

COURTS ADMINISTRATION SERVICE

**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**PROGRESS REPORT**

**2024**

## Courts Administration Service Accessibility Plan Progress Report 2024

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Rapport d'étape sur le plan d'accessibilité 2024.

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# Message from the Chief Administrator and Chief Executive Officer

At the Courts Administration Service (CAS), we have been working very hard to improve accessibility in our workplace as we continue to put our [Accessibility Plan 2022–2025](#) into action.

I am proud to present our Accessibility Plan Progress Report 2024, which highlights our efforts to removing barriers to accessibility and ensuring we do not create new ones. The report summarizes the progress we have made in the last year towards the objectives identified in our Accessibility Plan and under the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA) and its Regulations.

As we begin developing our next 3-year Accessibility Plan, we will use what we have learned from implementing our first plan to make sure we continue to improve accessibility and do our part to make Canada barrier-free by 2040.

Darlene Carreau  
Chief Administrator and Chief Executive Officer

## General

### Contact Us

**Name of Organization**

Courts Administration Service (CAS)

**Contact Person and Mailing Address**

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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**

[accessibility-accessibilite@cas-satj.gc.ca](mailto:accessibility-accessibilite@cas-satj.gc.ca)

## Requesting Alternate Formats

To request an alternate format of this progress report, our [accessibility plan](#) or our [feedback process](#), please contact us using one of the methods detailed above.

## To provide your feedback:

You can 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](#).

## Introduction

For the second year of our first 3-year [Accessibility Plan](#), the Courts Administration Service (CAS) has prepared this Accessibility Plan Progress Report 2024. This report fulfills the requirements of the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA) and the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#) (Regulations) and showcases our commitment to removing barriers to accessibility and ensuring we do not create new ones. It also tells the story of the work we have accomplished over the last year to advance in all the priority areas identified in our 3-year Accessibility Plan. These priority areas are culture, employment, the built environment, information and communication technologies, communication other than information and communication technologies, the procurement of goods, services and facilities, the design and delivery of programs and services, and transportation. The report also takes into account feedback gathered during consultations with persons with disabilities.

We are proud to say that we have made real progress towards achieving our goals. However, a great deal remains to be done as we continue to work to make our organization barrier-free for all.

## Priority Areas Progress Update

### Culture

We have taken steps to remove barriers to accessibility and prevent new ones from being created by working towards our objective in this priority area and taking the related actions listed in our Accessibility Plan.

### Objective

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

### **Progress**

CAS is working actively to nurture a culture of inclusivity by continuing to implement the identified actions and by fostering the understanding, promotion and integration of accessibility in all areas.

To raise greater awareness and support inclusivity, we have continued to provide all employees with access to diversity and inclusion awareness training. We have also regularly updated and promoted the Accessibility Hub on our intranet, which contains educational material and resources on accessibility and inclusion.

The different divisions continue to work together to send messages to all employees and to promote events and learning activities focused on accessibility, diversity, inclusion and equity. Examples are listed under the priority area [Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies](#).

We have also provided managers and other relevant parties with advice and support for having discussions and managing requests relating to disability and accommodations. Work on updating and developing resources and tools on the duty to accommodate and ergonomic assessment is ongoing.

## **Employment**

We have taken steps to remove barriers to accessibility and prevent new ones from being created by working towards our objective in this priority area and taking the related actions listed in our Accessibility Plan.

### **Objective**

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

### **Progress**

We have taken concrete actions to advance our objective in compliance with our Accessibility Plan and our commitment to employment as a priority area.

With this in mind, we continue to apply the recommendations made after the employment systems review (ESR) we conducted in 2023. The ESR allowed us to identify opportunities to improve the recruitment, retention, and promotion of members of designated employment equity groups<sup>1</sup>, including persons with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> [Section 2 of the \*Employment Equity Act\*](#); the four (4) designated groups include persons with disabilities.

The *Public Service Employment Act* holds managers accountable for their staffing decisions. A new course has been added to the training that hiring managers have to take before they can exercise their staffing authority. The course aims to identify prejudices and barriers, and provides insight on how to eliminate or mitigate them. Hiring managers also have access to the CAS Staffing Services webpage, which is regularly promoted and updated with links to tools, guides and training on identifying and mitigating biases. Staffing advisors also provide support, working with the employment equity team to keep hiring managers informed of existing gaps and targets and to provide advice on the best ways to increase hiring of persons with disabilities.

