

# Elections Canada's Accessibility Plan



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# General

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You can request a copy in an alternate format of Elections Canada's Accessibility Plan or a description of the feedback process. Alternate formats include print, braille, audio and more. You can also send us feedback on our services.

Juan Melara-Pineda, Manager, Accessibility and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) at:

Elections Canada  
30 Victoria Street  
Gatineau, Quebec  
Canada, K1A 0M6

Or

Email:

[accessibilite-accessibility@elections.ca](mailto:accessibilite-accessibility@elections.ca).

You can send us suggestions, questions and complaints, request help and report incidents using our [Contact Us](#) form. Other ways to contact us are listed below.

Telephone

Toll-free in Canada and the United States: [1-800-463-6868](tel:1-800-463-6868)

Toll-free in Mexico: [001-800-514-6868](tel:001-800-514-6868)

From anywhere in the world: [1-613-993-2975](tel:1-613-993-2975)

For people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: TTY, toll-free in Canada and the United States: [1-800-361-8935](tel:1-800-361-8935)

Fax

Local: [1-613-954-8584](tel:1-613-954-8584)

Toll-free in Canada and the United States: [1-888-524-1444](tel:1-888-524-1444)

# Feedback

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You can provide your feedback on:

- barriers encountered when dealing with Elections Canada; and
- how we are implementing our Accessibility Plan.

Or on:

- how we can remove the barriers that have been identified;
- our Accessibility Plan generally; and
- our feedback process.

Here's how to send us feedback:

1. Write to our **Manager, Accessibility and Gender-Based Analysis Plus** (see email address below).
2. Use Elections Canada's [Contact Us](#) online form (after clicking on the link that best describes who you are, select Send Accessibility Feedback under *Why are you contacting Elections Canada?*).
3. By phone, fax or mail using the contact information below.

You can send your feedback anonymously. We will acknowledge receipt of your feedback using the same means of communication that you used to send it to us. However, if you send your feedback anonymously, we will not be able to acknowledge receipt. If you send feedback using the Contact Us form, we will reply using the contact information you provide.

You can also contact us to ask for a copy of our Accessibility Plan and a description of our feedback process in these alternate formats: print, large print, braille, audio or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology for persons with disabilities. We will provide the format you ask for as soon as possible. Braille and audio formats may take up to 45 days to send. Print, large print and electronic formats may take up to 15 days to send.

## Online Form

[Contact Us](#)

## Email

Manager, Accessibility and Gender-Based Analysis Plus

[accessibilite-accessibility@elections.ca](mailto:accessibilite-accessibility@elections.ca)

## **Telephone**

Toll-free in Canada and the United States: [1-800-463-6868](tel:1-800-463-6868)

Toll-free in Mexico: [001-800-514-6868](tel:001-800-514-6868)

From anywhere in the world: [1-613-993-2975](tel:1-613-993-2975)

## **Fax**

Local: [1-613-954-8584](tel:1-613-954-8584)

Toll-free in Canada and the United States: [1-888-524-1444](tel:1-888-524-1444)

## **Mailing Address**

Elections Canada  
30 Victoria Street  
Gatineau, Quebec  
Canada, K1A 0M6

## **Teletypewriter (TTY)**

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing: TTY, toll-free in Canada and the United States: [1-800-361-8935](tel:1-800-361-8935)

## **Video Relay Service (VRS)**

Elections Canada welcomes VRS calls. Visit [VRS Canada](#) to learn more.

An agent in the Public Enquiries Unit goes through the feedback received and then refers it to a manager. The agent may also contact the right team at Elections Canada to take over. The Accessibility Office is informed of any feedback to make sure that it is tracked and included in our progress reports every year.

# Accessibility at Elections Canada

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The *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA), which came into force on July 19, 2019, requires that organizations under federal responsibility work toward identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility. Its goal is to create a barrier-free Canada by 2040. The ACA identifies seven priority areas where organizations must make sure that people with disabilities can fully and equally participate:

- employment
- the built environment (buildings and public spaces)
- information and communication technologies
- communication other than information and communication technologies
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities
- the design and delivery of programs and services
- transportation

As an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to the Parliament of Canada, Elections Canada's mandate is to deliver federal elections, by-elections and referendums and to administer the financial provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA). We work to make sure that all eligible Canadians can exercise their democratic rights to vote and to be a candidate. We are committed to making sure that Canadians, including employees of Elections Canada and members of the public with disabilities, can access our services.

