



Accessibility Plan for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Progress Report on the implementation of the third year of the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

Executive summary

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (the Office of the Commissioner) is pleased to publish its third and final Progress Report on the implementation of its 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan (Accessibility Plan). The vast majority of the initiatives set out in the Accessibility Plan have been implemented.

For the preparation of this report, the various directorates within the Office of the Commissioner were asked to report on the implementation of their initiatives, and staff with disabilities were invited to share their experience and perception of accessibility at the Office of the Commissioner, as well as their perception of the Accessibility Plan.

This final Progress Report will enable us to continue our conversations and reflections with the staff concerned so that the necessary actions can be taken to recognize and eliminate existing barriers to accessibility and prevent those that may arise.

General Information

Person in charge of feedback

At the Office of the Commissioner, the person responsible for gathering feedback on the Accessibility Plan is Roxanne Comeau, Director of Policy and Research in the Strategic Orientations and External Relations Branch (formerly the Policy and Communications Branch). Inquiries about accessible formats, accessibility or barriers to accessibility can be sent by email to accessibilite-accessibility@clo-ocol.gc.ca, by telephone to 1-613-410-1866, or by mail to 30 Victoria Street, 6th Floor, Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0T8.

Accessible Canada Act

In 2018, the government introduced Bill C-81, *An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada* (the *Accessible Canada Act*), which received Royal Assent in June 2019 and came into force on July 11, 2019. This Act aims to make Canada a barrier-free country by 2040.

Under the [Accessible Canada Act](#), federally regulated entities must report to the public on their policies and practices related to the recognition and removal of barriers by publishing accessibility plans, feedback processes and progress reports.

The *Accessible Canada Act* implements a proactive and inclusive approach to the identification and removal of barriers in the federal public administration. It provides for seven areas of action:

- Employment
- Built environment
- Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- Communication, other than ICT
- Procurement of goods, services and facilities
- Design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation

Under the *Accessible Canada Act*, the Office of the Commissioner prepared and published an accessibility plan on December 31, 2022. This is a progress report on this plan for the third and final year of its implementation.

Organization

Mandate

The Office of the Commissioner supports the Commissioner of Official Languages (the Commissioner) in his mission as an agent of Parliament, to ensure that the main objectives of the *Official Languages Act* are met:

- Ensure the equality of English and French in federal institutions.
- Support the preservation and development of official language minority communities in Canada.
- Advance the equality of English and French in Canadian society, taking into account the diversity of provincial and territorial language policies.
- Promote the future of French in Quebec.
- Clarify the official language obligations of federal institutions.

To support the Commissioner in fulfilling his mission, the Office of the Commissioner has two main areas of activity that go hand in hand and complement each other: compliance and promotion.

All human resources and Public Service Employee Survey responses

To fulfill its mandate, the Office of the Commissioner employed 172 people nationwide in 2025. Its headquarters is located in Gatineau, Quebec, and it has five regional offices: Moncton (New Brunswick), Montréal (Quebec), Toronto (Ontario), Winnipeg (Manitoba) and Edmonton (Alberta). It also has three satellite offices in Sudbury, Ontario; Regina, Saskatchewan; and Vancouver, British Columbia.

In addressing the equity, diversity and inclusion of employment equity groups, the Office of the Commissioner's 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan incorporated the results of the [2020 Public Service Employee Survey \(PSES\)](#), to which 148 of the organization's employees responded. These results are presented again below, along with those of the [2022–2023 PSES](#), to which 135 of the organization's employees responded. The results show the following:

- In 2020, 88% of respondents said they felt accepted as an equal member of the team, and 92% of respondents felt that members of their work unit behave in a respectful manner. The 2022 results for these same questions were similar, at 88% and 94%, respectively.
- In 2020, 85% of respondents said they felt that the Office of the Commissioner respected individual differences (for example, culture, work styles, ideas, abilities). In 2022, this proportion had dropped somewhat to 80%.
- In 2020, some respondents indicated that the organization could do better by implementing activities and practices that support a diverse workplace.
- In 2020, 92% of respondents said they felt they were treated with respect. In 2022, this proportion had dropped slightly to 89%.
- In 2020, 91% of the 23 respondents who had requested workplace accommodations (including 6 in relation to a disability) said they were satisfied with the measures put in place. In 2022, this proportion had dropped considerably to 71% of the 10 respondents.

