

# Accessibility Plan – Progress Report 2023

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## General

Transport Canada's Corporate Services group worked in collaboration with the national working group for accessibility to develop this Accessibility Plan Progress Report. The working group is composed of a representative from each region across the country and area of responsibility that operates within Transport Canada.

Transport Canada's designated official for the development of the Accessibility Plan and any progress reports is Ryan Pilgrim, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services.

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Accessibility plan

Transport Canada

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## Alternate format and feedback

Feedback on our progress report or our accessibility plan can be provided online through our [feedback form](#) or through the email, mail, or phone options listed below.

When asked, we commit to providing these alternate formats as soon as possible and within the time frames listed in the *Accessible Canada Regulations* and the *Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations* subsection 7(1) and 7(2) alternate formats of our plan can be requested in:

- print
- large print
- braille
- audio format
- an electronic format that's compatible with adaptive technology meant to help people with disabilities.

**By email:** [tc.accessibility-accessibilite.tc@tc.gc.ca](mailto:tc.accessibility-accessibilite.tc@tc.gc.ca)

**By mail:**

Accessibility Plan Alternate Format Request  
Transport Canada  
Tower C, Place de Ville  
330 Sparks St  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

**By phone:**

**Toll-free:** 1-866-995-9737

**Telephone:** 613-990-2309

**TTY:** 1-888-675-6863

Alternate formats will be provided as soon as feasible after the request is received but not later than:

- For Braille or an audio format: 45 days after the day that the request is received.
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## Executive summary

The purpose of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040. This involves identifying, removing and preventing barriers in federal jurisdiction in several of priority areas.

A "barrier" is anything that keeps a person with a disability from participating fully and equally in society. A "disability" is any physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or functional limitation.

Federally regulated entities are required to produce a plan to address any barriers or limitations they find in these priority areas:

- employment
- built environment
- information and communication technology
- communication, other than information and communication technology
- procuring goods, services and facilities
- designing and delivering programs and services
- transportation

Transport Canada published its first accessibility plan in December 2022. The plan outlines concrete actions that will help the department take the first steps towards becoming accessible by default. As required under the

*Accessible Canada Act*, this progress report outlines actions that we have taken to address some of the barriers identified through our consultations with persons with disabilities and through TC's online feedback form.

Transport Canada is committed to working with all of you, our senior leaders, our employees, and members of the public to create an environment that considers accessibility first, both internally and externally while we work to remove barriers and limits that impact people with disabilities by implementing the commitments found in our 2022-2025 accessibility plan. We have been guided by the principles behind the Office of Public Service Accessibility "Nothing Without Us" strategy and the *Accessible Canada Act*.

Transport Canada values diversity and inclusion, and understand how important it is that our policies, practices, programs, and services are accessible.

Though we have work to do, we are committed to meeting the Government of Canada's goal of being barrier free by January 1, 2040.

## **Accessibility Plan Progress**

### **Employment**

As outlined in the Accessibility Plan, Transport Canada is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workplace because we know our employees are key to the work that we do. The following list the progress TC has made towards the employment pillar of the plan:

### **Hiring**

As we continue to strive to be an employer of choice the following tools have been promoted and provided to hiring managers to increase the hiring of persons with disabilities and contribute to the whole of government goal of hiring five thousand (5,000) persons with disabilities to the public service.

Our internal Diversity, inclusion and accessibility site includes:

- Flexibility in Assessment (PSC) - highlights ways hiring managers can take advantage of flexibilities at the assessment phase of the appointment process to conduct an accessible process.
- Fairness Review Checklist (PSC) - Gives tips and five areas to be mindful of in staffing processes (readability, inclusiveness and representativeness, neutrality, format accessibility, alternative formats)
- Effective Merit Criteria - A closer look at job opportunities in the public service (PSC) - common practices that have potential barriers in job advertisements.
- Managers Toolkit for Hiring Persons with Disabilities (PSC) - Contains every accessibility resource for every step of the staffing process.
- Guide for Assessing Persons with Disabilities (PSC) (under review) - provides guidance on accommodating persons with disabilities within a staffing process.

Additionally, Transport Canada has conducted 7 targeted hiring processes specific for Persons with Disabilities (CR-04/CR-05/AS-01, AS-02, and EC-02, AS-01, IT-02, TI-06 and CR-04). Regional managers and Directors are incorporating Gender Based Analysis + principles to reduce barriers in staffing processes where possible. Transport Canada continues to educate

managers with regards to Employment Equity statistics and promote hiring candidates who have self-identified as having a disability, as well as the other Employment Equity groups.