We are also committed to the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities throughout the electoral process. Under the ACA, we will achieve this by removing current barriers by 2040. Therefore, we are pleased to present our roadmap toward greater inclusion of people with disabilities.

Elections Canada is made up of close to 500 core employees working mostly in the National Capital Region under a flexible hybrid work model. During a general election or referendum, returning officers recruit more than 235,000 election workers across the country. A returning officer is appointed to administer the election in each electoral district.<sup>1</sup> The CEA distinguishes between the role and powers of Elections Canada and those of returning officers. The latter are not employees of Elections Canada or the public service. Under the CEA, they find and lease buildings for local offices and polls and hire and train local office staff and poll workers. While Elections Canada provides general oversight and can set policies, we do not control all the areas of an election. The CEA may limit our ability to address or remove certain barriers.

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, there are 343 electoral districts (as of 2024).

The commitments in this first Accessibility Plan fall under four themes:

- Creating an organization that understands accessibility
- Developing services and processes that are accessible and include employees with disabilities
- Making sure that new products and services are user-friendly and accessible
- Improving the accessibility of our programs and services for Canadians

# Consultations

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Following the principle of “Nothing Without Us,” we developed this Accessibility Plan in consultation with the [Advisory Group for Disability Issues \(AGDI\)](#). AGDI has been Elections Canada’s main consultation body on accessibility since 2014. During online meetings in March and September 2022, we discussed the Accessibility Plan with the group. We focused on confirming barriers that were touched on in the Plan and the strategies we would use to address them in each of the priority areas set out in the ACA. On top of engaging AGDI on the scope of the Accessibility Plan, we also had several in-depth consultations on specific projects and initiatives that are included in the Plan, such as:

- the project on the technology used to help blind and partially sighted electors to vote
- our civic education program
- the initiative called Future of Work and Workplace Transformation
- the recruitment of returning officers
- voting and registration services

We also created a user group to advise the agency on the needs in voting technology of blind and partially sighted electors. We will continue to engage AGDI and other stakeholders, as we implement the Plan and prepare our progress reports.

Along with AGDI, we consulted employee representatives from various employment equity-seeking groups. Among these were groups for persons with disabilities. Key decision-making groups that helped to develop the Accessibility Plan included representatives of persons with disabilities. Also, our internal initiative on employment equity, diversity and inclusion featured a speaker series where persons with disabilities shared their experience and expertise on creating an inclusive culture. These sessions provided key information on ableism, micro-aggressions, accommodations and intersectionality. Such information influenced the direction of this Plan.

To identify barriers, we further consulted with people within the agency. To do so, we used assessment tools from the Office of Public Service Accessibility. We also looked at feedback and complaints from members of the public; and from some of our [post-election reports and studies](#) on the voting experience of people with disabilities. Moreover, we used reports by Statistics Canada from the [Canadian Survey on Disability](#) to better understand barriers faced by employees of the federal government and members of the public.

To make sure that, when developing this Accessibility Plan, we considered the views of local field staff who deliver elections, we met with a group of election administrators (returning officers and field liaison officers) from across the country. They advised Elections Canada on barriers faced at the local level. The group had three election

administrators from Quebec, two from Alberta, and one each from Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, British Columbia and Ontario. Some of these administrators identified as having a disability. Some said they were interested in, or had previous experience with, accessibility. Election administrators gave insight on accessibility that was based on their experience in delivering elections in their area, in different geographic settings (urban and rural) and in places where language and culture were diverse.

Elections Canada will continue to engage on this Plan with AGDI, employees and stakeholders. This is to make sure that the Plan evolves with changing accessibility needs. The Plan also outlines how, when improving accessibility, we will more consistently consider user testing as feedback to meet the needs of end-users.

## Accessibility Barriers

**Training and awareness**—Staff are becoming more aware of barriers to accessibility through initiatives of the Government of Canada and Elections Canada in accessibility and employment equity, diversity and inclusion. They are thus also becoming more aware of gaps in training and knowledge when it comes to making services and programs more accessible. Two key parts of the Plan will be to increase literacy on accessibility within the agency; and develop support tools for staff to use accessibility by design.

**Inaccessible applications and legacy systems**—Over the years, Elections Canada has developed many IT systems, databases and applications. These are not fully accessible and are becoming obsolete. The accessibility of our digital products and services for external users has been a top priority. But there is work to do to make sure that all new systems and digital assets—whether they are meant to be used by the public or our staff—meet accessibility standards. Therefore, many of our accessibility projects will be aligned with our Digital Transformation Strategy. The latter will aim to make all new digital tools and services accessible by design.

