COURTS ADMINISTRATION SERVICE

ACCESSIBILITY

PLAN

2022-2025

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Message from the Chief Administrator

It is my pleasure to present the first Accessibility Plan for the Courts Administration Service (CAS). In July 2019, the *Accessible Canada Act* came into force, aiming to make Canada barrier-free by January 2040. Earlier this year, the Government of Canada took additional steps towards that goal by appointing the first Chief Accessibility Officer, and the first Accessibility Commissioner to the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

We are taking steps of our own at CAS by developing this 3-year plan that outlines the specific actions we will take to identify and remove barriers to accessibility, while ensuring we do not create new ones.

Through these actions, we will support improved access to justice by addressing the priority areas identified in the Act, including employment, the built environment, information and communication technologies, communication, procurement of goods, services and facilities, design and delivery of programs and services, and transportation.

We have also chosen to include culture as a priority area given the importance of fostering a workplace in which each individual understands the importance of accessibility and plays an active role in creating and maintaining a barrier-free environment.

As an organization, we are committed to an environment in which everyone respects, upholds and celebrates diversity and inclusion. This means ensuring equitable access for every person entering one of our facilities across the country. Through the implementation of this plan, we will work towards that end and do our part to make Canada barrier-free by January 2040.

Darlene Carreau
Chief Administrator

General

Contact Us

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TTY access is available via Bell TTY Relay service by dialling 711 and providing our number to a Bell Relay operator, who acts as an intermediary to facilitate the call. For detailed instructions, you can visit Bell TTY Relay Services | Accessibility Services | Bell Canada.

Email Address

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Requesting Alternate Formats

To request an alternate format of this accessibility plan or our feedback process, please contact us using one of the methods detailed above.

Feedback

To provide your feedback on this plan, on its implementation, and on accessibility barriers encountered at CAS, please contact the Manager, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism using any of the contact information listed above. You can also provide your feedback anonymously by completing the Accessibility Feedback Form.

For more details on our feedback process and to read our privacy notices, please visit the Accessibility Feedback Process page and the Accessibility Feedback Form page.

Executive Summary

The Courts Administration Service (CAS) provides administrative services to the 4 federal courts: the Federal Court of Appeal, the Federal Court, the Court Martial Appeal Court of Canada and the Tax Court of Canada in support of the delivery of justice to all Canadians. CAS provides timely and efficient judicial, registry, court security and electronic court services to the Courts while safeguarding the independence of the Courts.

In keeping with the principle of judicial independence CAS's Accessibility Plan applies to the functions of the organization as part of the public service.

At CAS, we uphold ourselves to the highest standards of ethics and values and strive to be reflective of Canada's diverse population. We are committed to ensuring that our workforce as well as the people we serve have access to barrier-free programs,

services and physical environment. To deliver on our commitment, we have developed this first three-year accessibility plan with respect to the requirements of [The Accessible Canada Act (ACA)](), and the [Accessible Canada Regulations (regulations)]() which goal is to have a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

Under the lead of the Executive Director, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer, a Courts Administration Service working group has been created. It includes representatives from different divisions who were tasked to consult on and evaluate areas related to their expertise, determine needed actions, advise on and develop this CAS Accessibility Plan.

Members of the working group consulted with colleagues from their respective teams. They collected various perspectives, undertook evaluations, performed research and came up with the best action plan for their priority area (s).

We have also held consultations with persons with disabilities. Based on our strong belief in the: "Nothing without us" principle of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, which stipulates that persons with disabilities must be involved in decision-making on policies, programs, practices, service delivery and in the design and implementation of the strategy, we have integrated feedback and recommendations from our consultations in the actions to be taken in relevant priority areas of this accessibility plan.

This plan addresses all priority areas identified in the ACA, with the addition of 'Culture' as an additional priority, based on the findings from our consultations. The priority areas presented in this plan are:

- culture
- employment
- the built environment
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities
- the design and delivery of programs and services
- transportation

Of note, timelines in this plan are in accordance with the public service fiscal year (FY) which runs from April 1 of a year to March 31 of the following year.

Priority Areas

Culture

Our consultations highlighted that an enhanced culture of inclusivity and awareness is essential to advance accessibility. The Public Service Employees Survey results also demonstrated this. Consequently, we have added culture as a stand alone priority area while also forming the basis for all other priorities of our plan.

