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Canada

TBS Accessibility Plan 2022–25 (updated)

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TBS Accessibility Plan 2022–25 - Our Future Is Accessible

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Message from the Secretary

I am delighted to present the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's (TBS) first accessibility plan. Covering eight priority areas, the plan identifies barriers to accessibility and inclusion in our workplace and commits to their removal via initiatives co-developed by TBS employees with lived experience of disability.

In June 2019, the *Accessible Canada Act* became law, ushering in the most significant progress for people with disabilities in Canada in over 30 years with the overarching goal of making Canada barrier-free by 2040. Under the act, all federal departments and federally regulated organizations will

identify, remove and prevent barriers in their workplaces, enabling the full participation and inclusion of employees with disabilities and making their organizations more effective at serving all Canadians. To get there, federal organizations, including TBS, will be guided by accessibility plans.

While we support the Treasury Board as the employer of the core public administration, we are also a department in our own right. As such, we play two roles in promoting accessibility and inclusion; firstly as an enabler of change across the public service and secondly as the agent implementing the Accessible Canada Act within TBS. Our first accessibility plan is an important milestone in our work. The innovative solutions co-developed by TBS employees with lived experience of disability are a testament to what can happen when people are empowered and engaged.

Our accessibility plan is one example of our work to make Canada's federal public service the gold standard of an accessible and inclusive workplace. In May 2019, TBS launched "Nothing Without Us: An Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada." As the largest employer and service provider in the country, we consider this strategy our roadmap for becoming a model of accessibility for other organizations in Canada and abroad.

Building more diverse, accessible and inclusive workplaces is not only the right thing to do, it is also essential to our success as a public service. By creating a culture where everyone belongs and has the tools to work to their full potential, we deliver better results for Canadians.

To make sure we are delivering on the plan before you, we will measure our progress annually, seeing what works and what doesn't, so we can make adjustments along the way. I invite you to read this plan and join us in this important journey to a more accessible and inclusive TBS.

Original signed by

Graham Flack

Secretary of the Treasury Board

Message from the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Champion for Accessibility

I am thrilled that the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) is publishing its first TBS Departmental Accessibility Plan 2022–25! It is a truly collaborative effort and is the result of hard work by many individuals throughout our organization.

TBS is committed to creating a diverse, accessible and inclusive workplace that values our differences and provides a welcoming, respectful and safe work environment where employees are able to express their true selves and do their best work.

In the spirit of the theme “Nothing Without Us,” employees with disabilities at TBS were central to developing this plan. I extend sincere thanks to members of the TBS Accessibility Network, who were consulted from the very beginning of this plan’s development.

We approached this plan as an exciting opportunity to indicate our commitment and intent to lead by example as both an accessible and inclusive employer and service provider. As Champion for Accessibility, I felt it was important to be bold with this plan and to avoid letting fear of failure stop us from trying new approaches.

New initiatives at TBS, such as the Employment Equity Recruitment Team and the Workplace Accommodation Centre,¹ which work in tandem with the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport, have the potential to effect meaningful change. You will find these initiatives described in the Employment section of this plan. I am also looking forward to recognizing

the efforts of those who excel in their efforts to work more accessibly and inclusively, by launching new accessibility awards in 2023. See the [Workplace culture](#) section of this report for more information.

I hope many of you will see your ideas and concerns reflected in this plan. I encourage you to provide feedback, both positive or negative, so we can continue to fine-tune our efforts to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility and disability inclusion at TBS.

It is the responsibility of each of us to ensure that our actions and behaviours contribute to an accessible and inclusive work environment. I challenge all of you, especially those of you without disabilities, to become allies in our efforts to create a more welcoming and respectful workplace culture.

Thank you for your continued support and ongoing commitment to push for positive change. I look forward to seeing what we will accomplish together in the coming year and beyond.

Karen Cahill

Champion for Accessibility

Assistant Secretary, Corporate Services, and Chief Financial Officer

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

General

► In this section

Obtaining your feedback

This is the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's (TBS's) first accessibility plan to address barriers to accessibility and inclusion in our work environment. Over the next three years, we will be monitoring and evaluating our progress and adjusting our approach as needed.

Your feedback on this accessibility plan is essential to our ongoing evaluation. We value the input of employees at TBS, employees who work at other Government of Canada (GC) departments and agencies, as well as all Canadians. We welcome your comments, concerns and suggestions about our approach and initiatives related to accessibility.

All accessibility feedback received will be acknowledged in the same way it was received, except when feedback is submitted anonymously.

You are invited to send your feedback through any of the following:

Mail

Director General of Human Resources
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
Office 3-03328
90 Elgin St
Ottawa ON K1A 0R5

Email

AccessibilityPlan-PlanAccessibilite@tbs-sct.gc.ca

Telephone

1-877-636-0656

Teletypewriter (TTY)

613-369-9371

Anonymous feedback

You can provide feedback anonymously by completing our short and easy-to-use [online form](#). You are welcome to:

- comment on this accessibility plan
- identify barriers you have faced at one of TBS's work locations or with one of its programs, initiatives, tools or services

- ask questions

What we do with your feedback

We will analyze feedback to identify trends and patterns, as well as any gaps we can address to improve our efforts to remove barriers and become an accessible and inclusive employer and service provider.

We will publish annual progress reports in the years between accessibility plans, allowing you to monitor our progress and enabling us, with your feedback, to continue to adjust our accessibility plan as needed to get the best results.

Request an alternate format

Use the contact information listed above to request a copy of the accessibility plan progress report or the feedback process description in an alternate format.

The alternate formats that can be requested include:

- print
- large print (larger and clearer font)
- braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers)
- audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud)
- electronic formats that are compatible with adaptive technology

Background

The *Accessible Canada Act* came into force on July 11, 2019. Its purpose is to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040, by removing existing barriers and preventing new barriers. The Act applies to all federally regulated organizations, which includes GC departments, agencies and Crown corporations.

The *Accessible Canada Act* defines a barrier as:

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. ²

The Act also defines disability as:

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. ³

The *Accessible Canada Act* requires federally regulated organizations to:

- publish accessibility plans every three years, in collaboration with employees with disabilities
- report annually on progress made in implementing their accessibility plans by publishing progress reports in the years between published accessibility plans
- establish a feedback process to receive and address comments, concerns and suggestions from employees and Canadians

The *Accessible Canada Act* is one element of a framework that TBS will follow to create an inclusive, accessible and barrier-free work environment. Other elements of the framework are new accessibility standards and regulations being developed by people with disabilities in collaboration with Accessibility Standards Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada.

Executive summary

TBS plays a leadership role in driving change across the federal public service. As a central agency, we are well positioned to develop policies and programs to:

- foster equitable and effective people management
- develop inclusive procurement practices
- empower employees through technology that is usable by everyone
- ensure clear and accessible communication

The launch of *Nothing Without Us: Accessibility Strategy for the Federal Public Service of Canada* in June 2019 marked the beginning of a concerted effort by TBS to better understand where the public service was regarding accessibility and to begin addressing any gaps. Although progress is being made, work remains to be done.

We are proud to publish our first departmental accessibility plan in accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act*. It is truly a collaborative effort and the result of hard work by teams throughout TBS. Guided by the Act and informed by extensive consultations with employees with disabilities, our plan prioritizes actions in eight areas:

1. Employment
2. Built Environment
3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
4. Communication (other than ICT)
5. Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities
6. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services
7. Transportation
8. Workplace culture

Through our consultations, we heard that TBS employees have three main concerns:

1. employees need help with career progression and mentorship opportunities, including better access to work opportunities that provide the experience needed for advancement
2. employees still face barriers in the built environment
3. employees' accommodation requests go through a complicated process that takes too long and often results in the employee feeling undervalued

or harassed

With the information collected from employees and subject-matter experts from across TBS, we were able to gain a clear picture of where our most significant gaps are and how we should go about addressing them.