**Employment**—At this time, 4.2% of staff, or 39 individuals, at the headquarters of Elections Canada identify as a person with a disability. This includes indeterminate employees and term employees of three months or more. Employees on leave without pay, casual employees, students and employees who are seconded into the agency or contracted resources are not included in this figure. If we follow the estimated availability of public servants, as provided by the Treasury Board Secretariat, Elections Canada would need to have 47 more people with disabilities to close the gap. To effectively meet or exceed gaps in representation in its workforce, the agency will need to address barriers that persons with disabilities face in their employment journey—from recruitment, hiring, career development, and accommodation request to self-identification.

**Built environment**—Elections Canada has three work locations. Two of them are considered accessible and can be audited and can require improvements. However, a

major barrier in these locations is that the landlord and the tenant do not have the same responsibilities. We can only make changes to the physical area that is inside the space that we lease. This does not include parking, elevators or other common areas. The Distribution Centre at 440 Coventry also has significant physical barriers, such as no passenger elevator, narrow stairs, little to no natural light, leveling issues, air circulation issues and no accessible washrooms and inaccessible equipment. The building was built in 1968 and looks like a typical warehouse of that time. Therefore, the agency may need to use another location.

**Polling locations**—After an election is called, returning officers must, under the CEA, find and lease polling stations that are accessible to electors with disabilities. Returning officers use 39 accessibility criteria—15 of which are mandatory—to know whether potential polling stations are suitable. Polling stations must be confirmed quickly so that Elections Canada can print and mail voter information cards to electors. In some places, there may be few available polling places that are accessible. This may mean that returning officers can only lease inaccessible polling places. When these do not meet the mandatory accessibility criteria, returning officers must get authorization from the Chief Electoral Officer before they can sign a lease. Returning officers who cannot lease polling locations that meet all mandatory accessibility criteria must also consider whether they can take steps to lessen the accessibility issues. For example, they can post more staff at a door that does not have an automatic opener. The CEA allows electors with disabilities to vote at another accessible location. To do so, they need to get a “transfer certificate,” although this creates a barrier for those who may have to travel farther to get to an accessible polling station.

**Election campaigns**—During federal elections, persons with disabilities often report barriers to getting information from candidates and political parties. Elections Canada provides guidance to political participants about how to make their communications and events accessible. While we have also made recommendations to Parliament that have led to the adoption of an accessibility expenses regime for candidates and parties, it is the political participants who are responsible for adopting accessibility best practices and standards. Elections Canada will continue to engage with political participants to promote accessibility throughout the electoral process.

**Voting process**—One key priority for the agency is to remove barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully and equally exercising their right to vote. At this time, the independent verification of a marked ballot is a barrier for people who are blind or partially sighted. There are also issues with assistance in marking a ballot, proving identity, voting by special ballot and inaccessible voting locations. These issues often create more challenges for people with disabilities when voting. While Elections Canada has made much progress in making voting more accessible, at times, there is not enough flexibility to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities effectively. The CEA tells us, for example, how to use paper ballots and what the procedures are for voting by special ballot. It does so while looking at competing interests, which may result in barriers for electors with a disability. This may also hinder the use of adaptive measures.

## Legislative Barriers

Elections Canada also looked over the CEA to identify accessibility barriers that result from legislation. The agency is a statutory body, meaning that it is created by the CEA and can only exercise the powers and fulfill the roles given to it by the CEA. Barriers that result from the CEA itself can only be removed by Parliament and not by Elections Canada. Some legislative barriers have been highlighted in past recommendations reports to Parliament of the Chief Electoral Officer. Specific recommendations were made to Parliament to remove or reduce certain barriers to voting. However, while the Chief Electoral Officer can make recommendations, only Parliament can decide whether or how to act on these recommendations. We have identified the following barriers and potential barriers:

- Sections 26 and 29 together mean that there must always be an assistant returning officer in each electoral district. An assistant returning officer who cannot fulfill their duties must be discharged and replaced, even if the inability to work is related to a disability and is temporary. Because there is no authority to appoint a temporary or acting assistant returning officer, the assistant returning officer cannot take disability leave.
- During an election, the person in control of a building with many dwellings can deny entry to election officers. They can do this if they think that the residents' physical or emotional well-being may be harmed by letting the election activities go on. However, the person could base that decision on stereotypes and thus limit the electors' right to vote (section 43.1(2)).
- Sections 115 and 116 together create a requirement for paper ballots. This limits the accommodation measures that Elections Canada can offer for voting.
- Sections 121(4) and 151(1) require that the ballot be marked by hand. This limits the accommodation measures Elections Canada can offer for voting.
- Section 127 limits the ways to vote to voting in person or by special ballot. This limits the accommodation measures Elections Canada can offer for voting.
- A number of provisions require that someone voting by special ballot write the first and last name of their preferred candidate on the ballot. This may create a barrier for people who are blind, who have limited use of their hands, or who have intellectual or learning disabilities (sections 213(2), 227(2) and (3), and 258(2)).
- Some sections that allow for someone to help an elector mark their special ballot include specific requirements for the person who is helping, even if the elector is able and wants to mark the ballot themselves (sections 216(1), 243(1), 243.1(1), and 259(1)).
- Forms 3 and 4 of Schedule 1 are images that show how the ballot and special ballot must look, and Elections Canada has very limited discretion to make changes.

# Our Accessibility Commitments

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## Promoting Literacy on Accessibility and Enabling Delivery of Accessible Products and Services

A top priority for Elections Canada is to promote literacy on accessibility across the organization. The agency wants to make sure that staff have the knowledge and tools they need to identify, remove and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of employees and members of the public with disabilities. To this end:

### **By 2024:**

Elections Canada will include learning objectives in plans on employee performance and learning. We will also create an inventory of upcoming training opportunities on accessibility.

In 2023, Elections Canada created an Accessibility Office to support the implementation of the Accessibility Plan by:

- Offering guidance and expertise on accessibility standards and regulations, beginning with digital accessibility standards for web products and forms;
- Supporting the design of accessible and user-centric products and services through accessibility and usability testing;
- Regularly sharing with staff information and resources on accessibility; this will educate them on the needs of persons with disabilities and to help in the design of products, programs and services that respond to accessibility needs;
- Making it easier to receive and track feedback, complaints and accommodation requests from members of the public and employees of Elections Canada;
- Viewing through an accessibility lens the drafting and review of corporate policies, guidelines and directives;
- Reviewing or updating key policy instruments (or doing both) that are linked to accessibility; these include but are not limited to Elections Canada's regulatory policy instruments on the [selection of suitable polling places](#) and the [accessibility policy and service offering](#);
- Reviewing forms (internal and external) based on accessibility standards and user testing and developing guidance on creating new forms;
- Building relationships with other departments and electoral management bodies to keep best practices for digital accessibility up to date;

### ***Performance Indicator:***

- Staff have access to the training, expertise, resources and tools they need to integrate accessibility into their processes.

## **Employment**

To address the gaps in representation throughout the agency and promote the hiring, retention and training of persons with disabilities, Elections Canada will implement a strategy for Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI). This strategy will aim to reduce barriers by creating an environment where employees feel welcome, included and safe.

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Although we know that the barriers in the area of employment are systemic in nature, we are currently unable to identify such barriers. For example, as of September 2023, there is a gap of –3 for members of visible minority groups; and one of –2 for persons with disabilities at Elections Canada’s executive levels (not including the Commissioner of Canada Elections). However, we have not yet identified the barriers causing these gaps. We do know that there is a need to first review our current policies, programs, practices, and services. This would help us better understand and identify the barriers in the area of employment.

### ***Steps to identify barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

#### **By 2025:**

A third-party consultant is carrying out a full systems review of Elections Canada’s employment policies, programs, practices and services. This review will identify systemic and attitudinal barriers to employment opportunities for designated group members. These barriers include, for example, unnecessary job requirements and inappropriate screening and selection criteria. The review’s findings and results will be available in November 2024.

### ***Steps to remove identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

#### **By 2025:**

Elections Canada will develop an action plan to remove barriers in policies, programs, practices and services in the area of employment that will be identified in the Employment System Review mentioned above. This plan will include steps to remove the barriers once we identify them.

**By 2024:**

Although the barriers have not yet been identified, we will address gaps in recruitment and development through the newly launched EEDI recruitment strategy. This strategy focuses on increasing the number of people from all employment equity-seeking groups in the agency.

- There are three key EEDI recruitment priorities:
  - Increase awareness and engagement at all levels;
  - Improve planning processes in recruitment and tools; and
  - Focus our recruitment based on workforce data.
- When recruiting staff for Elections Canada headquarters, we will need to use the newly developed EEDI recruitment matrix to set up the right steps, based on each team's individual gaps.
- Once the new self-identification form is in place, we will conduct a blitz to update our data on employment equity-seeking groups.
- We will broaden our communication channels to reach communities that would otherwise not know about our recruitment efforts.
- Based on the employment systems review, we may need to refine how we recruit staff.
- We will implement a program to develop middle management leadership that gives priority to equity-seeking groups.
- We will continue to share the views of persons with disabilities in the workplace using the EEDI speaker series. This series focuses on creating a more inclusive culture.