Barriers

Through review of our practices, programs, policies, services and consultations, we identified the following barriers under the area of Culture:

- Available resources on accessibility are not promoted enough.
- There are delays in getting needed accommodations because of a lack of understanding of disabilities and of accommodation needs.

We will take steps to removing barriers and preventing new ones from being created, through working towards our objective and the relative actions to be taken, as listed below.

Objective

Promote a culture of inclusivity at CAS where accessibility is understood, promoted and embedded in all areas.

Actions to be taken and respective timelines

- Send awareness messages to all CAS (Ongoing)
- Continue to promote accessibility and related events and learning activities (Ongoing)
- Provide disability awareness training to CAS managers and employees (FY 2022-23 and ongoing)
- Provide diversity and inclusion awareness training and/or tools to all employees and managers, focusing on unconscious bias, micro-aggressions, inclusive hiring practices (for managers), etc. (Ongoing)
- Create an accessibility hub with different accessibility resources and learning activities on CAS intranet (FY 2022-23)
- Provide appropriate tools and strategies to managers to discuss topics related to disability with their employees and needed accommodations (FY 2023-24)
- Keep the Accessibility Plan Working Group active and its members engaged in monitoring the implementation of this plan and receiving feedback

Office of primary interest

Human Resources Division
CAS Senior Management

Employment

CAS is currently working on an Employment Systems Review and an Employment Equity Plan that will contribute to removing identified barriers and preventing future barriers. We currently promote existing programs and pools designed to attract and hire qualified persons with disabilities. Moving forward we will build more awareness and promotion of opportunities to attract persons with disabilities as well as revise assessment tools to ensure they are accessible. Managers are always reminded of the requirement and importance of providing needed accommodations for employees with

disabilities to support their development and retention and foster their sense of belonging to the organization.

Barriers

Through review of our practices, programs, policies, services and consultations, we identified the following barriers under the area of Employment:

- Fear of self-identifying due to stigma related to disability
- The current staffing processes are complicated and still have barriers
- Representation gaps within CAS workforce still exist for persons with disabilities

We will take steps to removing barriers and preventing new ones from being created, through working towards our objective and the relative actions to be taken, as listed below.

Objective

Promote and implement accessible human resources practices in order to enhance the recruitment, retention and development of persons with disabilities.

Actions to be taken and respective timeline

- Launch a self-identification campaign aiming at creating trust and increasing accuracy of representation to better influence action plans and strategies (FY 2022-2023)
- Leverage the upcoming Workforce analysis and the Employment System Review reports to better inform decisions and required initiatives regarding recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities (FY 2022-2023)
- Establish hiring targets and processes for persons with disabilities to remove existing representation gaps (FY 2023-24 and ongoing)
- Review hiring processes including assessments from an accessibility lens to remove barriers (FY 2022-2023)
- Promote the use of existing programs designed to attract and hire qualified persons with disabilities such as the Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities and The Federal Student Work Experience Program (Ongoing)
- Establish partnerships with specific organizations and academic institutions for targeted staffing processes (FY 2023-24 and ongoing)
- Adopt and promote the use of the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport to encourage mobility inside the organization and within the federal government (2022-23 and ongoing)
- Encourage participation of persons with disabilities in government-wide developmental programs through targeted promotion (FY 2023-24 and Ongoing)
- Implement exit interviews with persons with disabilities in order to determine if their decision to leave the organization is related to any barriers to accessibility (2023-24 and ongoing)

Office of primary interest

Human Resources Division

The Built Environment

Beginning last fiscal year, the facilities team began an inspection of all facilities that among other things is intended to identify barriers and correct non-compliance items to accessibility standards. It must be noted that while CAS is able to identify items of non-compliance, in most instances, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) is ultimately responsible for implementing corrective actions. As non-compliance items are identified, CAS commits to partner and collaborate with PSPC to ensure corrective works can be planned and implemented.

Barriers

Through review of our practices, programs, policies, services and consultations, we identified the following following barriers under the area of the Built Environment:

- Accessibility elements are not available in all of our premises
- Some items are non-compliant to accessibility standards

We will take steps to removing barriers and preventing new ones from being created, through working towards our objective and the relative actions to be taken, as listed below.

Objective

Ensure that CAS premises across Canada are accessible and barrier-free for employees and clients.