Two major components of this accessibility plan that will significantly affect some of our priority areas are the Workplace Accessibility Passport and the Workplace Accommodation Centre:

1. The **Workplace Accessibility Passport** will help employees identify the tools and optimum conditions needed to do their best work. The passport is a written agreement between the employee and their supervisor. Once the employee's passport is signed by their manager, accommodation requests will be sent to the Workplace Accommodation Centre. The passport belongs to the employee, and the employee decides who can view its contents to protect their privacy.
2. The **Workplace Accommodation Centre** is a centralized unit. It uses a neutral case management model⁴ for accommodation requests that will provide services to TBS and the Department of Finance Canada. Employees were clear in communicating that the accommodation process is too complicated and takes far too long. The centre aims to reduce the time that employees wait to receive their accommodations and improve users' experience while providing positive outcomes.

More information on the Workplace Accessibility Passport and Workplace Accommodation Centre can be found in the Retention section of this document.

Employees were also clear about their need for mentorship opportunities and better support for career advancement. We aimed to address these issues by co-designing the Mentorship Plus program with equity-seeking groups, which included employees with disabilities. By pairing candidates

with senior executive sponsors, we hope to see employees with disabilities acquire the skills and competencies they need to advance to the next level in their career.

TBS also launched the Mosaic Leadership Development Program in December 2021 to help employees from under-represented groups at the EX minus 1 level, including employees with disabilities, to develop their leadership skills and competencies to enable them to reach the executive level.

More information on these two development programs is available in the Retention section of this document.

To address concerns regarding the built environment, TBS's Corporate Services Sector collaborated with the Accessibility Network and the Human Resources Division to develop an action plan that groups identified barriers into three priorities: short-term, medium-term and long-term. We believe this action plan will expedite the removal of physical barriers at TBS's workplace. More information is available in the Built environment section.

Also noteworthy in this plan is the establishment of two accessibility awards, to be launched in 2023. TBS knows that shifting our workplace culture to one that is more inclusive, equitable and accessible will take time. But it will be important for TBS to highlight best practices and recognize the hard work of those who are continually leading by example to drive positive change.

For prospective employees looking to work at TBS, we have created an Employment Equity Recruitment Team to boost our recruitment efforts of employees with disabilities and other equity-seeking groups. More information is available in the Recruitment section.

Because this is TBS's first departmental accessibility plan, we will be tracking its progress and adjusting our approach where needed. We hope that our employees with disabilities see themselves reflected in this document and that this plan will improve their work life at TBS.

Consultations

TBS employees with disabilities were key collaborators in developing this accessibility plan. They were integral to identifying barriers to accessibility and inclusion in TBS's workplace and suggested many potential solutions.

Our employees are our greatest asset, and TBS employees with disabilities are our in-house experts on accessibility. Their feedback was instrumental in our efforts to deliver a robust plan that addresses their concerns and builds a workplace at TBS that they deserve.

As already mentioned, barriers that were identified are as follows:

- lack of mentorship options for employees with disabilities, as well as opportunities to gain the work experience necessary for career advancement
- physical barriers remain in the built environment
- the accommodations process is complex, confusing and too slow, and it often results in employees feeling less valued and, in some cases, harassed

Employees with disabilities participated in TBS's consultations in several ways. These are outlined in the following.

Journey-mapping

TBS's Human Resources Division, in collaboration with the Accessibility Network and the TBS Champion for Accessibility, conducted journey-mapping exercises with employees with disabilities to identify pain points during their employment with TBS, from the time they applied for their job to the present day.

Several journey-mapping sessions were moderated by the co-chairs of the Accessibility Network. Each session consisted of a 90-minute discussion of responses to questions intended to explore employees' experiences in TBS's work environment. The sessions focused on the five key pillars of *Nothing Without Us: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada*, which are:

1. employment, including recruitment, retention and promotion
2. accessibility of the built environment
3. information and technology that is usable by all
4. programs and services that are accessible
5. workplace culture

The sessions offered employees the opportunity to explain the kinds of barriers they face in their career at TBS in a safe, non-judgmental space with colleagues who share their concerns. All information collected was treated as confidential to protect each participant's identity.

Some employees chose to provide their input in writing via an anonymous online survey.

The data received from the journey-mapping sessions was used to create four fictional personas. These personas help tell accurate stories of employees with disabilities at TBS in an impactful way that protects their anonymity.

The journey-mapping sessions were key to evaluating TBS's level of accessibility and resulted in many of the key initiatives outlined in this accessibility plan, including the early adoption and implementation of the following:

- the Workplace Accommodation Centre
- the Mentorship Plus program
- the Employment Equity Recruitment Team
- the Workplace Accessibility Passport

Consultation on the built environment

In February 2022, the Champion for Accessibility and the Accessibility Network, in collaboration with Corporate Services Sector and the Human Resources Division, invited employees with disabilities at TBS to a consultation on TBS's built environment. The goals of the session were to:

- identify physical barriers that hinder employees from fully participating in TBS's workplace
- group barriers as priorities in the short, medium and long term

The session resulted in an action plan to address barriers in the built environment at TBS over the next three years.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Committee

The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Committee (IDEA Committee) was a key partner in developing this accessibility plan by providing a forum where employees and management could openly discuss ideas, concerns and opportunities to improve accessibility at TBS. The committee's involvement was key to ensuring that our approach was sound and inclusive before we developed the accessibility plan further.

The committee also had the opportunity to review an early draft of the plan and provide comments.

Chaired by TBS's Champion for Diversity and Inclusion, the IDEA Committee's primary objective is to:

- identify and discuss issues that have an impact on designated group members and equity-seeking groups
- provide advice to management on strategies or techniques to address such issues

Meetings are attended by representatives from sectors across TBS and by the co-chairs for employee networks, including the Accessibility Network. Meetings were also open to all employees.

Accessibility Network

In addition to providing its input through journey-mapping sessions and IDEA Committee meetings, the Accessibility Network had the opportunity to comment on the first draft of this accessibility plan in person at a network meeting and in writing.

The network also reviewed the final version of the plan and helped test its online accessibility.

Learning from past consultations

As part of planning for its first departmental accessibility plan, TBS drew from the following:

- the Office of Public Service Accessibility's GC-wide consultations for the federal public service's *Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada*
- the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer's consultations for its review of the *Employment Equity Act*

TBS also drew from the following studies:

- a gap analysis of select federal buildings, including TBS's building at 90 Elgin, Ottawa, undertaken by Public Services and Procurement Canada in collaboration with the Rick Hansen Foundation
- a report by the Canadian National Institute of the Blind on way-finding technology, signage and benchmarking of workplace accommodations, conducted by the Office of Public Service Accessibility and TBS

Eight priority areas

► In this section

In the spirit of the theme "Nothing Without Us," employees with disabilities were consulted at every stage of the planning, drafting and publishing of this accessibility plan. They will continue to be consulted as we move forward with the plan's implementation. During consultation, TBS identified the following:

- priority areas where barriers need to be addressed
- initiatives to be co-developed with employees with disabilities to remove barriers

In the following sections, we outline eight priority areas and the barriers associated with each. The priority areas are not numbered in order of priority. We also describe the steps TBS will take to address barriers and indicate the teams responsible for those steps.

As a central agency, we have policies, programs and initiatives that have a GC-wide focus and those that are internal to TBS. The first priority area we will focus on is the design and delivery of programs and services, which involve initiatives to help remove barriers throughout the GC.

1. Employment

TBS is committed to building and maintaining a talented and skilled workforce that truly reflects the diversity of the people it serves. Our goal is to create an accessible and inclusive workplace where diversity is valued and recognized as a strength.

TBS continues to work toward improving the way it recruits, retains and develops employees with disabilities to ensure equal opportunity for every employee to do their best work and attain success.

TBS will work with the Public Service Commission of Canada and other stakeholders to implement and support TBS-specific and GC-wide efforts to improve the representation rate of employees with disabilities, across occupational groups and levels, to help the Government of Canada reach its goal of hiring 5,000 new employees with disabilities by 2025.