The results of the 2024 Survey will be used to develop the 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan.

People with disabilities according to the Public Service Employee Survey responses

In terms of employees of the Office of the Commissioner who self-identified as having a disability, 15 of the 115 respondents (11.5%) said they had a disability, according to the responses to question 118 of the 2022 PSES. By way of comparison, among all PSES respondents in participating agencies and departments, according to their [distribution by demographic characteristics](#), 13% said they had a disability in 2022 (up from 9% in 2020 and from 7% in 2018).

Methodology for preparing and publishing the third progress report

The Office of the Commissioner's methodological approach to the preparation and publication of its 2025 progress report was as follows:

- Review and update key documents. Send out a call to all directorates and their directors in September 2025, asking them to report on the implementation of their initiatives in the final year of the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan.
- Send out a call to all Office of the Commissioner staff in September 2025, inviting people with disabilities to participate in the consultation.

Presentation

The report begins by presenting the best practices and barriers identified in the [Office of the Commissioner's 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan](#) under each of the areas covered by section 5 of the [Accessible Canada Act](#). The status of implementation of initiatives contained in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan is then presented under each area. This is followed by a presentation of the approach taken to consult people with disabilities from the Office of the Commissioner's staff.

Areas covered by section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*

This section looks at the implementation of the initiatives set out in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan for the first year in each of the seven areas covered by the *Accessible Canada Act*. It begins with a reminder of the best practices and barriers identified in the Accessibility Plan for each area and then reports on the implementation of the initiatives planned for 2024.

Employment

The Office of the Commissioner's 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan sets out the following best practices and barriers.

Best practices identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- The Office of the Commissioner has been accommodating the needs of people with disabilities since long before the *Accessible Canada Act* came into force.
- In all staffing processes, employees are asked to identify whether they need accommodation to be able to participate fully and equally in staffing processes and to remove barriers to their employment.
- Delegated managers sometimes use the services of the Public Service Commission's Personnel Psychology Centre to identify the most appropriate accommodation based on the disability.
- On the Office of the Commissioner's checklist for new employees, managers are required to tick a box to confirm that they have discussed the employee's accommodation needs prior to their arrival. All the necessary actions are taken to meet the needs of employees who require accommodation.

- As part of the Office of the Commissioner’s delegation requirements, all sub-delegated staffing managers are required to complete the Canada School of Public Service’s “Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce” course.
- Self-identification occurs in the appointment phase, when future employees are encouraged to complete a self-identification form.
- The Office of the Commissioner has an Employment Equity and Diversity Advisory Group and a champion of employment equity, diversity and inclusion. The Human Resources team works with the Champion to publish numerous communications on diversity and inclusion all year round. There is also a variety of information available from the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer’s Centre on Diversity and Inclusion.

Barriers identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- The Statement of Merit Criteria and method of assessment are not always accessible and inclusive.
- Managers and employees may have unconscious biases.
- Human Resources forms and documents are not all available in an accessible format.
- Employees are not aware of their accessibility rights and obligations.

Initiatives of the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- **Require all employees to take the Canada School of Public Service’s online course “Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility” (two-hour course, mandatory for all employees).**

Implementation complete

Various steps have been taken to ensure that all employees complete the course. In May 2023, a call letter for the 2023–2024 performance agreements was posted on the Office of the Commissioner’s intranet informing staff that this training was to be included in their 2023–2024 learning plan. The course and activity in the Accessibility Plan were added to the performance agreements of executives.

- **Remind employees about the Office of the Commissioner’s Accessibility Plan and encourage them to report any barriers.**

Implementation complete

In May 2023, a reminder was posted on the Office of the Commissioner’s intranet asking employees to read the Accessibility Plan and report any barriers. Another reminder was made in 2024, in a message from the champion, and again in 2025, in a reminder letter regarding the new Accessibility Plan consultation. The Accessibility Plan was also made available to employees on the Office of the Commissioner’s website. No employees reported any barriers.

