



Accessibility Plan

Canadian Grain Commission

2023 to 2025
Revised August 2024

Accessibility Plan

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Message from the Chief Commissioner

The Canadian Grain Commission is committed to equality for persons with disabilities and delivering on the goals of the *Accessible Canada Act*. In consultation with persons with disabilities, we have developed the Canadian Grain Commission Accessibility Plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. We will be implementing this plan and reporting on our progress over the next two years, and then updating it after that to ensure continued advancement. The plan reflects our values of excellence, integrity, respect and accountability and builds on Government of Canada initiatives to create adaptable and inclusive workplaces. It is also part of a broader framework for modernizing Canadian Grain Commission workplaces that includes our Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee's Action Plan and our [2021-22 Departmental Plan](#). I am confident that through our collective efforts, we can create a work environment where employees with disabilities can fully contribute, where diverse perspectives are valued and where accessibility is built into every aspect of our work. If you encounter a barrier to accessibility or have feedback on how we can do better, I invite you to reach out to our [accessibility officer](#). It is through your input and collaboration that we can achieve our goal of full accessibility for persons with disabilities.



Doug Chorney
Chief Commissioner Canadian Grain Commission

Executive summary

With guidance from the *Accessible Canada Act*, the accessibility working group at the Canadian Grain Commission considered eight areas in which to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in our operations and activities. Feedback on barriers in these areas was received through email submissions, an online employee survey, discussions with individuals, and group discussions with divisional managers and subject matter experts. Most of what we heard related to work culture, employment and the built environment. Especially in these areas, a lack of understanding of visible and non-visible disabilities, as well as uncertainty about how to accommodate disabilities, were identified as barriers to creating inclusive and accessible work

spaces. Beginning with the hiring process and continuing throughout their careers, employees with disabilities need more information on the resources available to them. Managers need to be more aware of the importance of inclusion, their roles and responsibilities in the accommodation process and how to better support accommodations in a timely manner. To address these barriers, we will develop a communication strategy that provides essential information to employees about accessibility and that promotes inclusion throughout our organization. Mandatory training on inclusive hiring and accommodation processes will also be implemented. To further understand barriers to accessibility at the Canadian Grain Commission, we will establish processes for persons with disabilities to identify barriers. An outline of the actions to be undertaken in the first year can be found in Appendix A.

General

Who we are

The Canadian Grain Commission is a federal government organization that administers the provisions of the *Canada Grain Act*. We regulate grain handling in Canada to ensure the integrity and marketability of Canadian grain for domestic and international markets. Our responsibilities include:

- delivering grain quality and quantity assurance programs for Canadian grain exports
- conducting scientific research to understand all aspects of grain quality and grain safety
- establishing and maintaining Canada's science-based grain grading system
- ensuring producers receive fair compensation for their grain

We have a presence in seven provinces with the head office in Winnipeg and regional offices in Montreal and Vancouver. Our employees work in more than 40 locations, including terminal elevators at waterfront sites, scientific laboratories and offices. As of March 2022, the number of employees at the Canadian Grain Commission was 468. Of those, 3.3% officially identified as persons with disabilities, below the current work force availability of 9%¹.

Accessibility Statement

The Canadian Grain Commission is committed to making itself more accessible to people with disabilities in all our operations and activities by:

- promoting a culture of disability awareness and inclusion
- providing all persons access to employment opportunities
- identifying, removing and preventing barriers to workplace accessibility
- facilitating access to information and communications technologies for all employees

¹ [Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada for Fiscal Year 2020 to 2021 - Canada.ca](#)

- ensuring that communications about information, services, consultations and events are accessible to persons with disabilities
- promoting the purchase of goods and services that are accessible
- identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility in our programs and services
- identifying, removing and preventing barriers to work-related travel for employees with disabilities

As our Accessibility Plan moves ahead, we will receive and respond to feedback from employees and clients and will report on the action items in the plan on a regular basis.