Through TBS's journey-mapping exercise, and consultations with the Accessibility Network and meetings of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Committee, three predominant barriers to accessibility and inclusion emerged as priorities to be addressed for the area of employment at TBS:

1. career progression
2. lack of mentorship opportunities

3. the need for a centralized approach to provide accommodations faster and in a more dignified fashion

To respond to these priorities, TBS has launched or will launch the following initiatives.

Recruitment

- In March 2022, TBS's Human Resources Division established an Employment Equity Recruitment Team to help increase the hiring of people with disabilities and other under-represented groups. The team was also tasked with improving the accessibility and employee experience of applying for jobs at TBS and competing for them.
- Through a collaborative review of the application process with employees with disabilities and members of equity-seeking networks, the following issues were highlighted:
 - application forms are too long, and their language is unclear
 - applicants often don't understand how GC staffing processes work
 - interview panel members are not diverse, and they are not trained to conduct an inclusive interview that is respectful of different backgrounds
 - statements of merit criteria for jobs often include experience and knowledge that can only be obtained by working for the GC, which excludes candidates from under-represented groups outside the GC

To address these issues, the Human Resources Division's Employment Equity Recruitment Team is:

- prioritizing the use of plain and inclusive language in job posters and removing government jargon
- providing a link in job posters that refers candidates to a document that explains how staffing in the GC works and defines staffing terms
- adding the following to job posters:

- a link to Canada.ca explains how to request accommodation for skills assessment when applying for a job
- an email address for requests for accommodation
- a statement that indicates that accommodation is available at every step of the hiring process, including the job application
- ensuring diversity among selection board members to prevent unconscious biases at every step of the selection process
- ensuring that board members have completed training to reduce or prevent unconscious bias
- continuing to work with subject-matter experts at ROSEPH (French only) to:
 - improve the recruitment of under-represented groups
 - gain access to untapped talent that is sometimes difficult to reach

To expedite the hiring of employees with disabilities, the team is incorporating all lessons learned and launching targeted job processes to recruit employees that identify as belonging to one or more employment equity groups, including people with disabilities. The planned targeted processes include the following groups and levels:

- EX-01 and EX-03
- EC-05 and EC-06
- AS-01 and AS-02

Staffing processes for the AS group began in July 2022, with the other groups to begin in 2023.

The team will continue its work to provide a barrier-free and positive experience for all candidates, from the moment they view the advertisement until they complete their onboarding with TBS. To ensure that the latest best practices are used and to help with

recruitment efforts, the Human Resources Division also consulted with subject-matter experts, such as ROSEPH (French only) and equity-seeking employee networks at TBS.

- The Human Resources Division's Corporate Resourcing and Innovation team launched a pilot project to support hiring from under-represented groups, including people with disabilities, by highlighting and promoting opportunities using the LinkedIn social media platform. The team expects that the high visibility of the platform will help reach a broader audience.
- The team continues to identify and promote sources of talent to encourage the hiring of people with disabilities at TBS. Ways to access talent sources include the following:
 - consulting a list of qualified people with disabilities available for hire through the Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities
 - hiring individuals with intellectual disabilities in collaboration with the non-profit organization LiveWorkPlay.
 - participating in the Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities
- TBS is also conducting a review of its employment systems, as required under the *Employment Equity Act*,⁶ to identify and remove systemic and attitudinal barriers to employment opportunities for designated group members.

Retention

TBS realizes that recruiting and hiring employees with disabilities is only the first step in creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace. Our efforts will be undone if we are not able to retain our employees.

Information in the 2019 Benchmarking Study of Workplace Accommodations by the Office of Public Service Accessibility, and more recent consultations with TBS employees with disabilities, indicates that a major barrier to accessibility and inclusion is the slow and complicated process to obtain workplace accommodations. TBS has launched two ambitious initiatives to provide employees with everything they need in a timely and dignified manner:

- **Piloting the Workplace Accessibility Passport:** At TBS, the passport's implementation is led by the department's Workplace Accommodation Centre. As previously mentioned, the passport facilitates recruitment, retention and career advancement for employees with disabilities by providing them with a single location to obtain workplace supports. The passport will travel with the employee throughout their federal public service career, reducing the need to renegotiate workplace supports when the employee's job changes.

TBS was an early adopter of the passport and continues to promote its use to managers and employees.

- **The Workplace Accommodation Centre:** This centre is a collaborative pilot program between TBS and the Department of Finance Canada, funded by the Office of Public Service Accessibility through the Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund and led by TBS's Corporate Services Sector.
- The centre is implementing a centralized and neutral case management model for accommodation requests. It will provide services to all employees who request accommodations, not only employees who have self-identified as a person with a disability. It will:
 - follow the principles of user-centred design and "lean" methodology. This methodology emphasizes continuous improvement, eliminating waste, and respect for people.

- explore the feasibility of expanding accommodation case management services beyond the initial two departments

The centre's approach could create a new user-centred model for managing accommodations requests in the federal public service. Its specific goals are to:

- streamline workplace accommodation practices
- improve employees' experiences
- facilitate the accommodation process for managers
- make expert guidance on accessibility readily available
- support a "yes by default" culture

Career advancement for employees with disabilities

Employees with disabilities, like their colleagues, are ambitious and expect that their hard work will be rewarded with career advancement opportunities. However, during our consultation process, TBS employees continued to mention career advancement as a major concern and were looking for learning and mentorship opportunities.

To address their concerns and increase the representation rate of employees with disabilities at all levels within TBS, not only more junior levels, TBS has co-developed and launched initiatives to remove barriers to success and to support career progression:

- **Mentorship Plus:** Launched in December 2020, this program was co-developed with the participation of equity-seeking groups, including employees with disabilities. It aims to enhance traditional mentorship by adding the element of sponsorship. The program pairs employees with executive mentors and sponsors to:
 - help navigate the system for upward mobility
 - provide better visibility in informal networks
 - provide access to developmental opportunities that build the skills that are necessary for executives

TBS is proud to be participating in this program, which is managed internally by the Human Resources Division. For information about the program's implementation GC-wide by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, see the [Design and delivery of programs and services](#) section of this document.

To date, 42 employees from employment equity and equity-seeking groups at the EX minus 1 and EX minus 2 level have been matched with a sponsor from the executive group. Planning is underway to increase the number of participants.

- **Mosaic Leadership Development Program:** Launched in December 2021 by the Centre on Diversity and Inclusion, this program aims to help equip equity-seeking employees at the EX minus 1 level to enter the executive group.

The Mosaic program has four main components:

1. sponsorship
2. learning opportunities
3. experience-building opportunities
4. assessment against EX-01 criteria

The program has the following aims:

- bridge the representation gap for equity-seeking employees, including employees with disabilities, in the executive group
- ensure that all employees can see people like themselves reflected in senior leadership in the federal public service
- accelerate meaningful culture change at TBS so that it is more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible

TBS will identify success measures for implementation within the department based on desired outcomes and performance measures to be adopted in 2023 by the Centre on Diversity and Inclusion.

- In 2023, the Human Resources Division will co-design opportunities for career progression with persons with disabilities. These opportunities

will supplement the Mentorship Plus program and Mosaic Leadership Development Program.

- **Leveraging staffing flexibilities:** As set out in the [TBS Departmental Employment Equity Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2019-22](#) (accessible only on the GC network) managers are encouraged to use staffing flexibilities to promote high-performing employees who belong to employment equity groups, including employees with disabilities.
- Managers can also appoint employees with disabilities if they do not initially meet the language requirements of the position but agree to do so within two years. This flexible approach helps support employees with disabilities who may struggle to learn a second language because of their disability.

2. Built Environment

TBS understands the importance of a barrier-free and comfortable work environment to the success of its employees and to their morale, overall health and quality of life. To inform the development of this accessibility plan, TBS participated in studies and conducted consultations to better understand where it was regarding accessibility in the built environment and what gaps exist. These initiatives included the following:

- a study of TBS's built environment led by Public Services and Procurement Canada in conjunction with the Rick Hansen Foundation in March 2019
- a report by the Canadian National Institute of the Blind on way-finding technology and signage
- the journey-mapping exercise with TBS employees with disabilities
- a consultation on the built environment with the TBS Accessibility Network to identify priorities from data received

In collaboration with the Human Resources Division and the Accessibility Network, TBS's Corporate Services Sector reviewed the data collected and developed an action plan that details short-, medium- and long-term priorities to be addressed in the built environment.