***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Moving forward, Elections Canada will:

- Consider the findings and recommendations of the employment system review
- Engage with employees with disabilities proactively
- Consult with AGDI.

***Performance indicators:***

- More employees with disabilities are working at all levels of Elections Canada, and there is an increase in self-identification rates.
- Staff have the accessible tools and accommodations they need to do their work.

## The Built Environment

The buildings and facilities of Elections Canada can be grouped into two categories: those that headquarters is using for the long term; and those that are leased for short periods during an election (including polls and local offices across Canada). These two categories involve different considerations for accessibility. This section deals with the buildings and facilities of Elections Canada headquarters.

### ***Steps to Identify barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Through the strategy called the “Future of Work and Workplace Transformation,” Elections Canada will tackle access barriers at the workplaces and facilities of its headquarters. We will adapt these locations based on up-to-date accessibility standards. We will also aim to improve the accessibility of Elections Canada workplaces and the on-site experience of persons with disabilities. We will do so by gathering evidence to make informed decisions. Through daily operations with Occupational Health and Safety, Security Services, the property manager and the owner, the Facilities team will monitor accessibility standards and continue to implement improvements. To this end, we will:

#### **By 2024:**

- Ask for feedback on accessibility to gauge employee satisfaction with the accessibility of our workplaces;
- Inform employees and managers about how to report accessibility issues faced at Elections Canada headquarters through the National Service Call Centre;
- Review the evacuation plan against the latest accessibility standards; we will do this to improve the on-site experience for persons with disabilities;
- Consult persons with disabilities on future workplace enhancements and develop a plan to address accessibility issues with the built environment that cannot be easily fixed.

#### ***Performance indicator:***

- Employees with disabilities are satisfied with our workplaces, based on employee surveys and complaints.

## Information and Communication Technologies

Elections Canada will cast a lens that is based on accessibility by design and new digital products and services. Where doable, we will enhance accessibility for digital products.

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada has identified the following barriers in the area of information and communication technologies:

**Barrier 1:** Current applicable WCAG accessibility standards do not meet the requirements for all people with disabilities and, consequently, the websites of Elections Canada are not accessible for some users.

**Barrier 2:** Knowledge of accessibility features and tools is not widely understood at Elections Canada. Therefore, we are not able to fully support employees when they request these features and tools.

**Barrier 3:** Currently, there is no central location (e.g. website landing page) for employees to access information about how to request accessibility features and tools.

**Barrier 4:** Currently, there is no inventory of accessibility tools, features, software and equipment available at Elections Canada.

**Barrier 5:** There is a long process to meet the expectations of the Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA) and Security Assessment and Authorization (SA&A). This process is designed to make sure that all personal information and data are secure before the accessibility tools, features and services are made available to employees. Thus, we are sometimes unable to promptly provide employees with disabilities with the required tools and features.

### ***Steps to remove barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada will take the steps below to remove barriers in the area of information and communication technologies. The steps correspond to the numbered barriers described above.

#### **By 2024**

**Barrier 1:** We will ensure that the information from our websites can be given in alternate formats upon request. We will also look into whether there are other means of making our websites more accessible for all users.

**Barrier 2:** We will survey employees for feedback on accessibility. We will do this to assess employee satisfaction with the accessibility features and tools on end-user devices (tablet, laptop, smartphones, etc.). We will also define the accessibility requirements of Elections Canada in this area. We will create a consultation workgroup to provide input on various personnel needs in accessible features and tools. Finally, we will hire an accessibility digital specialist to help us understand accessibility needs in terms of features and tools. We will thus be able to meet the Treasury Board of Canada's accessibility standards.

**Barrier 3:** We will work with the communication group and Accessibility Office to create a central website landing page. The page will clarify how to make an accommodation request.

**Barrier 4:** We will conduct an inventory review and make a list of common tools, features, software and equipment. We will then create a standard practice to fulfill non-standard requests.

**Barrier 5:** We will conduct an audit of all tools, software and equipment from the Government of Canada that were approved by the PIA and SA&A. We will then create a list of these approved tools, software and equipment to promptly respond to accessibility requests.