Actions to be taken and respective timelines

- Review the built environment in consultation with persons with disabilities to identify how it could be more accessible and inclusive (Ongoing)
- Share information gathered through reviews with building custodian (Ongoing)
- Collaborate with building custodians to develop plan, address recommendations from consultations and remove barriers in the built environment (Ongoing)
- Review evacuation plans with accessibility perspective (Ongoing)

Office of primary interest

Facilities Management Division
Collaboration is required with CAS Security Division and PSPC

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The Information Technology Services Division currently provides digital solutions and equipment required for accommodations to ensure that employees have accessible resources, including specialized hardware and software.

Barriers

Through review of our practices, programs, policies, services and consultations, we identified the following barriers under the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT):

- Organization's website is not easy to navigate
- Lack of awareness on the existence and use of tools to check accessibility in documents
- Lack of awareness about adaptive technologies

We will take steps to removing barriers and preventing new ones from being created, through working towards our objective and the relative actions to be taken, as listed below.

Objective

Ensure digital solutions provided to CAS employees and the public are accessible.

Actions to be taken and respective timelines

- Continue improving the web accessibility of CAS internal website (ongoing)
- Continue improving the web accessibility of CAS public facing website (ongoing)
- Continue providing IT equipment according to accommodations needs while reviewing and streamlining existing processes (Ongoing)
- Promote the use of existing accessibility check feature in MS Office suite and provide instructions on how to use this feature (FY 2022-23 and ongoing)
- Inform staff periodically that adaptive computer technologies are available and invite concerned users to communicate with their managers if any accommodation is needed (FY 2023-24 and ongoing)
- Continue to strengthen organizational accessible design and quality management of procedures to ensure new solutions are accessible when they are launched and made available to users (ongoing)

Office of primary interest

Information Technology Services Division

Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies

The CAS Communications team applies an accessibility lens to all of its products and services; this has been, and continues to be, a priority.

Work is underway to migrate the public-facing CAS website to an accessible platform. Next steps will include migrating the internal-facing intranet site to an accessible platform.

Members of the Communications team are regularly given training opportunities to strengthen their knowledge of accessibility principles and key guidance documents/tools (e.g., Canada Content Style Guide).

While the Communications team plays a key role in terms of ensuring that communications products are accessible, all business units within CAS are responsible for creating accessible communications products (e.g., reports, PowerPoint presentations, PDFs).

Barriers

Through review of our practices, programs, policies, services and consultations, we identified the following barriers under the area of Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies:

- Content shared does not always follow accessibility standards
- Content shared does not always use plain language, making it difficult to understand

We will take steps to removing barriers and preventing new ones from being created, through working towards our objective and the relative actions to be taken, as listed below.

Objective

Ensure that all CAS internal and external communications products are accessible by default.

Actions to be taken and respective timelines

- Improve the accessibility of information communicated by the Communications team to staff (FY 2022-23 and ongoing)
- Provide guidance, tips and templates to staff on how to create accessible content, including the use of plain language (FY 2022-23 and ongoing)
- Raise awareness among staff of accessibility training opportunities (FY 2022-23 and ongoing)
- Provide support to other business units within CAS to help ensure information about accessibility is communicated broadly within the organization (FY 2022-23 and ongoing)

Office of primary interest

Communications Team
All business units
All CAS employees

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

CAS Procurement Division already applies the policy and guidelines on accessible procurement[1] and defining requirements in procurement processes. They will continue

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[1] As per the Secretariat of the Treasury Board of Canada's Directive on the Management of Procurement, departments must include accessibility considerations when specifying requirements for goods, services and construction, and ensure that deliverables incorporate accessibility features

collaborating with other divisions to create awareness on these requirements and application of the policy.

Barrier

Through review of our practices, programs, policies, services and consultations, we identified the following barrier under the area of Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

- Lack of knowledge in relation to accessible procurement when it comes to business owners

We will take steps to removing barriers and preventing new ones from being created, through working towards our objective and the relative actions to be taken, as listed below.

Objective

Ensure accessible procurement is applied when purchasing goods, services and facilities.

Actions to be taken and respective timelines

- Continue to integrate accessibility criteria into procurement actions (Ongoing)
- Develop and use a justification document when accessibility criteria doesn't apply to ensure sound monitoring of procurement practices (FY 2023-2024 and ongoing)
- Provide guidance and advice to all CAS employees on selection criteria in relation to accessible procurement (Ongoing)
- Provide training to Procurement Staff (FY 2023-24 and ongoing)

Office of primary interest

Procurement Division
All CAS employees with financial delegation to purchase goods or services

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

CAS will ensure continuous consultations with persons with disabilities. We will build on received feedback and survey results in order to inform sound and accessible program and services design and delivery.