Some of the barriers identified as priorities in the short term are:

- the lack of clear signage that has braille to help employees navigate the building
- uneven flooring that presents a tripping hazard
- doors to boardrooms that are heavy and difficult to operate

Work is already underway at 90 Elgin to remove these barriers. Progress includes the following:

- new signage that has braille is now in place throughout the building at 90 Elgin
- work is planned to flatten uneven floors where possible; where it is not possible, signage will be posted, coupled with a pronounced change in the colour of the flooring to indicate a slope in the floor's surface
- automated push-button door openers have been installed on many boardroom doors on the second floor, and installation will continue on the remaining floors

More information about barriers in the built environment and actions planned to address them is in [Appendix B](#).

Other barriers revealed by the consultations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, including sensitivity to office lighting, the need for a quiet work environment, and proximity to washrooms.

The pilot Workplace Accommodation Centre, along with the Workplace Accessibility Passport, will play a key role in helping employees who struggle with these physical barriers in the built environment.

TBS is piloting a phased return to the physical workplace, which involves employees working in the office two days a week. Feedback from employees is being collected through an online survey. This survey will help inform our approach to a hybrid work model.

To help employees locate a workstation that fits their needs, the Corporate Services Sector is consulting with TBS employees with disabilities regarding the purchase of a worksite booking tool. The tool will help TBS provide a barrier-free experience in the built environment with accessibility features such as:

- online maps that provide barrier-free paths from various points within TBS's buildings
- the ability to find workspaces in a way that meets an employee's accessibility needs

3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

According to the Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017, one in five (or 6.2 million) Canadians aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities. That number is expected to grow considerably in the coming years, which highlights the need to prioritize making information and communications technologies (ICT) accessible and usable by all federal public servants and Canadians.

The challenge to eliminate barriers in ICT should be seen as an opportunity for the GC to increase its ability to interact with more Canadians.

Advancements in ICT mean that more Canadians with disabilities have the tools and are able to search for and access GC programs and services.

Efforts to improve ICT also help federal public servants with disabilities gain the tools they need to do their best work and grow in their career to their full potential.

New technologies can sometimes unintentionally create new barriers for people with disabilities. Common barriers brought to our attention include the following:

- some websites do not work well with assistive technologies, which people with disabilities rely on to navigate sites and read content aloud
- some websites and tools are not compatible with portable devices such as smartphones and tablets

To help ensure that these technologies are solutions and not barriers, TBS is taking the following steps:

- TBS will put into practice the steps outlined in the upcoming *TBS Guide to Accessibility in Federal Procurement*, which will:
 - align accessibility requirements for ICT for GC employees and the public
 - ensure that accessibility is considered when acquiring or developing ICT solutions and equipment
- TBS's Corporate Services Sector continues to update the current suite of Microsoft Office productivity tools to the Microsoft Office 365 cloud to ensure the integration of the most current accessibility features. The sector is also working directly with Microsoft to provide direct feedback and to push for improved accessibility within Microsoft Office 365. This update also includes the launch of SharePoint to replace GCdocs as TBS's information repository.
- TBS's Corporate Services Sector provides training on the Microsoft Office 365 suite and its new accessibility features. Training is available in person, live through MS Teams and through pre-recorded sessions. Since the training launched in 2020, 186 live training sessions have been delivered to over 1,100 participants. Thirty-six videos covering 18 topics are available for employees to access. To date, video views are approaching 3,000.

4. Communication (other than ICT)

TBS aims to lead by example in disseminating to its employees communications products that are accessible and usable by everyone.

A communications product is any information or event produced by or on behalf of the GC that informs employees or Canadians about policies, programs, services and initiatives, and dangers or risks to health, safety or the environment.

Barriers most often brought to our attention by people with disabilities regarding communications products are:

- events where sign language interpretation or live transcription of speech are not available
- documents that are difficult to understand because of their length and unclear language
- documents or presentations that contain images or graphics that have no alternative text to describe them
- documents that use colours that have low contrast
- videos that have no captioning or described video

To help ensure that communications products produced by TBS are accessible, the following initiatives are now in place:

- Teams within TBS's Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs branch are committed to leading by example by putting into practice the new *Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible*.
- TBS's social media team continually explores and implements new tools and methods to make social media posts more accessible. For example, the team learned how to use SRT (SubRip Subtitle) files to caption for videos, making them more accessible to people with a hearing disability. This practice is now mandatory for all TBS video files published since July 2021.

- TBS's User-Centred Design team focuses on improving priority web content, including its accessibility. For example, in collaboration with employees with disabilities, the team conducted usability tests on several TBS web pages, including pages on public service pension and benefits, GC design standards and open government.
- The Canadian Digital Service promotes best practices in accessible communications by hosting its content design community of practice, through its sharing of tips through social media, and by publishing best practices on its blog.

5. Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

In the spirit of the theme "Nothing Without Us," TBS aims to ensure that accessibility is considered from the beginning of any process to develop or purchase new goods, services and facilities. People with disabilities frequently noted that, too often, efforts are made to render goods and services accessible after the fact, which usually results in partial success at best.

The *Accessible Canada Act* and the *Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada* stress the importance of consulting with people with disabilities right from the beginning and at every stage of a procurement process to help ensure that the final product is usable by everyone.

In a perfect world, accessibility would be like muscle memory that is engrained in the very fibre of our organization. We would instinctively consider accessibility before entering into any agreement to purchase a good or service. However, we are not there yet. Until we are, TBS aims to make sure our policies and procedures expressly stipulate that accessibility criteria are considered in any decision to purchase a specific good or service:

- TBS will ensure that accessibility is considered from the very beginning of a process to purchase services, goods or facilities by adhering to the

upcoming *TBS Guide to Accessibility in Federal Procurement*, developed by TBS's Acquired Services and Assets Sector.

- TBS will diligently follow the new *Directive on the Management of Procurement* to support the GC's accessibility goals by mandating that businesses include accessibility considerations when specifying requirements and ensuring that deliverables incorporate accessibility features.
- Using TBS's Online Contract Initiation Form (OCIF) (accessible only on the GC network), launched in December 2019, helps ensure that clients indicate for each request whether their contract deliverables incorporate accessibility features or include accessibility criteria. If they do not, the client must provide a clear justification.

A guidance document on accessibility in procurement was created and is available to clients through the OCIF. Procurement officers are incorporating accessibility clauses, when applicable, in the statement of work of each contract. Guidance documents are also made available to all procurement staff.

6. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

As a central agency, TBS develops policies, programs and initiatives that apply to itself and throughout the GC. It is well positioned to enable the following:

- equitable and effective people management
- inclusive procurement practices
- empowering technology that is usable by everyone
- clear and accessible communication

TBS prioritizes accessibility and inclusion in each of these four areas, while addressing barriers identified by employees and subject matter experts across the public service. These barriers include accessibility challenges due to a lack of consideration for persons with disabilities when designing and delivering programs and services.

Some examples of actions that have been taken to address existing and unidentified barriers that may create challenges for persons with disabilities are identified in the following examples.

Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer

- The **Self-ID Project** modernized the form used to capture data on employment equity groups in the public service, including employees with disabilities, with the goal of increasing the number of forms completed. Increasing the quality and quantity of self-identification data supports the design, delivery and evaluation of targeted plans and programs to increase diversity and inclusion across the GC. The Self-ID Project launched in 2020 with stakeholder consultations. The modernized self-ID form was completed in 2021 and will be implemented in the near future. The new Self-ID application aims to meet the highest level of digital accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1 AAA), which is higher than the current digital accessibility standards set for the GC (WCAG 2.0 AA).
- Launched in December 2020, **Mentorship Plus** aims to address gaps in representation of equity-seeking groups, including employees with disabilities, in the GC's senior leadership. The program has begun to create a diverse talent pipeline by increasing the visibility of mentees and protégés through informal networks, access to career opportunities, and support to develop the skills necessary for executives. Mentorship Plus is in place in 49 federal departments and is benefitting the careers of employees with disabilities across the public service.
- The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer is collaborating with the Public Service Commission of Canada to enhance recruitment and retention support for students with disabilities in partnership with academic institutions.