### ***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada will take the following steps to prevent new barriers in the area of information and communication technologies:

- Enable, where possible, approved accessibility tools and features that are aligned with the applicable accessibility standards that are currently available on IT systems and in IT solutions.
- Continually assess and test our IT services and solutions to meet applicable accessibility standards.
- Build on our current accessibility foundation to provide the best accessibility tools and services.
- Make available assistive technology to employees with disabilities who request accommodations.
- Work with the workgroup to ensure that accessibility tools and services suit the needs of personnel.
- Follow Government guidelines for computing devices, tools, and services accessibility.
- Consult with AGDI when new technology becomes available.
- Consult with the Accessibility Office as required.

### ***Performance Indicators:***

- Employees with disabilities have access to accessible IT equipment, software and tools in a timely manner to do their job.
- More IT products meet or exceed accessibility standards.
- We perform periodic accessibility surveys on accessibility with a sample of personnel.
- We can respond to new accommodation requests more efficiently.

## Communication, other than information and communication technologies

Communications Services ensures that the communication activities of Elections Canada are well-managed, well-coordinated and responsive to the diverse information needs of Canadians and employees. Many requirements that are set out in legislated and policy instruments, guidelines and standards fix these communication activities. These activities ensure that the views and concerns of Canadians and Elections Canada employees are considered during the planning, management and evaluation of our policies, programs, services and initiatives. Currently, Elections Canada has more robust ways to understand accessibility for products that face the public. Moving forward, Elections Canada will review and identify barriers to accessibility in products that are internal.

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada has identified the following barriers in the area of communication, other than information and communication technologies:

**Barrier 1:** According to the 2019 and 2021 Report on the Voter Information Campaign and Elector Awareness, electors with disabilities continue to experience barriers to [finding information about the voting process](#). As a result, they are [less likely to feel well-informed about where, when and the ways](#) to vote.

**Barrier 2:** An internal accessibility review of the Intranet showed that a lot of content was not accessible for everyone.

### ***Steps to remove barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

While Elections Canada does a lot of work to reduce these barriers, we need longer term measures to remove them. We will take the steps described below in the coming years to remove the barriers in the area of communication, other than information and communication technologies. The steps correspond to the numbered barriers described above.

#### ***By 2024***

##### **Barrier 1:**

- Make significant efforts to ensure that all external communication products meet the new [Government of Canada's Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#).
- Have contracts with key service providers and suppliers to offer more external communication products in alternate formats outside the election period (videos with ASL/LSQ, large print or braille).

- Continue to review Elections Canada's public websites to ensure that they meet the most up-to-date accessibility standards; and develop a plan to make content more or fully accessible, where necessary.
- Make sure employees know about the communication tools and services available; employees can then make their external communication products and content accessible by design.
- Provide training and tools on requirements and commitments in accessibility to strategic communication advisors, graphic designers and videographers; thus, we will make external communication products meet the accessibility requirements that apply.

## **By 2028**

### **Barrier 1:**

- Develop a checklist and a corporate service to provide quality assurance for external communication products that are developed in accessible formats across the agency.
- Make sure that Elections Canada has the staff to apply accessible design and plain language standards that result from the introduction of new accessibility standards.
- Add more external information products that are available in alternate formats.
- Develop more tools and templates to help develop the public website and applications that meet applicable accessibility criteria.

## **By 2026**

### **Barrier 2:**

- Make significant efforts to make sure that all internal communication products meet the new [Government of Canada's Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#).
- Review internal communication products, including the digital newsletter and the intranet, so that content is accessible, where applicable.
- Provide internal communication advisors and business owners with training and tools on accessibility requirements and commitments; this is to ensure that internal communication products meet the accessibility requirements that apply.

### ***Steps to identify barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

As said above, we need to complete a review of our current policies, programs, practices and services. This will help us better understand and identify the barriers to accessibility on internal communication products. We have not yet set the timeline and specific steps of this review.

### ***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada takes or will take the following steps to prevent new barriers in the area of communication, other than information and communication technologies:

- We will continue to conduct the National Electors Study after each general election; in doing so, we will identify and remove possible barriers to registration and voting.
- We will also continue to hold focus groups with electors who live with a physical or cognitive disability or a mental health condition when developing new Voter Information Campaigns; in doing so, we will identify and remove possible barriers and make sure that products meet the information needs of all electors.
- We will continue to consult key stakeholders and AGDI members when developing new communication products or campaigns; this will help to make products accessible.
- We will use best practices and follow the [Government of Canada's Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#).
- We will ensure that training on developing accessible communication products will be provided to new employees that occupy a communications function.
- We will conduct regular accessibility testing to make sure that our websites are easily usable by everyone.

### ***Performance Indicators:***

- External and internal communication products, services and channels meet or exceed standards for accessibility in communication.
- Electors who need information in alternative formats can get it.