- **Launch a new call letter for self-identification.**

Implementation postponed and alternative provided

In June 2023, a follow-up was conducted with the Treasury Board Secretariat to find out when the new self-identification questionnaire would be released. In September 2023, it was learned that the

questionnaire would not be released in 2023. Since the initiative could not be implemented in 2023, a call letter to all employees was instead issued on the Office of the Commissioner's intranet in November 2023 asking them to complete the Employment Equity Self-Identification Form if they had not already done so or if their situation had changed.

- **Increase use of available central agency Persons with Disabilities inventories (for example, Federal Student Work Experience Program).**

Implementation complete

Various measures have been taken to increase the use of these inventories. For example, the Office of the Commissioner took part in the job fair at the annual Canadian Congress on Disability Inclusion, it sent a message to managers to encourage the hiring of persons with disabilities, it shared candidate pools and it promoted National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Despite the aforementioned efforts, the available data does not show any increase in the use of inventories of persons with disabilities by central agencies. Human Resources will therefore continue to analyze and promote the various options available to encourage the hiring of persons with disabilities.

- **Assign the accessibility function to the Champion of Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.**

Implementation complete

In May 2023, the Office of the Commissioner informed its staff through its intranet that the role of Champion for Accessibility had been assigned to the Champion of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The Accessibility Champion has since been involved in a number of initiatives and has spoken to staff about the activities set out in the Accessibility Plan.

- **Add a section to the Office of the Commissioner's intranet site to refer employees to all of the resources and information available on accessibility.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner's intranet site has been updated with a section that provides various resources and information on accessibility.

- **Implement the new requirement of the *Public Service Employment Act* related to assessment methods by using the Public Service Commission guide entitled *Identification of biases and barriers in assessment methods*.**

Implementation complete

Inspired by the Public Service Commission's guide, the Office of the Commissioner has successfully implemented the new assessment method requirements in the [Public Service Employment Act](#).

- **Remind employees of the Office of the Commissioner's Accessibility Plan and encourage them to report any barriers.**

Implementation complete

In October 2024, the Office of the Commissioner posted a reminder on its intranet site encouraging employees to read the Accessibility Plan and report any barriers.

- **Repeat the call letter for self-identification annually.**

Implementation complete

As of September 2024, the new Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's self-identification questionnaire had still not been published, and no launch date had been confirmed.

Therefore, in November 2024, a call letter was posted on the Office of the Commissioner's intranet site asking all employees to complete the employment equity self-identification form in cases where this had not been done or the situation had changed.

- **Increase use of the available central agency Persons with Disabilities inventories (for example, Federal Student Work Experience Program).**

Implementation complete

Various actions were taken to increase the use of these inventories. In August and November 2024, a message was sent to the directors to promote the hiring of people with disabilities and the sharing of candidate pools.

Despite the aforementioned efforts, the available data does not show an increase in the use of central agency Persons with Disabilities inventories. The Human Resources team will continue to analyze and promote the various options available to encourage the hiring of people with disabilities, and managers will be asked to show the efforts that have been made in this regard.

- **Conduct an employment equity review of systems, processes and policies to identify gaps and address identified issues.**

Implementation complete

By June 2024, the Office of the Commissioner had completed its review of employment systems, processes and policies in order to identify where improvements are needed and to help put an action plan in place.

- **Liaise with the Office of Public Service Accessibility to determine whether best practices can be adopted by the Office of the Commissioner.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner is continuing to liaise with the Office of Public Service Accessibility to identify best practices.

- **Research the Federal Speakers' Bureau on Diversity and Inclusion to find a speaker to give a presentation to all staff (annual general meeting, Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign, etc.).**

Implementation complete

A speaker gave a presentation to all staff at the 2024 annual general meeting. Topics included diversity, inclusion and resilience.

- **Provide training to all staff on creating accessible documents and emails.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner promoted and provided training to all staff on creating accessible documents and emails.

- **Provide plain language training to all employees.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner promoted and provided plain language training to all staff.

- **Add to the manager’s checklist on performance management a requirement to take courses on plain language and on creating accessible documents, if applicable.**

Implementation complete

The manager’s checklist on performance management includes a link to the recommended training list, which includes courses on creating accessible documents and on plain language.