- The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer also worked with the Canada School of Public Service to develop the course “Addressing Disability, Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility” (course number INC115).
- The **Mosaic Leadership Development Program** for employees at the EX minus 1 level was co-developed by the Centre on Diversity and Inclusion with employee networks to help equip equity-seeking employees to become executives. The program consists of four components: sponsorship, learning opportunities, experience-building opportunities and assessment against EX-01 criteria.
The program launched in December 2021 with 39 participants who graduated in November 2022. The next call-out for candidates is expected to be in winter 2023. In 2023, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer will consult stakeholders to identify desired outcomes and specific performance measures.
- In 2020, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer amended the nomination criteria for the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) to help ensure better representation of three under-represented equity-seeking groups (persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and visible minorities) within ELDP cohorts. At least 50% of nominations by all departments and agencies must belong to one or more of these three groups. The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer has also given itself discretionary power to nominate and select employees with disabilities who have not been nominated by their department.
Implementing this approach resulted in an increase from 2021 to 2022 in the representation of executives with disabilities, from 5.35% to 11.00% in the EX-01 to EX 03 stream of ELDP.
- The ***Directive on Official Languages for People Management*** was reviewed to identify and remove barriers for employees who are not able to meet the linguistic requirements of EX-02 to EX-05 bilingual positions because of language-related disabilities:

When administrative measures can be put in place, imperative staffing is not mandatory for EX-02 to EX-05 positions or their equivalent when a candidate has received an exclusion for a medical reason confirming a long-term or recurring physical, mental or learning impairment that prevents them from attaining, through language training, including with accommodation, the required second official language proficiency.⁵

The amended directive went into effect in September 2021.

- The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer will be posting a revised version of *Duty to Accommodate: A General Process for Managers* that supports a collaborative approach to accommodation and promotes the use of the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport. In addition:
 - TBS guidance and direction to federal organizations on the future of work have incorporated greater consideration of the duty to accommodate and accessibility in arrangements for telework, hybrid work and fully remote work
 - renewed web resources, including the revised *Guidance on Optimizing a Hybrid Workforce: Spotlight on Telework* (May 2022), promote a barrier-free workplace through flexible and equitable working arrangements
- The *Federal Speakers' Forum on Diversity and Inclusion* was co-developed with equity-seeking groups to give voice to public servants who wish to share their expertise, lived experience, perspectives and stories about their personal diversity and inclusion journey in the federal workplace.

Opening hearts and minds can shift the culture of the workplace and help make it more inclusive and diverse. The forum launched in April 2021 and has over 50 speakers who have made over 200 appearances.

The Office of Public Service Accessibility

- Launched in April 2019, the Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund (CEWF) is a \$10-million fund administered by the Office of Public Service Accessibility over a five-year period. The fund invests in innovative and experimental ideas, projects and initiatives to:
 - improve workplace accommodation practices
 - remove systemic barriers that create a need for individual accommodation

Examples of initiatives that receive funds through the CEWF are:

- the Workplace Accessibility Passport
 - the Lending Library pilot project (accessible only on the GC network)
 - the Workplace Accommodation Centre pilot project
- The **Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport** is a flagship initiative of the *Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada* and a key project funded by the CEWF. The passport helps address the obstacles that federal public service employees and applicants with disabilities face in obtaining the tools and supports to perform at their best and succeed in the workplace.

The passport will facilitate recruitment, retention and career advancement for employees with disabilities by providing employees with a single location to identify and update their workplace supports. Once signed by the employee's manager, the passport serves as an agreement between the manager and employee on the measures in place to help the employee thrive.

Development and testing the passport as an accessible Microsoft Word document began in 2020. Over 23 departments opted into the testing phase, which ended in March 2022. As of spring 2022, a digital version of the passport has been available on the Government of Canada

Workplace Accessibility Passport page. Organizations are being encouraged to continue to adopt and implement the passport through communication, awareness activities and educational initiatives.

- The Office of Public Service Accessibility developed guidance and tools, including the Accessibility Self-Assessment Tool (accessible only on the GC network), to:
 - help federal organizations with accessibility planning
 - help organizations self-assess their accessibility readiness
 - initiate the Accessibility Hub (accessible only on the GC network) on GCpedia

The self-serve Accessibility Hub has resources on various accessibility-related topics, such as guidance for developing accessibility plans, information on disability inclusion and more.

These tools have been operational since 2019 and will continue to be updated until 2024.

- The Office of Public Service Accessibility continues to collaborate with key partners, such as the Canada School of Public Service, to lead GC-wide engagement activities that help build accessibility confidence, competencies and ultimately advance the goals of the *Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada*. Target audiences include senior leaders, managers, employees and functional communities. GC-wide events take place throughout the year, most notably during the National AccessAbility Week in May or June and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December.

TBS's Acquired Services and Assets Sector

- TBS's Acquired Services and Assets Sector (ASAS) is developing the ***TBS Guide to Accessibility in Federal Procurement***, to be published on the Canada.ca website by March 2023, to:
 - a. promote, reinforce and align procurement practices with accessibility requirements for ICT used by employees and the public

so that accessibility is considered in acquiring and developing ICT solutions and equipment, as set out in the following:

- *Policy on Digital and Service*
- *Guideline on Making Information Technology Usable by All*
- *Standard on Web Accessibility*, which will soon be replaced by the new *Standard on ICT Accessibility* that will expand the scope of ICT under the *Policy on Service and Digital*

b. inform departments and public federal resources, including the following:

- *Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada*
 - Public Services and Procurement Canada's *Accessible Procurement Resource Centre*
 - Shared Services Canada's *Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology program*
- In May 2021, ASAS revised the *Directive on the Management of Procurement* to support the GC's accessibility goals by:
 - mandating that the private sector include accessibility considerations when specifying requirements
 - ensuring that deliverables incorporate accessibility features
 - ASAS continues to help inform and promote policy requirements, accountabilities, best practices and key instruments related to accessibility in federal procurement through engagement and outreach efforts. These activities include participation and presentations made at:
 - the Agents of Change for Accessible Procurement Centre of Excellence
 - multiple sessions of the Canadian Institute of Procurement and Materiel Management's 2022 national workshop
 - ASAS is working with the Canada School of Public Service to update procurement-related courses to include accessibility requirements and

latest best practices. Updated courses are expected to be available in 2023.

- ASAS aims to help increase recruitment, hiring and career advancement of people with disabilities through the following:
 - A GC collective recruitment process for the Purchasing and Supply group at the PG-03 and PG-04 levels was launched to establish a pool of qualified candidates from equity-seeking groups, including people with disabilities. This initiative includes training for candidates to succeed in “best fit” interviews and cultural and emotional awareness for hiring managers. The pool was made available to all departments in August 2022.
 - The Comptrollership Leadership Development Program (CLDP) launched in November 2021. The purpose of the CLDP is to prepare senior functional practitioners for executive roles and to help employees from equity-seeking communities advance to more senior levels. Departments and agencies were asked to nominate employees from equity-seeking groups to participate. The first cohort completed the program in May 2022. The second cohort is being planned with key stakeholders such as the University of Ottawa, the Department of Finance Canada, the Office of the Comptroller General and people with disabilities.
 - ASAS’s Professionalization Action Plan is being developed to promote gender equality, diversity, and inclusion within the real property community. The plan will aim to:
 - identify training and awareness-raising opportunities
 - explore opportunities for mentorship, consultation and engagement of equity-seeking groups
 - help improve the representation of people with disabilities in the real property community

TBS's Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs

- In September 2022, TBS's Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs branch published *Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible*. The guidelines include specific measures to consider when developing accessible communications. Examples of such measures are:
 - including visual representation of people with disabilities in everyday situations
 - applying plain language principles
 - using built-in audio and visual accessibility features
 - having users with lived experience test content and provide feedback

The guidelines will help ensure consistency in the accessibility of TBS and GC communications products and activities, and will make best practices available to communications practitioners.