We continue to support managers by promoting the importance of hiring qualified candidates from programs such as the Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities and the Federal Student Work Experience Program. We also encourage them to look for candidates among participants in a career fair for persons with disabilities who provided their resumes to CAS representatives during the event. We also ensure that candidates in staffing processes have access to accommodations when necessary for the assessment, and that hiring managers have the required knowledge to efficiently manage accommodation requests.

In preparation for the launch of the modernized self-identification application and process by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, we have posted a reminder on our intranet encouraging all employees to update their self-identification information in the current system. This is an effort to promote trust and enhance the accuracy of representation. This information will provide us with a better guide for our action plans and strategies.

In January 2024, we adopted a new exit interview questionnaire to gather information on whether employees in general, and employees with disabilities in particular, leave CAS because of any accessibility barriers.

## The Built Environment

We have taken steps to remove barriers to accessibility and prevent new ones from being created by working towards our objective in this priority area and taking the related actions listed in our Accessibility Plan.

### **Objective**

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

### **Progress**

In January 2024, CAS welcomed an accessibility expert dedicated to the National Courts Facilities Modernization Program. The expert's main focus has been on reviewing all architectural and operational plans to ensure that they comply with the latest accessibility codes and standards, including CSA B651:23. Since January 2024,

we have made important strides in the National Courts Facilities Modernization Program, which will significantly improve accessibility in the built environment in several courthouses across Canada (Montreal, Toronto, Victoria, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, National Capital Region and Halifax).

This effort includes conducting comprehensive evaluations of existing facilities, identifying non-compliant elements and collaborating with building management representatives to implement both immediate and long-term solutions. Important progress has been made in incorporating measures that not only meet but exceed minimum code requirements, ensuring compliance while fostering an inclusive environment.

In addition, from an accessibility perspective, evacuation plans continue to be updated to include personalized evacuation plans for employees who require assistance during an evacuation.

## Information and Communication Technologies

We have taken steps to remove barriers to accessibility and prevent new ones from being created by working towards our objective in this priority area and taking the related actions listed in our Accessibility Plan.

### **Objective**

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

### **Progress**

Our Digital Services Branch and our Communications team have been working together to ensure that publications are accessible. Our work to enhance the usability of CAS's public website is ongoing.

As we continue to provide IT equipment in response to requests for accommodations, we have also put a new ticketing system in place. The new Service Portal system was purchased and configured with CAS employees in mind, to improve service delivery and enhance employee access to resources through streamlined navigation, meeting evolving needs and adapting to changes.

We have given employees training materials on how to use the MS Office Suite's built-in Accessibility Checker to create inclusive documents. Employees were also given practical tips on how to create accessible content for publication on intranet websites. We will continue to look for opportunities to advise and inform users about new tools.

To move towards designing more user-friendly services, we have hired several additional quality assurance team members who will focus on accessibility testing. This will guarantee that accessibility is taken into account in future products.



## Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies

We have taken steps to remove barriers to accessibility and prevent new ones from being created by working towards our objective in this priority area and taking the related actions listed in our Accessibility Plan.

### Objective

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

### Progress

CAS has continued to make progress towards making communications products accessible by default.

Communications team members attended meetings of the Government of Canada's Community of Practice on Accessible Communications and Plain Language Community of Practice. They also received targeted training to learn how to create accessible content and get the tools they need to continue working with internal partners and clients to raise awareness among all employees of the importance of accessible content and the need to create it.

The team has continued the efforts described in the 2023 Progress Report to help other business units improve the accessibility of their communications. It has also put an emphasis on using plain language and has been coaching internal content creators on how to use it. The *Canada.ca Content Style Guide* is still one of the main plain language tools being used. This guide is a set of rules for creating web content that can be easily found, understood and used; the rules are based on writing principles and techniques that help make web content clear and adapted to the needs of all people.

Different initiatives, learning activities and events have been promoted throughout the organization. They include:

- International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- National AccessAbility Week
- Public Service Neurodiversity Week

By issuing communications on these events and others, CAS has ensured that information about accessibility is communicated broadly and regularly.

In addition, work is ongoing to migrate the CAS external website to an accessible platform. Phase 1 of the migration plan includes an initial review of the content and content architecture to improve how users find the content and read it. It also involves migrating content to the new platform, which uses templates proposed by the Government of Canada that comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

international standard. Phase 1 of the project is expected to be delivered by the end of fiscal year 2024-25.

