



**PacifiCan**

# **Accessibility Plan: Annual Progress Report**

December 2023



Pacific Economic  
Development Canada

Développement économique  
Canada pour le Pacifique



**Canada**



# Accessibility Plan: Annual Progress Report

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## General

Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) is proud to provide its first annual progress report of the [PacifiCan Accessibility Plan](#) based on the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA).

This first annual progress report identifies progress made since the publishing of the PacifiCan Accessibility Plan.

The ACA requires organizations to publish progress reports on the implementation of their accessibility plans. The progress reflects the organization's policies, programs, practices, and services in relation to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers.

## Agency Feedback Process

In line with the *Accessible Canada Act*, we have established an agency process for receiving and addressing feedback regarding the implementation of the accessibility plan and barriers experienced by our employees and people who deal with our organization.

Send your accessibility questions, feedback, and suggestions; or to request an alternate version, by phone, email or by letter to:

### Pacific Economic Development Canada

Suite 1300-300 Georgia Street

Vancouver, BC V6B 6B4

Telephone: 604-666-6256

Toll Free: 1-888-338-9378

Fax: 604-666-2353

Teletypewriter (TTY): 1-877-303-3388

Email: [info@pacifican.gc.ca](mailto:info@pacifican.gc.ca)

[Feedback form](#)

## Consultations

All PacifiCan employees, which includes members from all equity seeking groups and allies, were solicited to provide feedback on accessibility through culture building sessions and an internal



communications and engagement survey. Accessibility themes that emerged from this feedback include:

- PacifiCan is committed to embracing diversity and authenticity because we believe different perspectives contribute to our strength.
- Continuing to encourage healthy work/life balance habits.
- Prioritizing a safe, healthy, and welcoming place to work built on trust and inclusion.
- Providing more training and action on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

PacifiCan is committed to launching an Employee Resource Group for further consultation in 2024.

Internal subject matter experts were consulted to identify current activities and how PacifiCan will continue to increase accessibility.

## PacifiCan's Action Plan

As mentioned in the Clerk of the Privy Council's Call to Action,

*“As persons with visible and invisible disabilities continue to face physical and technological barriers, the approaches we develop must be truly inclusive by also being truly accessible.*

*Building a diverse, equitable and inclusive Public Service is both an obligation and an opportunity we all share. We must advance this objective together, acting both individually and collectively, and recognizing that our progress will rely on amplifying the voices of those within our organizations to help lead the way.”*

Below is the progress PacifiCan has made to support a more inclusive and accessible workplace and public service.

## Priority Area: Employment

As indicated in the [PacifiCan Accessibility Plan](#), PacifiCan committed to:

- Implement government-wide initiatives, including review of assessment methods in connection to the amendment of Section 36 of the Public Service Employment Act (PSEA), to remove and prevent barriers to recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities.
- Review and analyze updated PSES disaggregated results.
- Update PacifiCan's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Plan.
- Create opportunities for meaningful discussion and engagement with employees by establishing its own employee resource or consultation group, separate from PrairiesCan.
- Increase education on accommodation throughout all stages on employment (for example appointment, onboarding, promotion etc.).
- Continue to support accommodation requests from employees and managers, including ergonomic assessments for new and current staff and support flexible work arrangements, where possible.
- Continue to promote training events to raise awareness, and create an inclusive culture and work environment.

Progress made includes:

- Representation of persons with disabilities at PacifiCan has increased.
- Delivered training sessions to HR sub-delegated managers on the July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 amendments to the *Public Service Employment Act* and the evaluation of barriers and biases in assessment.
- Implemented agency tools for mitigating biases and barriers in the staffing process.
- Initial consultation on Agency-wide Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion plan.
- Initial development of a PacifiCan Employee Resource Group.



- Support for employees with accommodation needs.
- Active marketing and hiring of qualified candidates who self-identified as persons with disabilities.
- Engaging in career fairs, including the Canadian Congress on Disability Inclusion.
- Meeting with organizations supporting persons with disabilities to discuss opportunities for collaboration towards accessible recruitment and accommodation strategies.
- Actively participating in the Self-Identification Renewal initiative, led by TBS.
- Developed a Culture Canvas identifying important themes for employees through employee consultations and evaluating results from PSES and internal surveys.
- Established new mandatory training requirement on unconscious bias for HR Sub-delegated managers.
- Updated HR Sub-Delegation Attestation to be completed and signed by all HR delegated managers by December 31, 2023, which outlines the specific responsibilities and authorities delegated to the individual.
- Weekly learning emails to all staff promoting various training events. Themes included Mental Health; Mental Illness; Workplace Accommodation; Unconscious Bias; Inclusive Hiring Practices; and Inclusive Leadership.
- Continued contract with Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI), which provides additional training and resources on diversity and inclusion topics.