Office of the Chief Information Officer

- The Chief Data Officer for the Government of Canada published the recently approved *Standard on Systems that Manage Information and Data* (published as Appendix J of the *Directive on Service and Digital*). The standard requires that all new and modernized or upgraded systems that fall under the standard must comply with specified ISO 16175-1:2020 requirements, which include requirements for accessibility. Implementation of the new standard is scheduled to occur over the next two years for existing non-legacy systems.
- The Office of the Chief Information Officer is developing a new *Standard on ICT Accessibility*, which will replace the *Standard on Web Accessibility* and will be published in two phases. Phase 1 will focus on foundational elements of ICT that will have a low cost to implement. Phase 2 will implement requirements that are costlier and require more effort. This two-phase approach will increase departmental readiness and reduce

the effort required to meet future standard requirements. Phase 1 is planned for release in the 2023–24 fiscal year.

- With Shared Services Canada, the Office of the Chief Information Officer co-developed an ICT accessibility measurement scorecard and maturity model. The scorecard was developed as a tool to help departments self-assess the accessibility of their existing ICT. The tools will be piloted in 2023–24.

7. Transportation

TBS does not provide transportation services or directions. In the review of all TBS policies, practices, programs and services, it has been determined that there are no existing barriers in transportation at this time.

8. Workplace culture

Driving a change in workplace culture toward one that is more diverse, inclusive and accessible is a priority at TBS. We strive to create a workplace environment where employees understand what accessibility means, why it matters, and employees have the tools and the know-how to put accessibility into practice. The *Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada* refers to this kind of environment as one that has “accessibility confidence.”

TBS realizes that culture change does not happen quickly. It will require ongoing commitment and sustained attention. It will also require every employee doing their part to become an accessibility ally and encouraging others to do so as well.

To achieve an accessibility confident workplace culture, TBS is ensuring that the right governance and supports are in place. Actions taken include the following:

- A senior executive was appointed TBS Champion for Accessibility in 2020 to give accessibility a voice at the leadership table and to provide

support to accessibility initiatives at TBS. Actions taken by the Champion include:

- regularly attending meetings of the Accessibility Network to build trust with employees with disabilities and to better understand the issues being discussed
- hosting and participating in special events to promote accessibility and disability inclusion at TBS
- regularly updating TBS's Executive Committee on progress made with accessibility at TBS and on current priorities
- In 2020, the employee-led Accessibility Network at TBS was launched to provide a safe space for employees with disabilities to voice their ideas and concerns. The network is also a vehicle through which employees can speak to senior management. It works with the Human Resources Division and the TBS Champion for Accessibility to create greater awareness of accessibility, drive positive change from within and serve as a pool of accessibility expertise.
- In December 2021, TBS launched the new Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility secretariat within the Human Resources Division. The secretariat helps drive systemic change by:
 - researching innovative practices
 - leading new initiatives
 - providing strong support to TBS employee networks
 - educating TBS managers and employees on matters related to equity and inclusion in the workplace
- In early 2022, TBS renamed its Employment Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee as the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Committee (IDEA Committee). By indicating accessibility in the committee's name, it makes clear the committee's commitment to making accessibility a priority at TBS. The committee's primary objectives are to:
 - identify issues that have an impact on designated group members and equity-seeking groups

- provide advice to management on strategies or techniques to address such issues

Some of the actions being taken to improve accessibility confidence in TBS's workplace culture are as follows:

- The Office of the Ombud at TBS meets regularly with the co-chairs of the Accessibility Network to better understand the concerns of employees with disabilities and how its office can help address them. In 2022, the Office of the Ombud launched an ongoing podcast to highlight issues that employees with disabilities face.
- The Human Resources Division is working to create a central repository of accessibility-related information, tools and resources for employees on TBS's intranet (TBS InfoSite). The new TBS InfoSite page will be ready for launch in summer 2023.
- The Human Resources Division will work with Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs to develop a communications plan to raise awareness about accessibility at TBS by driving traffic to the new InfoSite page featuring accessibility-related information. The Human Resources Division will work to encourage learning opportunities around accessibility by promoting in-house training workshops, such as:
 - Microsoft 365 training available at TBS
 - training through the Canada School of Public Service, including the course "Addressing Disability, Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility" (course number INC115)
- The Human Resources Division plans to launch two accessibility awards in 2023:
 - the Luna Bengio Accessibility Leadership Award, to be given to a TBS employee who leads by example in contributing to an accessible TBS workplace

- a Team, Group or Accessibility Initiative Award to a TBS team, project or initiative that demonstrates excellence in accessibility
- The Accessibility Network, with support from the Human Resources Division, will continue to host events and guest speakers to inform TBS employees about:
 - new programs, tools and initiatives to advance accessibility
 - best practices used across government and in the private and non-profit sectors in Canada and internationally
- The Accessibility Network, in collaboration with the Human Resources Division and the TBS Champion for Accessibility, will establish a Peer Support Network for new employees with disabilities at TBS and for existing employees who are experiencing episodic disability or who have developed a new disability. Upon request, they will be paired with a colleague at TBS who can help guide them to the right resources or provide advice based their lived experience. The network aims to launch in spring 2023.

What success looks like

As a central agency, TBS has an important role when it comes to accessibility in the federal public service. TBS's policies and programs must support effective people management, inclusive procurement, empowering technology and clear communication. Improving accessibility will fulfill our moral imperative to make our work more accessible to Canadians and our own employees. Improving accessibility and inclusion in our workplace is also good business sense as TBS looks to recruit and retain top talent as it strives to be an employer of choice.

The Office of Public Service Accessibility will continue to engage with departments across the federal public service to assess our progress. The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer will use workforce analytics and

the Public Service Employee Survey to monitor recruitment, retention and career progression.

When it comes to our own department, we will work with our Accessibility Network and use the quantitative and qualitative data on our workforce.

The activities described in this plan will improve accessibility directly and indirectly. In some cases, other factors will contribute to desired outcomes. Following are indicators that will help us judge our success:

- percentage of people with disabilities being hired and choosing to stay at TBS and in the broader public service
- percentage of employees with disabilities who are progressing in their career
- number of successful workplace accommodations within TBS
- employee survey results in the areas of inclusion, mental health, respect and engagement
- progress in making improvements to the built environment
- feedback from TBS's Accessibility Network and its Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Committee

As our approach matures, we will revise and add indicators as needed.

TBS's overall goals in its accessibility efforts are that all its employees:

- feel valued, empowered and safe to express their true selves in the workplace
- have everything they need to do their best work
- have equal opportunity for advancement

Ultimately, it will be employees with disabilities who will determine whether TBS has succeeded in meeting these goals.

Much work remains to be done, but we believe that this plan is a solid step toward charting a course to improved accessibility at TBS. It will take all of us doing our part to get us there, but we are committed to doing what it takes

because a diverse, inclusive and accessible TBS and federal public service of Canada benefits every one of us.

Appendix A: journey-mapping themes and personas

▶ In this section

Journey-mapping themes

After conducting a series of journey-mapping sessions with people with disabilities at TBS, the following themes emerged.

Workplace culture

- Need continued support to work remotely, as it provides the ability to work more productively, comfortably and safely
- Need a proactive approach to workplace accommodations to allow employees and managers to see success rapidly

Workplace practices

- Need a safe and healthy workplace where barriers are identified, prevented and removed
- Need training for managers and employees on accessibility and inclusivity at work
- Need hiring and development programs for employees with disabilities to improve career progression
- Need a buddy system at entry to TBS and a mentoring system at key points in career
- Need faster access to adaptive equipment to aid with employee productivity
- Need better accommodations for staffing processes, as the lack of access to competitions impedes career mobility

People management

- Need a streamlined centralized process for workplace accommodations
- Need support for employees who have episodic disabilities to manage their careers in accordance with their health status
- Need equal access to promotions through an improved performance management and talent management system

To help show the human side of these issues, TBS created “personas” that reflect the challenges discussed during the journey-mapping sessions. Although they are fictional, we hope that the following personas are true to the spirit of employees with disabilities who work at TBS.