## The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

We have taken steps to remove barriers to accessibility and prevent new ones from being created by working towards our objective in this priority area and taking the related actions listed in our Accessibility Plan.

### **Objective**

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

### **Progress**

To use their expertise and support accessibility in procurement, our procurement specialists continue to learn about accessible procurement in a variety of ways (reading guides, participating in learning activities and communities of practice, etc.).

To educate employees on accessibility criteria in procurement and further raise awareness, resources and tools on this topic are expected to be published on the CAS intranet by the end of fiscal year 2024-25.

We have also provided consistent guidance to internal clients on making accessibility an aspect of all procurement actions and processes, and we will continue to provide this guidance as needed. In addition, accessibility requirements are added to procurement processes.

## The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

We have taken steps to remove barriers to accessibility and prevent new ones from being created by working towards our objective in this priority area and taking the related actions listed in our Accessibility Plan.

### **Objective**

Design and deliver programs and services that are accessible.

### **Progress**

We have continued to follow the recommendations that were made after we performed our ESR, which included consultation with persons with disabilities. We have also maintained consultations with the Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Committee in

order to ensure that accessibility is at the core of the delivery and design of programs and services.

With the same goal in mind, we have continued to consider the results of the Public Service Employee Survey, paying special attention to the results for people with disabilities and answers relating to diversity and inclusion, discrimination and the duty to accommodate. These results are used to evaluate our performance and our progress towards the goals of our Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Different offices of primary interest continue to work with the accessibility team leads on accessibility consultations and recommendations for various initiatives, guidelines, programs and services. By working together, we will continue to address any existing barriers and prevent the creation of new ones.

We will continue working with different subject-matter experts and offices of primary interest and consulting with persons with disabilities on how to create and provide our services and programs.

## Transportation

As stated in our Accessibility Plan 2022–25, CAS does not provide transportation or parking to employees or to the public. Therefore, this section is not applicable.

## Consultations

As we prepared this progress report, we sent a message to all employees, inviting colleagues with disabilities to take part in accessibility consultations through a digital survey or, if they preferred, a one-on-one meeting to share their comments with one of the project leads. We also invited the members of the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Committee to play a key role in the consultation process and ensure a diverse and inclusive perspective by sharing their enriching experiences, observations and accessibility challenges.

The purpose of these consultations was to assess our progress in implementing the Accessibility Plan in each priority area, identify any accessibility barriers that still exist at CAS in each priority area, and get suggestions on how to improve accessibility and eliminate and prevent barriers. The feedback gathered in consultations indicated that:

- Almost half of the respondents identified as persons with disabilities.
- There are different perceptions of progress and barriers in some of the priority areas; this means that more targeted awareness and more promotion of the available tools and resources are still necessary.
- Improvement to the built environment based on employees' experiences or observations is needed.
- Further improvements to the accommodation process are required.

- Challenges relating to increased presence in the worksite also exist.

Throughout the year, employees could share their ideas about accessibility by communicating with accessibility project leads. Contact details have been posted on the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism page (including the Accessibility Hub) since November 2022 and shared with all employees through emails.

Feedback received during consultations has been shared with the concerned parties to ensure appropriate actions are taken.

Employees from functional communities and the members of CAS accessibility working group, some of whom are persons with disabilities, were consulted to report on and evaluate the progress made under the Accessibility Plan and to discuss the lessons learned and the updates or improvements needed.

Through consultations, we were able to gather valuable information that has guided the preparation of this report and that will guide us as we develop our next accessibility plan.

## Feedback

In addition to the feedback gathered through consultations and described above, anyone can use the accessibility feedback process to provide input or comments on the Accessibility Plan, or on any barriers they have encountered. As required by the ACA and its Regulations, this process is published on the external CAS website for the public, as well as on our intranet for employees, and provides information and different methods for submitting feedback. CAS has received one feedback through its feedback process about the organization as part of the public service. This feedback, which falls under the built environment priority, mentioned a malfunction of an accessibility feature in an area that is reserved for employees. The information was sent to the office of primary interest, which addressed the issue. In addition, CAS also received feedback from the public related to judicial functions. Since judicial functions fall outside CAS's purview due to judicial independence, this feedback was forwarded to the relevant parties, who promptly addressed the issues.