Contact us

Employees, clients and members of the public can provide feedback to us on accessibility and barriers they have encountered. Your comments and questions can be sent to Scott Hazlitt, the Canadian Grain Commission accessibility officer, using any of the following methods:

- Email: accessibility-accessibilite@grainscanada.gc.ca
- Telephone: 431-336-3479
- Teletypewriter: 1-866-317-4289
- Mail: Canadian Grain Commission
303 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3G8

You can also contact the Canadian Grain Commission accessibility officer to request a copy of our plan and a description of our feedback process in print, large print, Braille, audio format or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology that is intended to assist persons with disabilities.

Consultations

In the spring of 2022, an accessibility working group was established to develop the Canadian Grain Commission's accessibility plan. The 4-person working group consists of Canadian Grain Commission employees who represents 4 divisions and 3 geographic regions, and includes 2 individuals living with a disability. The working group was responsible for organizing and conducting the accessibility consultations on which this plan is based. The following consultation methods were used:

1. Accessibility Survey

An online survey to better understand the level of accessibility at the Canadian Grain Commission was launched on June 9, 2022. The survey was promoted to all employees using email messages and was open for 2 weeks. Employees were given the option of taking the survey in a format that was most accessible for them. The survey contained 24 questions and space was given to add

detailed comments. The total number of respondents was 122, accounting for roughly 25% of the Canadian Grain Commissions overall population, with 24% indicating that they are persons living with disabilities. These disabilities included various physical, mental, communication and sensory impairments.

2. Individual discussions

Separate virtual meetings were held with 5 Canadian Grain Commission employees who indicated in the accessibility survey that they were willing to discuss their lived experiences with the working group. Four of these individuals were persons living with disabilities.

3. Accessibility email box

On May 30, 2022, an accessibility email box was set up to allow Canadian Grain Commission employees to submit feedback, ask questions or raise concerns about accessibility. The availability of this email box was promoted in an email message to all employees and in our group discussions. The email box has received 48 messages as of November 2022, including the submissions of accessibility questionnaires related to discussions with divisions.

4. Group discussions

In August 2022, group discussions were held with managers and subject matter experts from 6 out of the 7 divisions at the Canadian Grain Commission. The subject matter experts were from a range of areas across the organization including Labour Relations, Procurement and Health and Safety. The discussions were conducted via hybrid and virtual meetings. These discussions were held to establish a baseline understanding of accessibility at the Canadian Grain Commission, and identify areas of strength and weakness using different perspectives. To facilitate these discussions, accessibility questionnaires were sent to divisional managers ahead of time. Industry Services also offered individual employees the opportunity to complete the accessibility questionnaires due to the differences in their operational environments. Completed questionnaires were submitted to the accessibility working group email box.

Priority areas

[Section 5 of the Accessible Canada Act](#) describes 7 priority areas in which barriers to accessibility should be identified, removed and prevented. Our consultations considered these areas as well as the culture of disability in the workplace. We compared what we heard with where we want to be as an organization and determined a list of measurable steps to achieve our accessibility goals. As the majority of feedback received during consultations concentrated on culture, employment and the built environment, these areas will be where we focus much of our immediate attention. Furthermore, deliberate efforts in the first year will be placed on activities relating to training and awareness and reviewing our staffing processes, with other measures introduced thereafter.

Culture

What we heard

In our consultations we heard that employees with disabilities sometimes were made to feel less valuable and less productive when they self-identified. They often felt uncomfortable requesting accommodations and had the sense that accommodations were given as a favour. Some employees with disabilities said that proving the need for accommodation was too difficult, especially for non-visible disabilities. In some instances, accommodation requests were ignored or dismissed. Employees also reported that they did not know what accommodations were available to them.

Where we want to be

- employees understand what accessibility means and why it is important
- employees have the tools and training to make the Canadian Grain Commission a fully accessible employer and service provider
- a culture of inclusion for employees with disabilities exists across the organization

How we will get there

- develop a communications strategy in consultation with employee networks and persons with disabilities to raise awareness and promote a culture of accessibility at the Canadian Grain Commission (years 1 and 2)
 - education sessions to increase disability awareness
 - regional activities to celebrate National AccessAbility Week
 - create accessibility logo to increase the visibility of accessibility initiatives
- provide accommodation training for all employees (years 1 and 2)
- provide information to employees about the self-identification process (years 1 and 2)

Employment

What we heard

In our consultations we heard that the stigma associated with having a disability is still prevalent and this prevents some employees with disabilities from self-declaring during the selection process or seeking assessment or workplace accommodations. In addition, employees and managers lack information on how disability is defined. We also heard that supervisors and managers often have a limited understanding of how to process and implement requests for accommodation.