- **Review and modify employment documents (e.g., forms) to ensure that they are in an accessible format.**

Implementation complete and ongoing

Employment documents are gradually being made available in an accessible format.

- **Remind employees about the Office of the Commissioner’s Accessibility Plan and encourage them to report any barriers.**

Implementation complete

As each progress report on the implementation of the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan is prepared, all employees receive an invitation to report any barriers they may encounter.

- **Send out a call letter for self-identification.**

Implementation complete

Every November, all Office of the Commissioner staff receive a call letter for self-identification. A personalized campaign to raise team awareness in person is also in the works.

- **Promote the LiveWorkPlay Program.**

Implementation complete

The LiveWorkPlay initiative is managed by a community organization from Ottawa. Its representatives gave a presentation to Office of the Commissioner managers on how to recruit and support people with disabilities in the workplace.

- **Increase use of the available central agency Persons with Disabilities inventories (for example, Federal Student Work Experience Program).**

Implementation complete

Office of the Commissioner managers were informed of the various programs provided by the federal government in relation to recruiting people with disabilities.

Built environment

The Office of the Commissioner's 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan sets out the following best practices and barriers.

Best practices identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

Best practices

- Accessibility standards were taken into consideration when designing the 2022 office reconfiguration.
- Administrative Services ensure that the building is accessible.
- Administrative Services follow the Health and Safety Committee's recommendations regarding accessibility.

Best practices currently in effect

- Review the emergency evacuation procedures and update as required to ensure that the buddy system is in place and working.
- Ensure that there is a volunteer system for workplace emergencies and provide the required training.
- Update the Fire Warden lists and ensure fire wardens receive adequate training.
- Ensure that CPR training recipients are identified and trained.
- Ensure that regular occupational health and safety monitoring is conducted and that incidents are properly recorded.
- Ensure that identified occupational health and safety issues are addressed.
- Ensure that all office redesigns comply with the latest accessibility standards.
- Ensure that the list of people with reduced mobility is updated frequently.

Barriers identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- Some of the record rooms may not meet all accessibility requirements.
- Not all doors are equipped with push plates for people with disabilities.
- Buildings in the regions may not be completely accessible.

Initiatives of the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- **Review signage and wayfinding design.**

Implementation complete

Signage and wayfinding design in workspaces of the Office of the Commissioner offices were reviewed in order to make information accessible to all employees.

- **Document evacuation plans for employees with disabilities.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner implemented evacuation plans for all employees, including employees with disabilities.

- **Develop an accessibility checklist for inspections.**

Implementation complete

A checklist that reflects the Office of the Commissioner’s organizational and operational reality was developed to be used for onsite inspections.

- **Review building and workplace accessibility in all regions.**

Partial implementation

The review of building and workplace accessibility is underway. The Office of the Commissioner has completed its review of almost half of its offices. As the team travels to other regions, it will conduct the other office reviews. All reviews are based on the above-mentioned list.

- **Conduct a review of physical barriers on the premises.**

Partial implementation

The review of physical barriers on the premises is completed along with the accessibility review. This work will continue in order to review all regional offices.

- **Analyze feasibility of reviewing built environment against the requirements of the most current version of CSA B651-18.**

Implementation complete

The preparation of the inspection checklist of the Office of the Commissioner's head office and regional offices was based on the guidelines of Accessibility Standards Canada’s CSA/ASC B651 standard.

- **Ask Public Services and Procurement Canada to ensure that smoke alarms, fire alarms and other emergency alarms are visual as well as auditory.**

Implementation complete

The alarms in the Office of the Commissioner’s offices meet the minimal legal requirements.

Information and communications technologies

The Office of the Commissioner’s 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan identifies the following best practices and barriers.

Best practices identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- The Office of the Commissioner complies with the Treasury Board’s Standard on Web Accessibility. For example, the website, including the content added in 2024, complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, Level AA (perceivable content, operable

navigation, understandable content, robust site and conformance with assistive technologies).

- Workstations are equipped to accommodate employees' needs.
- The Information Technology team responds quickly to all accommodation requests.

Barriers identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- Some applications may not meet all accessibility standards.
- The Office of the Commissioner may not be aware of all of the accessibility standard requirements.