## **The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities**

Elections Canada will engage persons with disabilities about barriers in the procurement process. We will advise internal business owners and external suppliers on how to integrate accessibility considerations and standards into the procurement of goods and services.

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Although we know that that the barriers in the area of procurement of goods, services and facilities are systemic in nature, we are currently unable to identify such barriers. We need to review our current policies, programs, practices and services in this area to better understand and identify these barriers.

### ***Steps to identify barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

More specifically, to better understand and identify the barriers in the area of procurement of goods, services and facilities, we will:

**By 2024:**

- When making new procurement requests, make an assessment of accessibility.
- Consult affected parties about whether the procurement process is accessible.
- Maintain relationships with other departments to share process improvements, tools and training.
- Develop the requirements and methodology for an accessibility review by a third-party of our current policies, programs, practices and services. The review would be done to identify barriers.

**By 2025:**

- Begin an accessibility review by a third-party of current policies, programs, practices and services. The review will identify barriers and recommend best practices.
- Create a management action plan that is based on the third-party review, consultations, recommendations and any relevant audit results.
- Analyze data about how to include accessibility considerations for all procurement and develop a plan to carry out enhancements.

***Steps to remove barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Here are some general steps that we will take to remove the barriers in the area of procurement of goods, services and facilities once we identify them:

**By 2028:**

- Implement a management action plan that is based on the third-party review, consultations, recommendations and any relevant audit results.
- Develop strategies and tools for procurement that include socio-economic considerations and provisions for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups when determining the best value of proposals.
- Work with the Accessibility Office to set up internal governance that will have strategies for procurements that cannot meet accessibility standards.

This plan will include more specific steps to remove barriers once we identify them.

***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada will take the following steps to prevent new barriers in the area of procurement of goods, services and facilities:

- To avoid creating new barriers, we will consult with AGDI.

- We will review any new or updated relevant policies, programs, practices and services for accessibility best practices before we carry them out.

***Performance indicator:***

- There is an action plan for accessibility management, and new procurement requests comply with accessibility standards.

## **The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services**

### **Voter Registration**

***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada has identified the following barriers to voter registration:

- **Barrier 1:** The text at the end of the Online Voter Registration Service registration process and some text throughout the registration process is unclear or not in plain language.
- **Barrier 2:** Some users with assistive devices find the Online Voter Registration Service hard to use.
- **Barrier 3:** Some users see the font size in the Online Voter Registration Service as a barrier.
- **Barrier 4:** Non-sighted and low-vision users have said that the CAPTCHA feature (used to verify that a real person, not a machine, is accessing the Online Voter Registration Service) is difficult for them to use.
- **Barrier 5:** Some users with vision impairments cannot upload the required identification documents (ID) to register or register to vote by mail.
- **Barrier 6:** Electors who live at non-standard addresses (for example, those with no street name or house number) cannot use the point-on-map feature to fill out their address when applying to vote by mail.
- **Barrier 7:** Electors can easily mistake the voter information card for junk mail.

***Steps to remove identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada has taken the steps below to remove barriers in the area of voter registration. The steps correspond to the numbered barriers described above.

- **Barrier 1:** We reviewed the Online Voter Registration Service for plain language. We updated the text on several screens in the registration process; we also added a green checkmark or red X to the messages in the results to make them clearer.

- **Barrier 2:** We tested the Online Voter Registration Service with various assistive devices and made changes to the application code to accommodate all assistive device types.
- **Barrier 3:** The font size is adjustable in the user's web browser.
- **Barrier 4:** The CAPTCHA feature has an option for the user to receive an audio code.
- **Barrier 5:** The *Canada Elections Act* (CEA) requires electors to provide identification documents (ID) when registering to vote or applying to vote by mail. We continue to look into whether and how we can offer other ways for people to submit their ID to register to vote or apply to vote by mail.

Elections Canada will also take the steps below to remove barriers in the area of voter registration. The steps correspond to the numbered barriers described above.

**To begin after 2025, with a target completion date of 2027 at the latest:**

- **Barrier 6:** We are looking for other ways electors can enter an address to make it easier for electors who do not have a standard address. This will be a long-term item and will not be in place before the next general election.

**By 2028:**

- **Barrier 7:** We consulted the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) about how to make the paper voter information card more accessible. The CNIB suggested clipping the top-right corner of the voter information card. But Elections Canada cannot do this at this time. We may look at this suggestion again when our current production contracts end. We are looking into how to deliver an electronic voter information card; but this project will not begin before 2025.

