disabilities should be able to see themselves participating easily in the NFB work environment, ensuring we reflect the true face of Canada.

This plan is a vision for Canada's public producer and distributor as a creative organization where everyone can participate—with concrete actions to eliminate barriers in recruitment, our workforce, how we collaborate and how we serve our audience. The plan ensures creators with disabilities are fully seen and heard.

## 1.3 FEEDBACK PROCESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

We welcome feedback from our employees and members of the public about accessibility at the NFB and this plan. You can submit feedback without giving your name or contact information. We will review and consider it when we write our progress reports and our next Accessibility Plan. We will also take steps to address your comments where possible.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team is responsible for collecting, keeping and responding to the feedback we receive.

To send feedback, please contact us by using any of the following communication channels:

**E-mail:** [accessibility@nfb.ca](mailto:accessibility@nfb.ca)

**Feedback form:** [Contact the NFB](#)

**Phone:** 1-800-267-7710 (toll-free in Canada)

We are available to take your call Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)

**Mail:** National Film Board of Canada  
1501, Rue De Bleury  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 0H3

**Social media:** [Twitter-X](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[Instagram](#)

Information on our feedback process is available on [our website](#).

Unless you send us feedback without a name or contact, we will respond to let you know we received your comments. We store a copy of all the feedback we receive for at least seven years.

## 1.4 ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

You can request alternative formats of this plan. To do so, please contact us using any of the methods listed below:

**E-mail:** [accessibility@nfb.ca](mailto:accessibility@nfb.ca)

**Feedback form:** [Contact the NFB](#)

**Phone:** 1-800-267-7710 (toll-free in Canada)

We are available to take your call Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)

**Mail:** National Film Board of Canada  
1501, Rue De Bleury  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 0H3

**Social media:** [Twitter-X](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[Instagram](#)

A digital version of this plan that works with assistive technology is available on [our website](#).

We will respond to requests for other formats as soon as we can. For each alternative format, we will provide a copy within the following timelines:

- Print: 15 days from initial request;
- Large print (increased font size): 15 days from initial request;
- Braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers): 45 days from initial request;
- Audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud): 45 days from initial request.

## 1.5 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply throughout this plan:

**Disability:** any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society. (Source: [Accessible Canada Act](#))

**Barrier:** anything — including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice — that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. (Source: [Accessible Canada Act](#))

**Accessibility:** the degree to which any person may use or have access to a product, service, program or environment.

## 2. AREAS DESCRIBED UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE *ACCESSIBLE CANADA ACT*

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### 2.1 ORGANIZATION-WIDE INITIATIVES

The NFB has made proactive efforts to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. We have fostered a culture that takes a yes-by-default approach to accommodations, and we have all staff undergo equity, diversity and inclusion training. We will procure accessibility and disability-specific training to round out this training going forward. We continue to seek out ways to make our workplace, film catalogue and interactions with the public more accessible. For example, we instituted a mandatory captioning requirement for all films after 2018, and we have budgeted for accessibility features like

captioning and described video in our more recent productions. We have also begun participating in accessible career fairs that bring together job seekers with disabilities and employers. This reduces barriers and shows candidates with disabilities that the film industry is a place they can thrive in.

These goals will help us continue the work we are doing to improve accessibility:

- By September 2024, we will develop a strategy around ongoing engagement and consultations with people who have disabilities. To do this, we will consider forming:
  - an internal accessibility advisory committee;
  - an employee resource group for employees with disabilities;
  - an audience advisory committee.

## **2.2 DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

The NFB does not run programs in the same way your local community centre would. We partner directly with filmmakers and participate in film development, production and distribution. Our current system for project submissions involves filmmakers reaching out directly to our producers by email. Through discussions with our producers and employees, we learned we need to do more to ensure the public knows we are open to any kind of submission from filmmakers, both new and established.

Our Education team has worked closely with our Information Technology (IT) department to improve the accessibility of our CAMPUS platform and *Ocean School* website, which contain educational materials, webinars, films and lesson plans for educators of every level of education, from kindergarten to college and university. We are aware of several barriers to accessibility, including the use of PDFs, lack of captions and transcripts for films, and navigation difficulties within the sites. In addition, our Education team has been working to create a catalogue of content on the topics of disability and accessibility for various age groups and learning levels.

Our Production team has updated the [Create with the NFB](#) section of our website to more clearly state how filmmakers can submit projects to us. Moreover, on April 1, 2023, the team launched a self-identification form to collect data on the creators we work with, including whether they self-identify as a person living with a disability. These efforts are necessary and we will continue to increase the accessibility of our programs by actioning the following goals:

- By April 2025, we will invite people who attend our workshops and events to request accommodations;
- By April 2025, we will roll out disability-specific customer service training for client services staff.

## **2.3 EMPLOYMENT**

Our employees are very interested in learning best practices for accessibility in employment. We are revamping the application process to include a self-identification option for applicants. We have also begun participating in career fairs geared toward



candidates with disabilities. We will continue to make the NFB more accessible for our employees with the following goals:

- By April 2024, we will:
  - update the employment equity statement to let applicants know how to request accommodations;
  - develop a candidate accommodation process to ensure applicants' accommodation needs are met.
- By September 2024, we will draft and publish an updated workplace accommodation policy that includes clear instructions on how to request workplace accommodations.
- By April 2025, we will provide employees with training resources specific to disability and accessibility.
- By December 2025, we will:
  - formalize best practices for meeting accessibility and give employees the ability to enable accessibility features on NFB devices independently, where possible;
  - review required personal qualities in job postings to consider why these profiles were included and whether they are relevant to the requirements of each position.