Initiatives of the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- **Research existing accessibility standards.**

Implementation complete

Information and communication technology accessibility standards are constantly evolving, and the Office of the Commissioner is following these developments closely in order to determine how they apply to its organizational reality.

- **Identify and adopt accessibility standards that correspond to the Office of the Commissioner's needs.**

Implementation complete and ongoing

Existing accessibility standards were identified and reviewed for their applicability to the Office of the Commissioner. The accessibility standards that meet the Office of the Commissioner's needs were identified following the review. The Office of the Commissioner is currently consulting with Public Services and Procurement Canada and with Shared Services Canada on two existing initiatives in the area of automating analysis and developing measures. Consultations will continue, and the Office of the Commissioner will monitor the development of these initiatives.

- **Consult with the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program on leading-edge technology.**

Implementation complete

Consultations were conducted and the information has been continuously integrated in the Office of the Commissioner's ICT management.

- **Conduct a gap analysis on the standards currently being used for applications and equipment.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner completed its gap analysis on the standards currently being used for applications and equipment and is now continuously working to make them more accessible. A number of challenges remain, such as the use of PDF forms, which presents certain accessibility issues. As more employees use Microsoft Dynamics 365, fewer PDF forms will be used.

- **Require accessibility clauses to be included in technology acquisition contracts.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner has met the requirement to include accessibility clauses in technology acquisition contracts.

- **Explore opportunities for more accessible collaborative technology, including Teams (for example, closed captioning, recording).**

Implementation complete

An initial evaluation was conducted and showed that closed-captioning poses challenges in terms of official languages. The Office of the Commissioner will continue to assess the other functions.

- **Help other branches, as required, if Canadians have technical difficulties when filling out forms or accessing and leveraging services from the Office of the Commissioner.**

Implementation complete

The Information Management and Information Technology Directorate is continuing to support all branches of the Office of the Commissioner when Canadians ask for technical help in using the Office of the Commissioner's forms.

- **Develop a multi-year action plan to address the results of the gap analysis.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner has identified the main gaps in ITC accessibility and ensures that it will integrate these considerations into the management of existing technologies and the acquisition of new technologies.

- **Require accessibility clauses to be included in technology acquisition contracts.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner considers accessibility issues in its approach to acquiring new technologies. However, the extent of what it can do is limited by what technology providers can offer.

- **Consult with and join the GCconnex and GCcollab communities of practice to identify best practices and share lessons learned on complying with accessibility requirements.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner continues to work with other federal institutions and is an active participant in multiple communities of practice. It also collaborates, as required, with Shared Services Canada and its Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology program.

Communication other than information and communication technologies

The Office of the Commissioner's 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan identifies the following best practices and barriers.

Best practices identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- An external resource was contracted to review all of the interpretation bulletins published on the Office of the Commissioner's website to ensure that they all are written in plain language. The website has since been redesigned, and the bulletins are now integrated into the rest of the website's content and are written in plain language.
- Our web content management system supports accessibility.
- When the Office of the Commissioner posts videos online, captions are integrated into the video or transcriptions are added when there is only text in the video.
- Plain text is posted under images on the website to make the text in infographics accessible.
- Descriptive alternative text is programmed into visual content posted on the website as well as on social media (Facebook, X, Instagram).
- The autogenerated forms on the Office of the Commissioner's website are designed for accessibility.
- Colour contrast is taken into consideration when developing web content.
- Appropriate headings are used to organize the structure of web content.
- All web content can be accessed with a keyboard alone in a logical way.

Barriers identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- Documents and presentations created by employees of the Office of the Commissioner, whether for internal or external use, are not always accessible.
- Meetings, events or training organized for internal or external use do not always take accessibility requirements into consideration.

2023–2025 Accessibility Plan initiatives

- **Avoid using GIFs and emojis in social media posts.**

Implementation complete

The Treasury Board Secretariat's new [Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#), including best practices, have been adopted by the Communications Directorate and communicated to employees. The Office of the Commissioner's new social media strategy (July 2024) includes many accessibility best practices and guidelines.

We implement the following practices:

- **Add alternative text for images:** Use alternative or descriptive text—including any text that appears on the image—to describe the image so that people with visual impairments who use screen readers can have equal access to it.