## **Accommodations**

We continue to evaluate our accommodations process and we work toward the implementation of a centre of expertise to provide timely and adequate tools and resources to our employees and external candidates.

We currently have a designated accessibility ambassador working in HR Corporate Staffing group who assists with accommodations in our staffing processes. They are a part of the Bias and Mitigation Evaluation Team within the Public Service Commission and assist our department in the following ways:

- Development of statement of merit criteria, job advertisement, and evaluation tools for use.
- Assists in all steps of the staffing evaluation process including accommodations requests.
- Identify risk factors in challenging situations.
- Where applicable; assesses policies and procedures, while considering accessibility needs, and proposes solutions.

Additional training has been offered to our staffing group to assist in expanding knowledge in accessible staffing and accommodations for persons with disabilities. A second workshop based on these principles is currently being developed and should be available in 2024.

Additionally, TC has a rich and diverse Network of Persons with disabilities that contribute to the identification of barriers through their lived experiences and advocate for the removal of barriers to ensure all persons

can bring their best self to work. Our departmental network hosted a workshop on accommodations during National AccessAbility Week (June 1st) to discuss best practices for employees and managers and encouraging inclusivity for all teams.

Lastly, tips and tricks were published through our internal website for planning accessible meetings and events. An example of these tips are:

When hosting or attending an MS Teams meeting:

- Provide material for meetings in advance – at least two days, but ideally a week before – so everyone is prepared, including service providers who may be assisting you (such as sign language interpreters).
- Avoid switching between languages – speak in English and then repeat in French or vice versa.
- Send meeting invitations with enough notice to allow individuals who need accommodation to request it, and for the meeting organizer to put the requested measure in place.
- This should be done as early as possible as some measures – such as contracting interpreters and preparing material – can take days if not weeks.
- When a meeting has American Sign Language and/or Quebec Sign Language:
  - Introduce yourself when you speak.
  - Speak clearly and slowly.
  - Avoid rapidly switching between languages.
  - Use headphones.

When hosting or attending a meeting in person:



- Make sure that the meeting space is:
- large enough to accommodate all invitees.
- Equipped with good acoustics.
- accessible – there is a ramp to enter the building, the meeting space can be accessed directly or by elevator, and the washrooms have automatic door openers to access the washroom facilities.
- Offer a call-in function for those who cannot attend in person.
- Print off meeting materials for use by attendees.

When creating documents:

- Provide two separate versions of material, one in English, and another in French, as most assistive devices can only process one language at a time.
- Use sans serif fonts, such as Calibri, Arial or Verdana, in size 12 font or larger – this will make the text easier to read for screen reading technologies, and for people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or learning disabilities like dyslexia or dyscalculia.
- If you must use graphics in your presentation or document:
- remember to add alternative text descriptions or mark them as decorative.
- use colours with a high contrast ratio.
- avoid adding text over images.
- Do not merge cells in tables because screen readers cannot process the read order correctly on merged cells.
- In Word, organize your content with built-in headers (under the 'Styles' toolbar) to guide screen readers and increase readability of your

document.

- In PowerPoint, use the built-in accessibility features to set the read order for slide content.
- Consult the [guidelines for inclusive writing \(ourlanguages.gc.ca\)](https://ourlanguages.gc.ca) to learn how to make your content more inclusive.

## **The built environment**

In Fall 2023, TC conducted an environmental scan to determine the initial accessibility status of its facilities at a high level, such as building construction, last renovation of tenant space, etc. This is a living document that is reviewed annually to update changes and inform on Transport Canada worksites for Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) accessibility gap analysis assessments. Four RHF accessibility assessments were conducted in the 2022-2023 fiscal, and arrangements are in progress to conduct additional assessments this fiscal year.

Between January and March 2023 four (4) offices have were assessed through this process.

To provide an example of the progress being made in the built environment one of the assessed offices is undergoing the following changes:

### **Collaboration with PSPC property management**

The findings of the accessibility study have been shared with the PSPC (Public Services and Procurement Canada) property management team. This collaboration ensures that the property management team is well-informed about the identified gaps, enabling them to proactively address issues during site renewal. Specifically, the study has focused on highlighting base building deficiencies within the office space.

## **Obstruction removal and clean up:**

An extensive clean-up effort has been undertaken to ensure the office environment is free from obstructions. All obstacles that may impede accessibility have been removed, creating a safer and more user-friendly workspace for all employees.