In the appointment and onboarding processes there is an insufficient amount of information for candidates about assessment format and requirements and a lack of opportunity to identify potential barriers and request appropriate accommodations. There is also an absence of consultation with persons with disabilities in staffing processes.

Where we want to be

- a workforce that reflects the workforce availability of persons with disabilities in Canada
- recruitment, retention, and promotion processes that allow persons with disabilities full access to employment opportunities
- documentation of accommodation follow-up

How we will get there

- provide information to employees about the self-declaration process (year 1)
- establish a process for the evaluation of accessibility biases and barriers in all steps of the assessment process including planning, statement of qualifications, advertising, and accommodations (year 1)
- Building on the unconscious bias training that was provided to all staffing sub-delegated managers, provide training for managers on inclusive hiring processes and the implementation of accommodations (year 1)
- increase the involvement of persons with visible and non-visible disabilities in consultation and assessment processes (years 1 and 2)
- engage with Human Resources and persons with disabilities in the review of positions' conditions of employment and occupational requirements
- adopt the use of the [Government of Canada Accessibility Passport](#) to facilitate ongoing conversations between employees and their managers on accessibility during onboarding and in regular performance review discussions (year 1)
- establish mandatory training for all employees on the accommodation process (years 1 and 2)

The built environment

What we heard

Nearly 40% of accessibility survey respondents said that they had either witnessed or experienced architectural or physical barriers in their workplace. We also heard that more awareness was needed on how to document barriers for use in future planning. Concerns were raised that accommodation requests were not acted upon if the request seemingly affected only one employee and this led to employees finding their own solutions outside work channels. It was acknowledged that the removal of barriers is challenging in work settings such as research laboratories and terminal elevators. It was also reported there needs to be more awareness of evacuation plans for persons with disabilities.

Where we want to be

- employees have barrier-free access to all Canadian Grain Commission leased or managed locations, including office and special purpose spaces

How we will get there

- conduct a full review of our physical work environments in consultation with persons with disabilities to identify and document barriers to accessibility
- begin to address the removal of existing barriers in consultation with the property management team (years 1 and 2)
- establish a process for identifying and reporting barriers in the built environment and post on our internal website (year 1)
- ensure employees are well aware of site evacuation plans and store them in locations that are accessible to all employees (year 1)
- establish mandatory training for all employees on the accommodation process (years 1 and 2)
- collaborate with persons with disabilities to prevent barriers to accessibility in any new builds or retrofits, including GC workplace and new headquarters initiatives
- establish specialized training for identifying and removing barriers in laboratories and terminal elevators using the expertise of Health and Safety

Information and communication technologies

What we heard

In our consultations we heard that more awareness is needed about the availability of adaptive equipment and that the process to obtain adaptive equipment should be simpler. Employees want better support from managers in obtaining ICT equipment and in accessing online information such as journal subscriptions. More awareness is also needed about how ICT accommodations move with an employee if they change jobs. Concerns were raised about the feasibility of using adaptive equipment in waterfront locations.

Where we want to be

- all employees can access and use information and communications technology needed to perform work duties
- all requests for information and communication technology are addressed in a timely manner

How we will get there

- establish a process to identify and document barriers to accessibility in our systems, software, websites and equipment and post details on our internal website
- begin to address the removal of existing barriers in consultation with Information Management and Technology Services (years 1 and 2)
- inform all employees of the training, tools, adaptive computer technologies and services available from the [Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology \(AAACT\) program](#) (year 1)

- offer training to managers and subject matter experts on AACT

Communication, other than information and communication technologies

What we heard

Employees indicated in our consultations that meetings and communications are generally provided in an accessible manner. Large in-person meetings are not seen as fully accessible, however, due especially to background noises. More closed captioning needs to be available for meetings and training materials. A well-defined procedure for employees and clients to submit feedback on the accessibility of communications and events is needed.