Personas

The following personas are fictional composites derived from the real-life experiences of TBS employees with disabilities that were expressed during journey-mapping discussions. These personas enable us to accurately tell the story of employees with disabilities at TBS while protecting their privacy.

Sophia

Meet Sophia:



“My biggest fear is of being helpless in a fire (at work). How can I be assured of my safety?”

Sophia was born with a physical disability and requires a wheelchair as a mobility aid. She has worked at TBS for nine years.

Accommodations

- Accommodations for her computer and office were delayed by three months, which created great stress and frustration for her.
- Sophia knows that other departments put accommodations in place more quickly.

Building

- There are problems at 90 Elgin with fire safety, access via Para Transpo, uneven flooring (second floor), and access to washrooms and boardrooms.

Remote work during pandemic

- Remote work has been wonderful for her because she does not have to commute.
- Setting up computer equipment was a challenge.
- Sophia needed a friend to help set up her workstation.
- She has issues with her adaptive technology that IT cannot resolve.

Frustrated due to lack of career progression

- Sophia started at TBS feeling motivated and ambitious. Now she feels as though she's fallen out of the fast lane and that she is not one of the "chosen few."
- Sophia would like to have a mentor who has experience coaching employees with disabilities.

Pain points

- Workplace can be unsafe and scary
- Limited access to mentorship and career development opportunities
- No central or streamlined process to help her with accommodations

Matthew

Meet Matthew:



“I have good managers, but they can do more. I get good appraisals, such as ‘Very pleased, thank you for the good work.’ But there’s no guidance on how to get a promotion.”

Matthew has worked at TBS for 12 years. Ten years ago, he was diagnosed with a degenerative neurological condition, which impacts his mobility and some fine motor skills. Over the last four years, his condition has deteriorated. He now self-identifies as having a disability and needs accommodations.

Accommodations

- His initial request for accommodations was met with delays of about three months, as it got mired in back-and-forth questions at every step of the process.
- The lack of centralized support and coordination left Matthew feeling stressed and frustrated.
- These delays had an impact on Matthew’s productivity and morale.

Equipment

- Upon receiving adaptive computer hardware, he experienced challenges with installation and maintenance.
- He wishes that TBS’s IT Services would behave more like an ally, looking to proactively solve IT issues instead of just offering piecemeal patches that don’t resolve the overall issues.

Frustrated due to career progression

- About a year ago, Matthew felt ready to start looking for a promotion. He applied to some competitions but ultimately withdrew his application because the competitions weren’t sufficiently accessible.

- Despite positive performance reviews, his efforts to be promoted through the performance and talent management process have failed, leaving Matthew feeling frustrated and excluded.

Pain points

- Unmet and delayed accommodations decrease productivity
- Lack of career mobility impacts morale
- TBS's IT professionals are not informed enough about adaptive technology, which creates delays, errors and barriers for employees

Lisa

Meet Lisa:



“When you have an invisible disability, it’s easy to get overlooked.”

Lisa joined TBS four years ago as a student and was bridged in when she completed her degree. She has invisible disabilities: mental health disorders, learning disabilities, and difficulties with her hearing.

Supportive team

- Lisa was afraid to disclose her disabilities when she was hired indeterminately at TBS.
- She was worried about the impression that her disabilities would create with her supervisor and colleagues.
- She was encouraged by her mentor to disclose her disabilities to get the support she needed.
- Lisa was happy when her supervisor was accommodating.
- Lisa is able to work from home when necessary.

- She is supported by her colleagues, who provided a “psychologically safer environment.”

Less supportive team

- Surprised at the difference of support that she received in her new team after being promoted
- New supervisor was unwilling to support her need to work from home
- Told that if she didn't show up for work, she would need to use a sick day
- Wonders why there isn't a consistent approach to disabilities with supervisors across the department
- Wonders if a centralized approach would help improve variations between teams

Day-to-day work

- Lisa's day-to-day work became isolating and draining.
- She asked to be away from higher-traffic areas in the open office.
- Lisa felt as though she was viewed as trying to “jump the line” because those desks were typically reserved for more senior employees.

Remote work during the pandemic

- Has become more productive since she started working from home
- Likes how the work atmosphere has become more accepting and inclusive

Career progression

- Interested in seeking out a promotion in the future
- Worries about how to manage more responsibilities with her disabilities

Pain points

- Need for an accepting and proactive approach to accommodations
- Need for better training for supervisors

- Concern about maintaining productivity when disease flares up and her condition declines further
- Working from home is more inclusive

Marta

Meet Marta:



“There are a lot of financial implications, there’s not a lot of wiggle room. Question of who pays for adaptations is important and we need to improve.”

Marta has worked for the public service for 18 years. She has a mental health disorder and learning disabilities and is a survivor of past trauma. Marta entered the public service through a development program and now works as a supervisor of a medium-sized team.

Medical appointments

- Marta needs appointments with different health professionals and support groups to manage her disabilities.
- Marta tries to book some appointments during her lunch hour or after work, but most appointments with health professionals occur during working hours.
- Senior management frequently schedules meetings over her appointments, even when she has booked them off in the calendar.
- It is difficult for Marta to balance her health and work.

Accommodating her own employees

- Marta is aware of the importance of providing her employees with timely accommodations.
- She strives to have requests dealt with promptly.

- Marta is frustrated with the delays in getting her employees the accommodations they need.
- On average, it takes two to three months for employees to receive their accommodations, after multiple emails between Labour Relations, Occupational Health and Safety, and others.
- There are variations in employees' disabilities, which makes each request uniquely challenging.
- Marta is frustrated by ambiguity regarding who pays for adaptations.
- Due to the length of time in getting approval and questions about who "owns" the adaptive equipment, Marta has seen employees pay for their own tech out of desperation.
- She would like to see a more centralized system that provides training to managers and supervisors, processes accommodation requests, and funds accommodations centrally.

Pain points

- Need for a centralized process
- Need for an accepting and proactive approach to accommodations
- Need for manager and supervisor training

Appendix B: Built Environment Action Plan – 90 Elgin Accessibility Report Review and

Action Plan

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
3	1	1.1.3 Parking garage security access system requires reach and dexterity, making it inaccessible for some people. Consider proactively providing all employees with any reach or dexterity limitations, a remote-controlled security device as standard procedure when assigning reserved parking space.	PSPC/Property Manager	Long term	End of Fiscal 2023-24
10	1	2.1.2 Large Government of Canada signs are not cane detectable and may create a hazard to someone with low vision. Consider adding a bar connecting the signposts at the bottom that would be cane detectable, or adding a surface detectable edge or curb.	PSPC	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24
23	1	3.2.6 Entrance doors have glazed panels within the door frame, without visually contrasting markings. People with low vision may have difficulty delineating the glazed door from an open space. Provide visually contrasting markings along glazed door surface at 1350 - 1500 mm. Best practice is to include markings at higher and lower levels.		Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
24	1	3.1.1 Power-assisted door openers are not installed on all meeting rooms, board rooms and other common use rooms where needed. Consider installing power assisted door openers on all meeting rooms, board rooms, and other common use rooms. Power-assisted door openers are now available in the market for sliding doors, as well as hinge type doors.	PSPC	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24
27	1	3.1.4 Door stops can obstruct clear approach and clear floor space around power-assisted door controls. Consider removing door stops that obstruct approach by wheeled mobility devices to activation pads. Consider overhead style of door stop, if required	Landlord	Short term	Possible this fiscal if we know which door stops