- **Include video subtitling:** Add subtitles for spoken words in videos to make them accessible for people who are hard of hearing or who do not speak the official language used in the video. Note that reels are often navigated in mute mode, so subtitling ensures that the message is delivered to all users.
- **Use CamelCase for hashtags:** CamelCase is a typographical convention that requires the first letter of each word to be capitalized. This allows people who use screen readers to hear the words individually rather than as one long incoherent word.
- **Do not replace words with emojis or emoticons:** Screen reader software does not read emojis or emoticons but rather describes them. This can be confusing for users if words are replaced by emojis, if there are too many emojis in a message or if there are no spaces between multiple emojis. Emojis should therefore be used sparingly and should not be used to replace words when delivering messages.
- **Write messages in plain language:** Ensure that messages published on social media platforms strictly follow the rules of plain language: simplify, avoid the passive voice, do not use unknown or uncommon acronyms, avoid jargon and ensure that messages can be understood by as many people as possible.
- **Ensure sufficient colour contrast in images:** Understand the importance of sufficient colour contrast to ensure that the text in images and graphics is legible. Make sure that colour choices meet the basic requirements for proper visibility while continuing to improve the Office of the Commissioner’s practices.
- **Make sure all links are to accessible web content:** Ensure that all links included in our social media posts lead to accessible web content.

As third-party service providers, social media platforms (X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn) are not bound by the Government of Canada’s web accessibility policies.

- **Use colour contrast appropriately on social media platforms.**

Implementation complete

When the Office of the Commissioner’s website was redesigned, a new visual identity was adopted that meets accessibility needs and requirements. The new visual identity is also used across the Office of the Commissioner’s social media accounts. Even theme-specific messages that do not reflect the Office of the Commissioner’s visual signature use reasonable, appropriate colour contrast.

- **Perform general website maintenance to ensure that material is current and determine whether it needs to be archived or brought up to standard.**

Implementation complete

When the Office of the Commissioner’s website was redesigned, a content update was completed. All outdated content was archived. The website content is regularly checked and updated, as the website is regarded as an evolving platform.

- **Follow the guidelines on making communication products and activities accessible, when appropriate.**

Implementation complete

When the Office of the Commissioner's website was redesigned, a new visual identity was adopted. Guidelines will continue to be followed. Communication products for the general public (website, press releases, social media content, responses to media inquiries) are written in clear, plain and concise language.

We drew on the centre's guidelines to elaborate instructions that respond to our own needs, and we diligently apply them to all of our communication products.

In addition, the tools and practices of the official languages workshops for federal institutions were reviewed and updated based on accessibility best practices, in order to rebuild PowerPoint presentations in a unilingual format and change the procedures to ensure participants receive the presentations in both official languages before the workshops.

- **Ensure that communication products are developed with an accessibility lens.**

Implementation complete

The Communications Directorate has published, communicated and adopted the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's new Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible, including best practices.

We have adapted these guidelines to our needs and designed specific instructions for each type of communication product. We also ensure that we systematically apply and track them.

Employees of the Office of the Commissioner have been informed that the organization is adopting the best practices set out by Employment and Social Development Canada's Information Technology Accessibility Office.

- **Create a checklist for employees to ensure that all documents posted on the Office of the Commissioner's website is accessible and written in plain language where possible.**

Implementation complete

The procedure to post on the [Office of the Commissioner's website](#) confirms this requirement and stipulates that the Web team must verify all documents to ensure accessibility and the use of plain language. This procedure is still in place. The items to be checked are based on the [Standard on Web Accessibility](#):

- If there are images, include descriptive alternative text.
- If there are videos, include subtitles and transcriptions.
- If there are links, make sure they have clear descriptions.
- Organize text to ensure a clear title hierarchy.
- Use plain language.
- Provide clear instructions for interactive features, such as forms, and ensure that validation of a missing or faulty element in a form is clearly indicated.

Since its redesign, the Office of the Commissioner's website features a colour palette that ensures sufficient contrast between the text and the background. Keyboard navigation is an option, and selected elements are highlighted. Compatibility with assistive technologies is still in place.