## **2.4 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)**

The NFB has several websites and apps accessible to the public, as well as accounts on all major social media platforms. This section focuses on the accessibility of the websites and apps we control. Our web team has been actively working to improve accessibility on our websites. Our consultations with people with disabilities identified several barriers, including some we have known about and some that were new to us. The barriers involve a lack of captioning on video content, challenges with user experience and navigation throughout the websites, a lack of described audio, issues with proper tagging and functionality of our websites and apps, small font sizes and poor colour contrasts in many places. We have started removing these barriers and have improved the font size, colour contrast and tagging for screen readers on our websites. We are working towards making the websites and apps fully compliant with the Web Access Content Guidelines 2.1 (WCAG 2.1).

Our employees also highlighted barriers in our internal ICT systems, including a lack of awareness about accessibility features in programs such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Teams, and the use of PDFs for some communications documents. To support our IT team, we have set the following goals:

- By December 2025, we will:
  - have a web accessibility specialist review our websites and apps accessible to the public for barriers to accessibility;
  - initiate the removal of accessibility barriers on our websites and apps accessible to the public;
  - add a page about the accessibility of our main website, nfb.ca.

- By December 2025, we will improve the navigation of our website based on feedback from people with disabilities. We also intend to consult people with disabilities again as part of this exercise.

## 2.5 OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

We are very proud of the initiative our communications teams have taken to ensure the accessibility of our communications products and documents. These efforts include using readability checkers in WordPress and Microsoft Word for all our blog posts, documents and press releases, including alternative text and captions for social media content with images and video, and using plain language in our external communications. We would like to formalize these practices so new employees can find resources and guidelines easily. To achieve greater accessibility for both our employees and the public, by September 2025, we will:

- add labels to film descriptions indicating if a film has closed captioning or descriptive audio;
- ensure all new films have closed captioning and descriptive audio.

## 2.6 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

We have been working diligently to make our physical office spaces more accessible. For example, our head office, Îlot Balmoral, in downtown Montreal, is an accessible building and, where possible, we have communicated to our landlords the need for further accessibility improvements, such as high-contrast wayfinding elements. We do currently operate in an open office environment and are conscious of the barriers this environment poses for people with disabilities. We encourage employees to wear noise-cancelling headphones or use our small meeting rooms if they need a quiet place to work.

When hosting events, we provide a range of seating to accommodate wheelchair users and ensure venues have accessible washroom facilities. We will go further with the accessibility of our built environment spaces by actioning these goals:

- By December 2025, we will:
  - have built environment accessibility specialists identify barriers in our offices;
  - liaise with building owners to see which recommendations from built environment accessibility specialists we can implement (for example, installing automatic door openers on bathroom doors);
  - have wheelchair users or built-environment accessibility specialists identify other barriers in our washrooms;
  - review evacuation plans in all NFB offices to include instructions on evacuating people with disabilities.

## 2.7 PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The NFB benefits from the Public Service Lending Library, a program that promotes resource sharing for accessible technology and devices across the federal public service. While we will continue to refer to this program, we will also procure accessible equipment quickly to respond to requests for accommodation from our employees. We recognize that reacting to requests is only one part of the solution. We will continue our conversations with other federal public service agencies whose regulations we need to follow in procurement. We have set the following goals for increasing accessibility in procurement at the NFB:

- Starting immediately, we will use best practices for including accessibility in the procurement process;
- By December 2025, we will create guidance resources and checklists for how to make procurement more accessible. Employees who participate in the procurement process will receive training on using these resources.

## 2.8 TRANSPORTATION

The NFB does not provide passenger transportation.

# 3. CONSULTATIONS

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This section outlines our consultation efforts with employees, freelancers, educators and the public. These consultations were undertaken as part of preparing this Accessibility Plan. We learned so much throughout this process, and we recognize that consultations need to be meaningful and ongoing. We are committed to building relationships with people with disabilities, disabled filmmakers and our employees with disabilities.

We consulted employees with disabilities through an anonymous online survey that was shared with all employees in both English and French. In the survey, we asked employees with disabilities to share their experience of barriers to accessibility at the NFB. We also invited employees who do not have disabilities to share any feedback they might have about things they have observed. Most of the responses to this survey were in relation to the accessibility of the washrooms in our Îlot Balmoral head office in Montreal.

We also surveyed our network of freelance film industry professionals to get their perspectives on accessibility at the NFB. All the professionals who responded believed that the NFB has a responsibility, as Canada's national producer and a fixture of the film industry, to advance accessibility in the film industry.

We surveyed audience stakeholders and education professionals who use our CAMPUS platform and participate in events held by the NFB. We asked the audience what their

experience of accessibility has been when interacting with the NFB and most of the barriers they mentioned were related to communication. Both the freelancer and audience surveys highlighted the desire for us to increase career and professional development opportunities for creators with disabilities.

Lastly, we held a focus group with people with a variety of disabilities (Left Turn Right Turn's Accessibility Advisory Group). The focus group participants were not employed by the NFB, but they represented people from across the country who may interact with us or apply to work for us. We asked them to review our social media accounts, websites, job postings and services. A lot of the feedback we received was about communication and navigation barriers they experienced when trying to watch films and read content on our website. We also received valuable feedback about the language we use in our job postings and how it could be stigmatizing for potential applicants.

The feedback gathered from all these consultations significantly influenced the goals outlined in this plan. We are grateful for the time and energy everyone spent filling out the surveys and participating in the consultation process.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

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This Accessibility Plan sets the tone for our approach to accessibility going forward. We are strongly committed to addressing, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and using our position as Canada's national producer to expand opportunities for filmmakers with disabilities and disability representation on screen. We look forward to this process and will be accountable to the goals we have set out. We will continue to build relationships and engage meaningfully with people with disabilities as we refine our accessibility initiatives and create future accessibility plans.