

# **Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency**

## **Accessibility Plan (2022-2025)**

### **Progress Report**

**December 31, 2024**

Cat. No.: R105-9E-PDF

ISSN 2817-9730

Unless otherwise specified, you may not reproduce materials in this publication, in whole or in part, for the purposes of commercial redistribution without prior written permission from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency's copyright administrator.

To obtain permission to reproduce Government of Canada materials for commercial purposes, apply for Crown Copyright Clearance by contacting:

Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

200 -1106 Iqaluktuutiak Drive

Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 3H0

Telephone: 1-855-897-2667

Email: [CanNor.InfoNorth.InfoNord.CanNor@canada.ca](mailto:CanNor.InfoNorth.InfoNord.CanNor@canada.ca)

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

Aussi disponible en français

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

–	
Accessibility Statement.....	4
General .....	4
Employment .....	5
Built Environment.....	6
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) .....	7
Communication (Other than ICT) .....	8
Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities.....	9
Design and Delivery of Programs and Services.....	9
Transportation .....	10
Other .....	10
Consultations.....	11
Feedback .....	12

## ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT FOR CANADIAN NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CanNor)

CanNor is committed to fostering and preserving an inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible workplace where every employee is able to contribute to their fullest and to feel safe in bringing their authentic selves to work. Our vision is an organization that is representative of the population we serve, where the principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) are seamlessly embodied in everything we say and do, and where every employee feels responsible for upholding those principles. We know that accessibility is a journey and we are always looking for ways to enhance accessibility for employees and the clients we serve.

By adhering to the 'inclusion by design' philosophy, CanNor ensures that our work environment is inclusive and accessible for everyone, removing the need for employees and clients to request accommodations.

### GENERAL

The Accessibility Plan (2022-2025) and Progress Reports (December 31, 2023 and December 31, 2024) are available on CanNor's website at the following link [Accessibility at Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency](#).

To submit feedback on CanNor's Accessibility Plan, the Progress Reports, or any barriers within CanNor or accessing its programs, or to obtain copies in alternate formats, please contact:

Sean O'Donnell  
Director General of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer  
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency  
200 - 1106 Iqaluktuutiak Drive  
Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 3H0  
[Infonorth-infonord@cannor.gc.ca](mailto:Infonorth-infonord@cannor.gc.ca)  
[1-855-897-2667](tel:1-855-897-2667)

## EMPLOYMENT

CanNor is committed to a workforce representative of the population we serve. We strive to ensure that HR systems and processes that impact recruitment, development and promotion are barrier-free. Progress to date includes the following:

- We implemented the amendments to the [Public Service Employment Act](#) to assist in ensuring that our hiring is free of bias and barriers.
- Work is underway to streamline our Duty to Accommodate process to ensure that employees facing barriers receive the required accommodations/support as quickly as possible.
- We are implementing new wording for job postings that highlights CanNor's commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.
- At all stages of the recruitment process, candidates are encouraged to request any accommodation needed to support their performance. As a best practice, hiring managers are encouraged to provide interview questions in advance to help candidates perform at their best.
- At the beginning of each recruitment process, Human Resources Advisors discuss best practices in barrier-free recruitment. For more information, managers are referred to relevant sections of the following resources available on the Government of Canada network:
  - [Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit: Best Practices for Recruiting a Diverse Workforce](#)
  - [Guide to Mitigating Biases and Barriers in Assessment](#)
  - [Tools for Mitigating Biases and Barriers in Assessment](#)
- We encourage employees and managers to consult with the Ombuds for Small Departments and Agencies to allow confidential conversations regarding concerns in the workplace. In 2025, CanNor will be asking the Ombuds to conduct 'stay interviews' with our employees to understand what keeps them engaged and how we can enhance their work experience. Results of the stay interviews will be used to identify any systemic practices that impact (negatively or positively) employees' experience working at CanNor.

- CanNor’s Learning Roadmaps detail mandatory learning for all employees. The majority of courses are offered online through the [Canada School of Public Service \(CSPS\)](#). Most are virtual with accompanying print documentation that is accessible. Many of the courses are self-directed so the student can engage when convenient and at their own pace. Students are invited by the CSPS to send requests for accessibility accommodation requirements.
- We are in the process of updating our Learning Roadmaps to include courses such as: [Making Documents Accessible \(INC-1-V46\)](#) and [Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility \(INC115\)](#).
- We encourage employees with disabilities facing barriers in the workplace to use the Government of Canada’s [Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) to help them identify tools, supports and measures they need to perform at their best. The Passport focuses on barriers and solutions, not disabilities. A reminder about the advantages of the Passport was sent to all employees in May and November 2024. We plan to continue sending reminders twice every year.
- Information about the [Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology \(AAACT\)](#) services is included in every letter of offer to ensure that employees are aware of accessibility supports available to them from the start of their employment.