Where we want to be

- all communications and events use language that is informed, respectful and accessible to persons with disabilities
- all employees and clients can fully use information and services, engage in consultations and conversations, and attend and participate in events

How we will get there

- consult with accessibility subject matter experts and persons with disabilities to test communications products and identify areas for improvement
- create an accessibility feedback form for posting on our external and internal websites (year 1)
- promote the availability of automated closed captioning for video meetings (year 1)
- prepare and distribute information on how to host accessible meetings (year 1)
- promote the availability of accommodations for employees attending large in-person meetings

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

What we heard

The Treasury Board [Directive on the Management of Procurement](#) mandates the consideration of accessibility requirements in federal procurement. This includes accessibility training, ensuring clients consider accessibility, advising businesses of accessibility requirements and documenting reasons for not including accessibility criteria in procurement. The organization has carefully reviewed all of its policies, practices, programs, and services related to the procurement of goods, services and facilities and has determined that there are no barriers at this time.

Where we want to be

- goods and services bought by the Canadian Grain Commission are inclusive and accessible by default

The Design and delivery of programs and services

What we heard

Consultations indicated that more information is needed regarding the ability of our programs and services to meet the accessibility needs of our clients. Programs and services are generally not designed in consultation with persons with disabilities.

Where we want to be

- all Canadian Grain Commission programs and services are designed and delivered in a way that is accessible to persons with disabilities

How we will get there

- design a process to capture feedback from both internal and external clients with disabilities to identify, and remove barriers in our programs and services (year 1)
- prioritize training opportunities on the design and delivery of accessible programs and services
- build accessibility into all new policies and programs
- increase training for managers on accessibility accommodations (years 1 and 2)

Transportation

What we heard

Our consultations found that accommodations are available for Canadian Grain Commission employees who travel for work and employees are comfortable approaching managers about travel arrangements. The organization has carefully reviewed all of its policies, practices, programs, and services related to transportation and has determined that there are no barriers at this time.

Where we want to be

- all staff are aware of the accommodation policy, processes and options available for travel
- job postings and letters of offer accurately reflect travel requirements and outline the available accommodations

Budget and resource allocation

In order to reach the goals identified above the organization has committed a budget of \$65,000 in the first year for training, consultation with external subject matter experts, promotion of activities related to accessibility and resources allocated to ensure that progress is being made.

Appendix A - Accessibility actions for year 1 by theme and area of focus

	Awareness	Process and Reviews	Consultation and Collaboration	Training
Culture	Years 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop communication strategy to raise awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -speakers -National AccessAbility Week -accessibility logo provide information on the self-identification process to employees 	No actions at this time	No actions at this time	Years 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> training for all employees on accommodations* including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special middle managers session - Speaker Series event focussed on disability
Employment	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide information on the self-declaration process to employees to prevent potential barriers 	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish a process for the evaluation of accessibility biases and barriers in all steps of the staffing assessment process adopt the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport to encourage accommodation conversations during regular PSPM discussions 	Years 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to prevent barriers, increase the involvement of persons with disabilities in the assessment process 	Years 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> training for managers on inclusive hiring and accommodations to prevent and remove barriers
Built Environment	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure employees are aware of site evacuation plans and store them in locations that are accessible 	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a system for identifying and reporting barriers and ensure employees are well informed 	Years 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to address the removal of existing barriers and prevent future ones in consultation with the property management team 	No actions at this time
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate information about the AACT program to all employees 	No actions at this time	Years 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaborate with Information Management and Technology Services to begin the removal of existing barriers that have been identified 	No actions at this time
Communications	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote the availability of automated closed captioning for video meetings prepare and distribute information on how to host accessible meetings to prevent barriers 	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> create an accessibility feedback form that will be posted on our external and internal websites** 		
Procurement	No actions at this time	No actions at this time	No actions at this time	No actions at this time
Programs and Services	No actions at this time	No actions at this time	No actions at this time	No actions at this time

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Transportation	No actions at this time			
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*training was captured under Employment and Programs and Services as well

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