Through review of our practices, programs, policies, services and consultations, we identified the following barriers under the area of the Design and Delivery of Programs and Services:

Barriers

- Lack of consultations with people with disabilities in the design of programs and services
- Lack of awareness of accessibility requirements

We will take steps to removing barriers and preventing new ones from being created, through working towards our objective and the relative actions to be taken, as listed below.

Objective

Design and deliver programs and services that are accessible.

Actions to be taken and respective timelines

- Leverage received feedback, Public Service Employee Survey Results and other internal surveys results to make recommendations on programs and services accordingly (FY 2023-24 and ongoing)
- Maintain consultations with persons with disabilities in order to identify and remove barriers to accessibility (FY 2023-24 and ongoing)
- Partner with relevant Offices of primary interest to raise awareness, improve accessibility and promote available training and tools (FY 2022-23 and ongoing)

Office of primary interest

CAS Senior Management
Collaboration with different divisions, managers and employees responsible of designing and delivering programs and services

Transportation

We have reviewed our policies, practices, programs and services, and have determined that there are not any barriers in the area of transportation, at this time. In addition, CAS does not provide transportation nor parking to employees or to the public and as such this section is not applicable.

However, it should be noted that when court locations are selected, proximity to downtown, access to public parking, and access to public transportation are important criteria that must be met. Locations that do not adequately meet all three of these criteria are removed from consideration.

In the coming years, CAS will be opening new locations in Victoria and Saskatoon. At each of these locations, and in the event of relocation of any offices, CAS, in collaboration with PSPC, will ensure that consideration is given to the criteria mentioned above.

Consultations

Holding consultations was crucial for the development of the CAS Accessibility Plan as per the principle of "Nothing without us: An accessibility strategy for the Public Service of Canada."

How we consulted

- Consultations and focus groups were held with functional communities, such as Human Resources professionals, and included participants with disabilities.
- The Public Service Employee Survey results, particularly results for answers provided by persons with disabilities, were also taken into consideration for identifying barriers and for drafting this plan.
- A callout letter was sent to CAS employees, inviting colleagues with disabilities to voluntarily participate to accessibility consultations. Individual consultations took place during which employees with disabilities shared their opinions and/or experience on what can be done in order to:
  - improve recruitment, retention, and promotion of persons with disabilities;
  - enhance the accessibility of the physical environment (i.e. buildings, office space, etc.);
  - make information, communication and technology accessible and usable by all;
  - design and deliver accessible programs and services;
  - increase awareness, promote a culture of inclusion and collaboration towards a barrier-free workplace, etc.
- A survey was also sent out for the same purpose mentioned above. Among the respondents, some specified the types of their disabilities. These included:
  - Coordination or Dexterity 8.00%
  - Mobility 16.00%
  - Blind or visual impairment 8.00%
  - Deaf or hard of hearing 12.00%
  - Other disability including learning disabilities, developmental disabilities and all other types of disabilities 56.00%

Collected feedback was used to inform and guide the development of this plan by identifying or confirming issues and barriers to be addressed and actions to be taken. It also complemented and validated the subject matter experts initial input, evaluations, research as well as information collected from other departments.

- Consultations were also held with external entities including employment counsellors working in programs addressed to persons with disabilities.

What we heard

The consultations helped highlight barriers to accessibility but also shed the light on positive improvement to accessibility and on the fact that most employees have established trust with their supervisors. However, in this section, we summarize what we heard about barriers and needed actions in relation to the areas of priorities of this plan. What we heard largely contributed to the development of this plan and the specific actions to be taken.

In summary, the consultations revealed that:

- it is crucial to put more emphasis on a culture of inclusion through further promoting awareness and fighting attitudinal barriers and stigma

- there is a lack of understanding of invisible disabilities and particularly when related to mental health; highlighting the need to improve culture and educate others
- fear of self-identifying or disclosing disability due to stigma and the risk of being discriminated against, not selected for a position or given the opportunity to be promoted, still exists
- it is important to make hiring less complex within the public service as the current staffing processes are not accessible and complicated and disadvantage persons with disabilities
- whereas some people mentioned they have needed accommodations, others highlighted delays and difficulties getting needed accommodations
- shared messages, posted information and website are long and complex at times and that clearer, more concise and better organized communication needs to be adopted
- virtual meetings can be challenging for persons with hearing impairment when the cameras are off as speech reading cannot occur
- from a built environment perspective, it was highlighted that certain doors are heavy to open, some spaces are not lit enough or narrow spaces and that an open space environment makes it hard to concentrate at times