## **Procurement of new chairs**

The accessibility study pinpointed the need for new chairs that provide improved back support and armrests. To address this requirement, the procurement process for these chairs is currently underway.

## **Relocation of emergency equipment (AED)**

In response to the accessibility study, the emergency equipment, specifically the Automated External Defibrillator (AED), has been relocated to an alternate location within the office premises. This new location ensures better accessibility and availability of the AED in case of emergencies.

The efforts and actions taken thus far demonstrate a commitment to fostering a more inclusive and accessible workspace. By collaborating with the PSPC property management team and addressing identified gaps, significant progress has been achieved in enhancing the office's overall accessibility. The ongoing dedication to these initiatives reflects a proactive approach to improving the working environment for all employees.

## **Information and communication technology**

As we rely on information and communication technology, we want to ensure that Transport Canada is providing accessible digital information, services, and products for employees and for Canadians.

As we have committed in the accessibility plan, a priority matrix was developed to test over four hundred applications that are in use at Transport Canada. To this date, we have completed the testing of five applications and have provided the results for remediation to the appropriate parties. Transport Canada currently has one tester available for this work, however, we hope to onboard additional testers to ensure the bulk of this work is complete in 2024.

In the last year, TC has focused on updating our web content and providing additional information on accessibility and people with disabilities. The following documents are now available to employees to access resources and templates:

- Considering inclusion and accessibility
- Accessibility on the web
- Accessibility tips and tricks

In addition, with the assistance of internal communications, our diversity and inclusion action team revamped the diversity and inclusion section on the intranet, updating existing content and adding information related to all equity-seeking groups, including persons with disabilities. The site includes an additional section on accommodation and promotes useful resources related to increasing diversity in the workplace, through inclusive hiring and getting involved in employee networks.

Transport Canada's Web Services group provides guidance on web and document accessibility, to further strengthen understanding and application of accessibility standards in our work. This is done through our TCnext learning series where we raise awareness and provide training on how to use accessibility features in our commonly used applications.

We have initiated a SharePoint site to assist us in the creation of a repository of accessibility results and lessons learned. As content is completed it is published and shared with our project leads and business stakeholders.

As the department rolls out the new Treasury Board Secretariat guidelines for web accessibility, we are also developing an internal testing policy that aligns with the new standards. Additionally, we have created a technical guidance checklist, and best practices documents for the technical teams to follow how to support their testing and development work that impacts areas of accessibility and required standards.

## **Communication, other than information and communication technology**

Transport Canada is committed to ensuring that alternate formats of documents, interpretation and alternative ways to submit information is available to all persons who require it. The department encourages the accessible documents, forms, and presentations are created and shared as early as possible.

We have published information to support employees who are organizing events:

- Considering inclusion and accessibility
- Accessibility tips and tricks

As part of our event planning process for department wide events, the department secures simultaneous translation in both official languages. Every invitation to these events includes an active offer for accommodation - such as the need for American Sign Language or Langue Signe Quebecois interpretation - as well as a reminder that employees are expected to remain respectful in their interactions during the event.

Additionally, the department has hosted events with simultaneous interpretation available to ensure all employees can access the event in the language of their choice.

Internal Communications also provides advice on potential communication barriers that may exist during in-person events and makes recommendations to mitigate these barriers.

Additionally, corporate services are working with our information technology group to include a prepopulated active offer for accommodations for all meeting invitations. This active offer will be linked to our internal accessibility tips and tricks webpage and will provide information on how to book sign language interpretation and provide support for implementing accommodations.

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- large print
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**By mail:**

## Accessibility Plan Alternate Format Request

Transport Canada

Tower C, Place de Ville

330 Sparks St

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

### **By phone:**

**Toll-free:** 1-866-995-9737

**Telephone:** 613-990-2309

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### **Procurement of goods, services and facilities**

As we work towards our goal of ensuring employees and clients can access the tools and resources that they need to interact with us in the fullest way possible we have implemented the following:

- Implementation of mandatory Accessibility in procurement form to document what accessibility considerations were made for all procurements.
- Updated our accessible procurement information hub on our internal website to include information on:
  - Accessible considerations or requirements in procurement

- Roles and responsibilities in the procurement process
- Best practices for accessibility in procurement

## **Design and delivery of programs and services**

Transport Canada continues to strive to ensure that our programs and services are designed and delivered in a way that everyone can access them, especially people with disabilities. We make sure that everyone who interacts with us is satisfied with the accessibility of our programs and services. To ensure that employees are equipped to design and deliver programs and services that are accessible the department has hosted workshops on various accessibility topics like webservices and Microsoft word.