## Priority Area: Built Environment

As indicated in the [PacifiCan Accessibility Plan](#), PacifiCan committed to:

- continue to have accessibility as a mandatory consideration when securing new office space as well as the retrofitting of current leased space;
- proactively work with building management companies to enhance accessibility in the built environment;
- have accessibility as a mandatory consideration when securing a new Headquarters in Surrey, British Columbia to address accessibility and promote inclusion from the planning and design stage to completion.

Progress made includes:

- Continue work with PSPC to ensure the new fit-up of regional offices and new Headquarters in Surrey are aligned to the standards for Accessibility;
- Validate that accessibility standards are met in any lease documentation and conduct accessibility site visits prior to signing new leases.

## Priority Area: Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)

As indicated in the [PacifiCan Accessibility Plan](#), PacifiCan committed to:

- continue to support the accommodation requests from employees to ensure they have the systems and equipment to do their job (Accessible by default);
- adopt new software that has accessibility capabilities built within it, whenever possible.

Progress made includes:

- Updated Software/Service Request form which includes accessibility assessment section.
- Agency roll-out of Office 365 and Kofax PDF, includes built in accessibility features.

## Priority Area: Communication, Other than ICT

As indicated in the [PacifiCan Accessibility Plan](#), PacifiCan committed to:

- use plain language in communications to benefit all users, including those with low reading skills or cognitive disabilities;



- continue to ensure that all external communication is [WCAG 2.0](#) compliant, or greater;
- redesign our internal website to ensure content and layout meets accessibility standards;
- continue to promote accessibility within our organization, including International Day of Persons with Disabilities and National AccessAbility Week, as well as training events to raise awareness and create an inclusive culture and work environment.

Progress made includes:

- Audit of the external PacifiCan website for plain language began and will be completed early 2024.
- Implemented a process for preparing social media posts, which requires:
  - alt-text descriptions for images;
  - use of plain language;
  - ensuring all visual content (graphics, images, video) adhere to visibility and contrast standards; and
  - limiting the use of emojis in social media posts.
- Use of closed captions and subtitles on all video content.
- Accessible intranet launching soon.
- Finalizing Accessibility Guidelines for Communications Branch
- Agency-wide messaging and promoting accessibility within our organization, including International Day of Persons with Disabilities and National AccessAbility Week, as well as training events to raise awareness and create an inclusive culture and work environment.

## Priority Area: Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

As indicated in the [PacifiCan Accessibility Plan](#), PacifiCan committed to:

- continue to consider accessibility when establishing all contracts;
- leverage our purchasing power with a focus on social procurement and realize socio-economic objectives by including socio-economic measures within procurement processes.

Progress made includes:

- Continued use of standing offers, which has accessibility built into the process.
- Use of larger text in contract documents.
- Remained up-to-date with PSPC and Treasury Board (TBS) standards and policies.
- Agency presence on interdepartmental committees regarding procurement, which includes discussions around accessibility.

## Priority Area: Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

As indicated in the [PacifiCan Accessibility Plan](#), PacifiCan committed to:

- continue the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP);
- review and analyze inclusivity data provided on applications, which provides information on the diversity of the population applying for and receiving departmental funds, and contributes to PacifiCan's Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) processes;
- continue to inform applicants of the collection and use of inclusivity data from applications.

Progress made includes:

- During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the EDP program has produced the following results:
  - 351 businesses created, maintained, or expanded
    - 284 in rural British Columbia;
    - 54 in Greater Vancouver;
    - 13 in Greater Victoria.
  - 654 clients served (558 in rural B.C.; 61 in Greater Vancouver; 35 in Greater Victoria);



- 1,466 business advisory services provided to clients (1,285 in rural B.C.; 124 in Greater Vancouver; 57 in Greater Victoria).
- Continued supporting the Government of Canada's commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion, recognizing that participation of underrepresented groups (including persons with disabilities) is key to building a strong and inclusive regional and national economy. In 2023, PacifiCan continued to leverage its funding application forms, which include a voluntary self-declaration section for underrepresented groups (including persons with disabilities), to better understand the reach of the agency's programs.
- Program guides continued to provide information to applicants on the collection and use of inclusivity data.

## Priority Area: Transportation

Although indicated as not applicable in the [PacifiCan Accessibility Plan](#), should the situation arise where this is required, PacifiCan will explore best practices, legislation, and policies; and will focus on identifying, removing and preventing barriers accordingly.

## Looking forward

The *Act* seeks to benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities, to create a Canada without barriers, on or before January 1, 2040. As a Regional Development Agency, PacifiCan has a key role to play in helping to achieve this goal.

PacifiCan is committed to creating a diverse, safe, respectful, healthy, and inclusive workplace. This means a commitment to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to full participation for persons with disabilities. The agency will continue to evolve and adapt this action plan, in consultation with key stakeholders, to meet the needs of employees and clients with disabilities.