- **Modify presentation and document templates so that they are compliant with accessibility requirements and post them on the Office of the Commissioner’s intranet site.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner has updated its presentation and document templates to ensure they fully meet accessibility requirements, including those that apply to workshops for federal public servants. The templates have been made available on the intranet to be used by staff in preparing any product of presentation. They have been designed with accessibility best practices in mind and come with instructions to ensure they are as accessible as possible.

- **Share accessible communications knowledge with other branches through awareness sessions and material (for example, formatting, italics, columns, colour contrast, pictures, bullets, font size).**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner has developed its own guidelines and templates, including detailed instructions, for preparing Word documents, emails, PowerPoint presentations and other communications products. Other branches have access to these guidelines and templates on the intranet and via written awareness campaigns. Accessibility requirements and best practices in accessible communication are integrated into all products.

- **Ensure that the Office of the Commissioner’s webmaster uses ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Applications) roles on the website.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner webmaster uses ARIA roles when necessary.

- **Ensure the adaptability of the Office of the Commissioner’s web design.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner’s website was made more adaptable when it was redesigned. Since June 2023, the website has been responsive and automatically adjusts to any screen size, which guarantees a fluid experience, whether on a computer, tablet or smartphone. Content is therefore accessible and navigable on all platforms. Design for this responsive mode uses coding techniques such as CSS rules and media queries to adapt content to devices’ features and orientation.

- **Ensure that the Office of the Commissioner’s meetings, events and training sessions take accessibility requirements into consideration by creating a checklist for organizers.**

Implementation complete

Documents highlighting the importance of incorporating accessibility requirements into meetings have been developed and shared with all staff.

The latest annual general meeting, held in June, was organized using the latest accessibility guidelines, including its PowerPoint presentation format. The meeting was highlighted as a practical demonstration of how these standards can be applied and as a concrete example for staff.

- **Adapt existing presentations using the new presentation template.**

Implementation complete

All Office of the Commissioner’s staff have access to the new templates.

The new template includes the updated presentations on best practices to federal institutions. Other communications products were also adapted, such as emails from the Commissioner and agreements to be sent to federal institutions for investigations, which ensures compliance with accessibility standards across all communications.

- **Consider producing key documents in alternate formats—such as braille, large font—as required.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner is able to provide documents in alternate formats when requested. When provided systematically, alternate formats are considered accessible alternate formats; for example, after a PowerPoint presentation, the document may be shared by email, along with a simplified Word version and a descriptive text for all infographics and graphics containing data.

Staff was also made aware of what else could be requested, such as braille and a bigger font size, and the Communications team is always available to create such products as required.

- **Create a checklist to ensure that documents produced by clients are in an accessible format before being posted on the intranet site (e.g., news feeds).**

Implementation complete

The Communications team has written internal guidelines and detailed instructions for creating and delivering accessible documents and presentations. The guidelines include even more detailed checklists, developed in response to staff requests for clearer guidance on how to create accessible products. The guidelines and instructions are available on the intranet and were promoted to staff in awareness campaigns.

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

The Office of the Commissioner’s 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan identifies the following best practices and barriers.

Best practices identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- The request for goods and services form includes an accessibility attestation section that helps employees identify accessibility considerations when specifying requirements for goods or services to ensure that deliverables include accessibility features.
- The Office of the Commissioner developed a checklist to help its business owners identify accessibility requirements by providing different scenarios.
- Requests for proposal documents used by the Procurement team are accessible.
- The Office of the Commissioner uses Public Services and Procurement Canada templates that are in an accessible format.

Barriers identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- Procurement forms and documents are not all available in an accessible format.
- Business owners are not aware of their accessibility obligations when it comes to contracting for goods or services.

2023–2025 Accessibility Plan initiatives

- **Liaise with Public Services and Procurement Canada to determine accessibility clauses that can be added to procurement documents.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner communicates regularly with Public Services and Procurement Canada to add, when required, accessibility clauses to procurement documents.

- **Keep abreast of Public Services and Procurement Canada improvements with respect to accessible procurement and implement them where possible.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner attends meetings of the Client Advisory Board of Public Services and Procurement Canada, a forum for sharing information with client departments such as the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Accessibility of public contracts are discussed at these meetings.

- **Review the accessibility attestation form used by the organization’s business owners with a view to capturing more information.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner’s business owners use the reviewed form.