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
28	1	3.1.5 Glazed doors and walls throughout 90 Elgin do not include high visual indicators on glazed door surface. White frosted treatments on glazed surfaces do not offer adequate visual indication, except where background is a darker colour. Consider providing visual contrasting markings along glazed doors and walls surface at between 1350 - 1500 mm. Best practices recommends markings at a higher and lower level.	Landlord (public), PSPC (tenant)	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24
38	1	3.5.1 Stair nosing on escalator does not include a visually contrasting marking. Consider painting or installing a visually contrasting marking.	Landlord	Long term	End of Fiscal 2023-24

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
39	1	<p>3.5.2 Escalator emergency stop buttons are not accessible for everyone. Two emergency stop buttons are positioned between the escalator railings. One button is at the top landing and the other at the bottom landing. A person using a mobility aid or with a short reach may not be able to access the emergency stop buttons. Consider repositioning the emergency stop buttons to the other side of the railing on the open side of the escalator.</p>	Landlord	Long term	End of Fiscal 2023-24
43	1	<p>4.1.1 There is no map with key amenities and services on the main floor reception. Due to the three entrances into 90 Elgin, locations of key amenities and services are spread throughout the lobby and are not easily identified or understood for a first-time user of the space. Consider providing maps with key amenities and services at entry points. Maps should include alternate information formats such as tactile information and audio.</p>	Property Manager	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
44	1	4.1.2 Washroom facilities are not well indicated. As a key amenity, the location of washrooms should be quickly identified from all entrances. Consider providing directional signage at building entrances to washroom facilities. Use symbols on signage where possible.	Property Manager	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24
46	1	4.2.1 The location of the security desk is not immediately understood when entering building. Consider providing directional signage at entry points. Use symbols on signage where possible.	Property Manager	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24
47	1	4.2.2 Signage at the security desk does not indicate the purpose. Security desk should include clearly posted information indicating that users should check into security before attempting to access elevators. Consider providing clearly visible signage at the security desk, indicating need for visitors to check in. Consider including visitor check-in procedures on the 90 Elgin website	Property Manager	Short term	2022-23

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
49	1	<p>4.3.2 Meeting tables in the main lobby are labelled as accessible but may not be accessible for everyone. Consider purchasing new tables that can be verified to have accessible height, clear width and knee clearance.</p>	Property Manager	Short term	2022-23
50	1	<p>4.3.3 Floor surfaces in seating areas in lobby do not have any visual or tactile contrast with main pathway. Seating is not visually contrasting with surroundings. People with low vision may inadvertently walk through or into seating areas. Consider providing visual and tactile contrast on floor surfaces, and visual contrast of seating and surroundings, to draw awareness to seating area for people who have low vision.</p>	Landlord	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
52	1	<p>4.3.5 Some tenant lounges and meeting rooms do not have enough open space to easily include someone using a mobility device. Consider arranging seating so there is clear space in lounges and meeting rooms. Arrangement of seating should provide clear areas beside seats to accommodate people using mobility devices, and people with service dogs. Consider removing extra chairs, so extra space is always available.</p>	Tenant	Short term	Can pilot some meeting rooms in 2022-23
53	1	<p>4.4.1 Knee recess below kitchen sinks does not provide the recommended knee clearance between the bottom of the counter and the floor. Consider increasing the available knee clearance below the sink by removing cabinet skirting below the sink. Ensure that pipes are insulated, and any sharp edges protected.</p>	Tenant	Long term	End of Fiscal 2023-24

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
54	1	4.4.2 Microwaves are often mounted in inaccessible locations and heights, and do not include adjacent counter space to cool food. This may create a safety hazard for people with limited dexterity. Consider placing microwave ovens at counter height. This will ensure microwaves are at an accessible height and have level work surfaces adjacent to microwave door opening.	Tenant	Short term	2022-23
56	1	4.4.4 There is a lack of seating options in kitchen seating area. Consider replacing some chairs without armrests with those with armrests to offer options of both.	Tenant	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023 - 24
62	1	5.1.5 Washroom entrance doors on lower level and main lobby do not visually contrast with surrounding walls. Visual contrast helps people with low vision to identify the door. Consider painting washroom entrance doors, door frames, or surrounding walls to create a visual contrast.	Property Manager/Tenant	Short term	Can Pilot an area in 2022-23; completion Quarter 1, 2 2023-24

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
65	1	5.1.8 Urinals do not visually contrast with surrounding wall surfaces making it challenging for people with low vision to identify. Consider painting surrounding walls a visually contrasting colour.	Property Manager	Short term	Can pilot an area in year 2022-23, with completion in Quarter 1, 2 2023-24
74	1	6.2.1 Most room signage in tenant space does not include Braille and raised lettering. This limits people who are blind or have low vision to independently navigate within workspace. Consider producing new signage that includes Braille and raised lettering for commonly used rooms.	Tenant	Medium term	Quarter 1, 2 2023-24
75	1	6.3.1 There are no directory boards or building maps available at entrances to 90 Elgin. Install a building directory including a map of main floor with highlighted pathways to key facilities. Board should have alternative information available such visual, tactile and audible formats. Directories should be mounted at variable or accessible heights.		Short term	2022-23

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
76	1	6.3.2 Floor directories located in elevator lobbies on individual floor do not include tactile or other alternate information. The availability of alternative information is important for people who have visual or cognitive impairments. Add tactile or other alternative information to floor specific directories.		Short term	2022-23
78	1	6.4.2 Assistive listening devices are not installed where information is exchanged at the security counter or in tenant meeting rooms. During times when the lobby is busy, background noise can make it difficult for a person who is hard of hearing to fully understand a conversation. Install a hearing loop or similar assisted listening device at the security counter and meeting rooms. This will decrease words missed during interactions and improve communication, providing for a more inclusive environment. Ensure that clear signage is posted to notify people that hearing loop is available.	Property Owner/PSPC	Short term	2022-23

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
80	1	7.1.2 Emergency exit doors in tenant spaces often do not visually contrast with surrounding surfaces. An emergency exit door should stand out from surrounding surfaces. Consider adding highly visual colour to emergency exit doors, so they provide adequate contrast to surrounding surfaces. This will help make evacuation routes more discoverable during low light or if there is smoke.	Tenant	Medium term	2022-23; can pilot one area, finishing in Q1 and Q2 in 2023-24
81	1	7.1.3 Evacuation chairs are not placed in emergency exit stairways. Emergency evacuation chairs should be placed in stairways when possible, to service several floors. Consider placing evacuation equipment such as the Evac+Chair in stairways or nearby on each floor. Signage should clearly indicate location of evacuation equipment.	Tenant	Long term	End of 2023-24

#	Document	Item	Responsibility	Term	Timeline
82	1	7.1.4 Emergency phones are mounted up to 1400 mm. This is significantly higher than the recommended reach requirement and may be out of reach for a person using a mobility aid. Consider lowering emergency phones to an operable height of 1100 mm above finished floor.	Property Manager	Short term	2022-23
85	1	7.2.1 Visual fire alarms are important to warn people with no one else around that there is an emergency. Consider installing visual fire alarms in washrooms, showers, and other areas where a person may be expected to be alone.	Property Owner	Medium term	Q1, 2 2023-24
93	1	8.1.2 Outlets and switches are often placed outside of the recommended accessible reach. Many operable switches are located significantly higher than 1150 mm above finished floor. Consider adjusting heights of operable switches and outlets to be located within the recommended accessible reach range.	Landlord	Medium term	Q1, 2 2023-24

Footnotes

- 1 Formerly the Shared Accommodation Centre.
 - 2 *Accessible Canada Act*, section 2: Definitions.
 - 3 Ibid.
 - 4 This model is consistent with the key findings of the *Summary Report: Federal Public Servants with Disabilities: October 2019 Follow Up Survey on Workplace Accommodations*. Finding 6 stated that “A centralized accommodation request system with a larger role for arms-length neutral experts could address several concerns including supervisor reprisal, protecting employee privacy and reducing the burden on supervisors.”
 - 5 *Directive on Official Languages for People Management*, Appendix 2.
 - 6 See paragraph 9(1)(b) of the *Employment Equity Act*.
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