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Accessibility of all office buildings occupied by CanNor, and crown housing utilized by CanNor employees remains a high priority. Any issues identified are dealt with promptly to ensure that the built environment remains barrier-free.

- At CanNor headquarters in Iqaluit, an accessible door has been installed on the back door and 1<sup>st</sup> floor washroom of the Iqaluit office. Accessible doors are also being installed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. These doors into the office space and the washrooms will be accessible and completed by March 31, 2025. The newly constructed Pilimmaksaivik office in Iqaluit is fully accessible.

- An accessible door into the CanNor office in Whitehorse will be installed by March 31, 2025.
- The office in the National Capital Region is fully accessible.
- Crown Housing in Iqaluit is provided by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). There are currently no fully accessible units. When applying to rent a unit, employees have the opportunity to identify accessibility needs, and CanNor pays for any required modifications. We have regular discussions with PSPC about accessibility in Crown Housing and issues identified are resolved as quickly as possible. There is no Crown Housing in Yellowknife or Whitehorse.
- Although not identified as a concern, we are in the process of developing an information sheet to ensure that employees are aware of who to contact for accessibility concerns in the office or housing, including general concerns and issues of immediate safety.
- The Yellowknife office has purchased desk lamps where the office lighting is low and/or employees are affected by fluorescent lights. This will be implemented in the other offices by March 31, 2025.
- Given the long dark winters and its effect on people's mood, energy levels and potentially productivity, the Yellowknife office has purchased SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) lights that can be borrowed by employees. Pilimmaksaivik in Iqaluit has SAD lights available to anyone who would like to use one. Lights will be purchased for the Whitehorse and NCR offices by March 31, 2025.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility is the digital equivalent of accessibility in the physical environment. CanNor believes that it is essential that all employees and clients can access information, perform tasks and receive the same service using information technology.

- We continue to provide ad hoc training on an individual basis about the accessibility of interactive tools and software. In July an e-mail was sent to all employees encouraging the use of Calibri 12 as the default font due to its accessibility.

- CanNor receives its Information Technology (IT) services from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). CanNor will work with ISC to ensure an assessment of CanNor's digital accessibility using the *Government of Canada ICT Accessibility Scorecard*. New content is fully accessible and modifications to existing content is made as issues are noted.

## COMMUNICATION (OTHER THAN ICT)

CanNor is committed to delivering communication products and activities that are accessible by default. Clear, straightforward communication helps to remove barriers, enabling everyone to fully access information and services, participate in consultations and discussions and attend events.

- When working with internal clients, the Communications team continues to ensure that accessibility of documents and products is a priority. All-staff messages distributed via InfoNorth adhere to Treasury Board Secretariat accessibility guidelines, use descriptive web links, are presented in plain language, and are available in both official languages.
- We ensure that ALT text accompanies photos and graphics in key documents, including the Departmental Plan, the Departmental Results Report and the President's transition binder, all of which are available on the Agency's website.
- Although there have been no requests to date from clients or the public for documents in alternate format, we are able to provide large print or braille copies.
- Through CanNor's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), ISC provides technical support and guidance to help CanNor meet the Government of Canada Web Publishing and Accessibility Standards. ISC supports CanNor's commitment to accessible content by assisting with content management, webpage design, coding, toolset access and compliance with accessibility guidelines. This collaboration ensures that all digital content adheres to best practices for readability, usability, and accessibility, enabling Canadians to easily access and engage with CanNor's resources and services. CanNor Communications continues to monitor the intranet site for accessibility, making updates as needed. As

part of an upcoming intranet update, we will ensure that all sections are fully accessible and that new content is designed with accessibility in mind. We are considering including this service as part of the ISC MOU renewal.

- We provide information to employees on using plain language through multiple channels, such as all-staff emails, intranet articles and team meetings. The Communications team is launching a new internal newsletter where a 'Learning Section' will include information about accessibility in communication and written products to keep the topic top-of-mind. We will include articles and tips on plain language and can offer information sessions for employees to deepen their understanding. These articles will touch on accessibility features, such as closed captioning, ALT text, plain language and document formatting. Additionally, we will include plain language resources and links to our intranet site. Managers are encouraged to promote the use of plain language within their teams to enhance clarity and accessibility in all communications.

## PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Accessible procurement is about identifying accessibility barriers and how requirements can be defined to meet the needs of a broad range of end-users. We are continuing to follow direction and guidance from Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) while relying on our service provider, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

## DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The [Nothing Without Us](#) strategy identifies the need to ensure that persons with disabilities, including employees and clients, have barrier-free access to programs and services.

- To determine if our clients and the public face any barriers in accessing services or applying for funding, we conducted a Client Survey in the first quarter of 2024. We received no responses so in November 2024, we sent targeted e-mails to clients and potential clients inviting them to complete the survey. The results will be analyzed in early 2025 and an action plan developed to remedy, where possible, any barriers identified.

- We want to ensure that individuals and organizations applying for funding are able to do so. In order to assist with this:
  - We accept hard copy applications including handwritten forms; and
  - We have a general phone line and generic e-mail address to receive enquiries and will hold one-on-one meetings in-person or virtually to support the application process.
- The Employee Accessibility Survey conducted in 2022 identified that some employees experience barriers in accessing some training. This will be explored further in 2025.

## TRANSPORTATION

CanNor does not have responsibility for transportation of clients or the public, but is committed to ensuring that all employees who are required to travel to carry out employment-related responsibilities are able to do so safely.

- We have a corporate vehicle in each of the Iqaluit, Yellowknife and Whitehorse offices for employees to use for work-related tasks. The current vehicles are not accessible. The purchase of new vehicles is planned for Whitehorse and Yellowknife in the 2025-26 fiscal year and for Iqaluit in 2026-27 and consideration will be given to accessibility when purchasing decisions are made. CanNor will make these vehicles available to other Federal Departments should an accessible vehicle be required.
- There are unique challenges with travel in the North and in the past, some employees experienced challenges with accessible travel (difficulty getting on/off small aircraft due to limited accessibility options). Where an employee is unable to be accommodated by public transport safely, in a way that preserves their dignity, we will work with the employee to explore alternatives.

## OTHER

We have begun identifying potential resources for effective meetings through the CSPS. There are a variety of resources that will allow employees to choose

learning that is the most relevant and works best with their learning style. Resources include online (self-paced) courses, virtual courses and job aids (info sheets). We will have these resources compiled and made available to employees by March 31, 2025.

Fire alarm testing is done according to an established schedule. This can cause a “screeching” noise for employees with hearing aids. CanNor advises all employees in advance of fire alarm testing so that they can take action required for comfort/safety.

The Employee Accessibility Survey identified that not receiving written materials in advance to allow for review prior to a meeting was a barrier to effective participation. We will include this in the resources to be shared with staff for leading effective meetings. We will also review the Terms of Reference for all Committees during the 2025 calendar year and ensure that an appropriate timeframe to share information with members is included for each, depending on what is reasonable for that Committee.

We recognize the importance of an ergonomically correct workspace on an employee’s health and productivity. We will put a process in place whereby an employee can request an ergonomic assessment.

## CONSULTATIONS

- Accessibility Committee: CanNor’s Accessibility Committee includes employees with and without disabilities from all four offices (Iqaluit, Yellowknife, Whitehorse, National Capital Region) as well as subject-matter experts from CanNor’s internal services and program delivery areas. We were pleased to welcome new members to the Committee in 2024 as we bid farewell to others. As this Progress Report was being written, the Accessibility Committee was briefed on the progress being made towards completion of the activities identified in the Accessibility Plan and an opportunity given to provide input into any areas of concern. The Committee was provided the opportunity to comment and provide input into this Report prior to publishing.

- Clients: In early December 2024 we surveyed clients and potential clients regarding Accessibility at CanNor. We will use the results of this survey to make changes and improve processes if accessibility concerns are identified.
- Executive Committee: The Executive Committee was provided with updates on Accessibility throughout the year. Committee members provided input into this report and renewed their commitment to accessibility at CanNor.

## FEEDBACK

CanNor's [Accessibility Plan](#) and [Progress Reports](#) are on CanNor's website. The [Accessibility Feedback Process](#) invites input on accessibility experiences at CanNor, with multiple options available for submitting feedback.

No feedback has been received since the publication of CanNor's Accessibility Plan in December 2022.