- **Network through the GCpedia community of practice to determine and adopt best practices.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner is an active participant in the GCpedia community of practice and works closely with key stakeholders, such as Public Services and Procurement Canada and Shared Services Canada.

- **Research and participate in any Government of Canada training and event as it relates to accessible procurement.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner participates in various training and discussion sessions involving key federal government procurement stakeholders.

- **Take Canada School of Public Service courses on readability and converting documents into PDF for people with visual impairments.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner participated in a course and continues to look at options to make PDF documents more accessible. With the implementation of Dynamics 365, fewer PDF forms will be used in the organization.

- **Explore contracting opportunities to access alternative accessibility services, as required, to address ad-hoc situations (e.g., sign language interpretation services, braille publication services).**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner has identified a number of options to consider to obtain specialized services to support accessibility, and this an ongoing process.

- **Monitor the Government of Canada’s Accessibility Hub and adopt best practices as appropriate.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner continuously monitors the Accessibility Hub for all new practices.

- **Review current procurement documentation with a view to simplifying where possible, enhancing readability and improving user friendliness.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner continuously reviews its procurement documents. The goal is to strike a balance between streamlining and ensuring that all information required for contractual purposes is included.

- **Review accessible procurement material on the intranet site and update, as required.**

Implementation complete

The Office of the Commissioner continuously reviews the accessible material on its intranet site. With the implementation of Dynamics 365, this process will be made easier.

Design and delivery of programs and services

The Office of the Commissioner’s 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan identifies the following best practices and barriers.

Best practices identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- The Office of the Commissioner provides various feedback options (in writing, by email) to federal institutions, staff and complainants.

Barriers identified in the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan

- Taking accessibility into consideration while ensuring that communication products are attractive and appealing to our younger audience.

- The current online complaint form and satisfaction survey do not include a question related to accessibility or special needs.
- Main points of contact with the public for investigations and follow-ups are not available in an accessible format.

2023–2025 Accessibility Plan initiatives

- **Review all templates and communication materials related to investigations and follow-ups to address accessibility issues.**

Implementation complete

With the June 2023 adoption of *An Act for the Substantive Equality of Canada’s Official Languages*, the investigation and follow-up templates and the communication materials were changed to be more gender neutral. The complaints process guide was also reviewed and updated to include an accessibility component.

- **Review the Office of the Commissioner’s service points to ensure that they comply with accessibility requirements and use the satisfaction survey to ask whether any existing barriers to accessibility were identified.**

Implementation complete

With the adoption of *An Act for the Substantive Equality of Canada’s Official Languages*, the Office of the Commissioner’s organizational structure was reviewed. In addition, the new Complaint and Request Management Centre was created as an organizational hub to centralize all of the Office of the Commissioner’s service points. The satisfaction survey was updated in 2024 to include accessibility questions.

- **Modify the online complaint form to ask whether complainants have special needs or require accommodation.**

Implementation complete with an alternate measure

The web page includes the information required to file a complaint using alternate processes, such as by phone or mail.

Transportation

The Office of the Commissioner’s 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan does not identify any best practices, barriers or initiatives in terms of transportation, because the Office of the Commissioner does not have a transportation mandate.

Consultations

Approach and methodology – How employees with disabilities were consulted

The Office of the Commissioner held a series of consultations with its employees and managers as part of the preparation for this progress report. Group meetings and follow-up meetings were held.

The Office of the Commissioner also held a consultation with its employees with disabilities. On September 3, 2025, the Strategic Orientation and Research team launched a consultation call-out email to all Office of the Commissioner staff.

The email invited staff members with disabilities to participate in the consultation, whether or not they had self-identified. They could choose one of two ways to participate.

They could do a semi-directed interview, in person or online, with a representative from the Human Resources team.

They could also respond to the interview questionnaire in writing.

Staff members could express their interest by sending a message to the address accessibilite-accessibility@clo-ocol.gc.ca, which was also used to follow up on the consultation.

A total of four Office of the Commissioner staff members expressed an interest in sharing their feedback on the implementation of the Accessibility Plan. These consultations shed light on considerations that the Office of the Commissioner will take into account in developing the next accessibility plan.