Governance

The Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism team in collaboration with the Accessibility Working Group will provide feedback and seek input and direction on this Accessibility Plan, at least twice yearly from:

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is CAS's most senior decision-making body, chaired by the Chief Administrator. The Executive Committee serves as a forum for establishing the strategic direction on a wide range of issues, identifying corporate needs and considering the potential outcome of decisions on the priorities and resources of the organization. The Executive Committee will ensure sound monitoring of the implementation, progress, review, adjustments and reporting on this plan.

Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Committee

The Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Committee is to provide feedback on various aspects of the implementation of this plan and recommendations when needed.

Monitoring and Reporting

We will ensure a transparent and accountable process by continuously following-up on the progress made in the implementation of the actions to be taken under each priority area of this plan.

- The working group includes representatives of each Office of primary interest. These representatives will monitor and report on the progress of their relative actions to the rest of the group and to the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-racism Team.
- The Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-racism Team will share with the working group the feedback collected from persons with disabilities among employees and the public. Feedback will be used to determine the needs to adjust actions to be taken and will be included in the annual progress reports as required by legislation.
- The Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Team will report on progress and feedback to the Executive Committee and to the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-racism Committee.
- The Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Team, in collaboration with the working group will prepare an annual progress report to be published as required by legislation.

Glossary

We have adopted the definitions from the [glossary included in the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#) from the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

Accessibility

The degree to which a product, service, program or environment is available to be accessed or used by all.

Accommodation (adjustment)

Any change in the working environment that allows a person with functional limitations in their abilities to do their job. Changes can include:

- adjustments to the physical workspace
- adaptations to the equipment or tools
- flexible work hours or job-sharing
- relocation of the workspace within the greater workplace
- the ability to work from home
- reallocation or exchange of some non-essential tasks for others
- time off for medical appointments

Accommodations (adjustments) can be temporary, periodic or long-term, depending on the employee's situation or changes in the workplace.

Barrier

Anything 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. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal. (Source: *Bill C-81: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada*)

Clients

Individuals, businesses or their representatives served by or using services provided by a government department.

Department

Any of:

- the departments named in Schedule I of the *Financial Administration Act*
- the divisions or branches of the federal public administration set out in column I of Schedule I.1 of the *Financial Administration Act*
- a commission under the *Inquiries Act* that is designated by order of the Governor in Council as a department for the purposes of this Act
- the staffs of:
  - the Senate
  - the House of Commons
  - the Library of Parliament
  - the Office of the Senate Ethics Officer
  - the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner
  - the Parliamentary Protective Service
  - the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer
  - any departmental corporation named in Schedule II of the *Financial Administration Act*

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: *Bill C-81: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada*)

Diversity

The inclusion of different types of people. A diverse workforce in the public service is made up of individuals who have an array of identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, perspectives and experiences that are representative of Canada's current and evolving population. (Source: *Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion*)

Hiring

Staffing actions that added to the employee population in the past fiscal year that involve:

- indeterminate and seasonal employees
- those with terms of three months or more
- students
- casual employees whose employment status has changed to indeterminate, terms of three months or more, or seasonal

Hirings measure the flow of employees into the public service and may include more than one staffing action per person per year. (Source: *Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada for Fiscal Year 2017 to 2018*)

Inclusion

The act of including someone or something as part of a group. An inclusive workplace is fair, equitable, supportive, welcoming and respectful.

Inclusion recognizes, values and leverages differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce Canada's evolving human rights framework. (Source: _Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion_)

Persons with disabilities

Persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who a) consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or b) believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment.

Persons with disabilities include persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace. (Source: _Employment Equity Act_)

Training

The following available courses will be promoted and some will be made mandatory. Of note, the descriptions of the below courses can be found in the Learning Catalog of the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS).

- Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility (csps-efpc.gc.ca)
- Disability Management and Workplace Wellness (csps-efpc.gc.ca)
- Overcoming Unconscious Bias in the Workplace (csps-efpc.gc.ca)
- Leading Diversity (csps-efpc.gc.ca)
- Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce (csps-efpc.gc.ca)

In addition to the courses offered by the CSPS, a list GC Accessibility Training and Events hosted by Shared Services Canada will be promoted and employees will be encouraged to participate to the trainings.