## **Transportation and provisions under the Canadian Transportation Act Accessibility - Related Regulations**

Transport Canada continues to conduct research and participate in the innovation of a safe, reliable, and accessible transportation network through our policy groups as a federal regulator.

In September 2023 our innovation policy group released their first issue of a newsletter to inform employees on accessibility issues in the media that impact accessibility in Transportation. This newsletter highlighted accessibility in transportation across Canada and nationwide.

In addition, the department strives to increase accessibility within our owned and operated airports across the country. Transport Canada's Innovation Centre has initiated a project that will test an innovative and unique seating device to enhance the in-flight health, safety and comfort of passengers with mobility disabilities (such as wheelchair users; people who cannot hold themselves upright without support or those who have other



mobility, flexibility or pain-related disabilities). For these passengers sitting in an airline seat for extended periods of time can lead to severe discomfort and sometimes pressure sores that can have serious health implications. This creates a barrier to access to air travel.

This initiative will help establish the useability of the device and determine if it is acceptable from a regulatory perspective without requiring special permission from air travel authorities. The results will help de-risk the further commercialization of the device by the IP holder, which will ultimately lead to a product that can make air travel more accessible.

An advanced contract award notice to enter a contract with the IP holder for the seating device has been posted and closed on November 15, 2023. The project will have a duration of 22 months.

## **Culture**

This year Transport Canada established internal templates and processes aimed at ensuring that every communication product that we produce is accessible, including using high contrast colours, alternative text for images, and plain language.

Transport Canada also advocates for the use of web pages rather than Word files or pdfs, where appropriate, as the HTML format at Transport Canada meets accessibility requirements.

Through our Internal Communications group the department also regularly promotes learning opportunities for employees, such as events for National AccessAbility Week and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, as well as training offered by the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology team at Shared Services and the Canada School of Public Service.

The department is currently reviewing our values and ethics model through stakeholder engagement surveys and focus groups to ensure that we are meeting the needs and expectations of our employees under the program framework.

Lastly, Transport Canada modernized its self-identification questionnaire to include an expanded list of disabilities under the new definition provided with the *Accessible Canada Act*. Throughout 2023 there has been an on-going campaign to increase self-identification to ensure all voices are heard. Through this process TC has increased self-identification of employees with disabilities from 3.8% to 5.1% between 2022 and 2023.

In late 2023 Transport Canada engaged all employees in a review of our values and ethics programs with specific focus groups for persons with disabilities to provide their input in November 2023.

## Consultations

Transport Canada actively encourages participation in our rich employee network for persons with disabilities. This network can be used for accessibility related consultation to incorporate the lived experiences of persons with disabilities within our department.

Additionally, in 2023 the department underwent an employment system review to collect data and consult on systemic, cultural, and attitudinal barriers that impact persons with disabilities throughout both our formal and informal policies and practices. Through focus groups targeting employees with disabilities, we identified barriers faced in our employment practices and internal policies. The results of the employment systems review will be used to help inform the next steps Transport Canada will take to support all equity seeking groups with our department.

To increase consultation with persons with disabilities who interact with the transportation network the department is actively evaluating the development of an external advisory committee.

Lastly, this progress report was provided for feedback through the following channels within Transport Canada:

- National Working Group for Accessibility
- Collective Bargaining Agents
- Persons with Disabilities Network
- People and Culture Committee (a newly established executive committee)
- Transport Canada Executive Management Committee

## **Feedback received**

Transport Canada published our feedback form in December 2022. Since its publication the department has received eighteen (18) submissions regarding accessibility barriers.

An example of feedback that was received earlier this year indicated that a barrier existed at one of our worksites regarding automatic door openers. This location was assessed in partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation and a comprehensive evaluation of improvements was provided to our facilities team. As a result of this review, the department has committed to removing this barrier and is investing one hundred and thirty-four thousand dollars (\$134,000) into infrastructure improvements for this location.

To better position the department a review of need areas to create a centralized fund to support infrastructure improvements to ensure that we meet our commitments in the Accessibility Plan 2022-2025.

## Acknowledgements

We want to thank everyone who participated in our consultations. Without learning about your lived experiences, we wouldn't be able to reach our goal of being barrier free by 2040.

## Request a copy

Receive a copy by email:

**Date modified:**

2024-03-15