***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada takes the following steps to prevent new barriers in the area of voter registration:

- We regularly review the website code to ensure that it meets WCAG requirements and make changes as required.
- We regularly review comments received in the optional survey at the end of the online registration process; we also do this with complaints received from the public. When possible, we make changes to the online service throughout the year.
- To avoid creating new barriers when we update the Online Voter Registration Service, we will continue to consult with AGDI and do user testing with persons with disabilities.

***Performance Indicators:***

- Electors are satisfied that registration services are accessible.

## Voting Tools and Services

### *Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services*

Elections Canada has identified the following barriers in the area of voting tools and services:

**Barrier 1:** In the current voting process, there is no way for electors with visual impairments to independently verify that their ballots are marked properly. Although the CEA allows for someone to help an elector who needs assistance to vote, this creates barriers in both voting autonomy and secrecy.

**Barrier 2:** Members of AGDI told us that providing ASL/LSQ services for electors at polling locations could improve accessibility.

**Barrier 3:** Electors who cannot vote in person often face barriers in voting accessibility. Many of these electors do not meet the legislated requirements for a home visit. They also find that the current service is not fully accessible and does not meet their needs. Elections Canada is unable to have electors with certain types of disabilities vote independently and in secret.

**Barrier 4:** Electors with low literacy or learning disabilities often face voting accessibility issues. Stakeholders in AGDI said that this could be an area for improvement.

### *Steps to remove identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services*

Elections Canada has taken or will take the steps below to remove barriers in the area of voting tools and services. The steps correspond to the numbered barriers described above.

#### **By 2025:**

**Barrier 1:** Elections Canada has launched a formal procurement process with the intention of hiring a contractor to develop an assistive technology tool. It will allow a person who is blind or who has a visual impairment to mark their ballot independently and in secrecy; at the same time, this will comply with the CEA. The timeline will depend on the success of the tendering process.

#### **By 2024:**

**Barrier 2:** Elections Canada is consulting with communities that are affected by this barrier to find potential solutions.

#### **By 2026:**

**Barrier 3:** Elections Canada has done a preliminary analysis to look at how we can remove these accessibility barriers. The next steps will include looking at the analysis

again and putting a solution in place. However, any solution and proposed timeline may depend on Parliament, as it may need to approve amendments to the CEA. As said in the part on legislative barriers, the Chief Electoral Officer can make recommendations for future legislative amendments. But only Parliament can decide whether or how to act on them. We will likely review this step after the next general election.

### **By 2026:**

**Barrier 4:** Elections Canada will conduct a preliminary analysis to determine the best way to remove this barrier. This may include adding political party logos or colours, either on the ballot or on posters in polling places. Once again, the chosen solution and proposed timeline may depend on Parliament approving any required amendments to the CEA. As said in the part on legislative barriers, while the Chief Electoral Officer can make recommendations for future legislative amendments, only Parliament can decide whether or how to act on them.

### ***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada takes the following steps to prevent new barriers in the area of voting tools and services:

- To help us keep identifying barriers to accessibility, we review comments received at polling places as well as complaints received after an election.
- To avoid creating new barriers in our services, we will continue to consult with AGDI and do user testing with persons with disabilities.
- We stay up to date with accessibility trends and best practices.

### ***Performance Indicators:***

- Electors are satisfied that voting services are accessible.

### **Services to Political Entities**

Elections Canada will make it easier for political participants to get information about campaign expenses for accessibility and disability. We will also try to reduce barriers to information that prevent persons with disabilities from participating as candidates in the electoral process. While political entities are responsible for making political campaigns accessible, Elections Canada will continue to encourage them to run accessible campaigns.

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Although we know that the barriers in the area of services to political entities—including when it comes to their use of campaign expenses for accessibility and disability—are systemic in nature, we are currently unable to identify these barriers. There is a need to

review our current policies, programs, practices and services in this area so we can better understand and identify these barriers.

### ***Steps to identify barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

To better understand and identify the barriers in the area of campaign expenses for accessibility and disability, we will:

#### **By 2024:**

- Review the Survey of Official Agents results to identify areas where we can improve our policies, programs, practices and services.

#### **By 2025:**

- Conduct a program evaluation to find out why political entities, such as parties and candidates, are not claiming accessibility and disability expenses. The program evaluation will include a survey of candidates and political parties.

### ***Steps to remove identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Here are some general steps that we will take to remove the barriers in the area of campaign expenses for accessibility and disability once we identify them:

- Through the Advisory Committee of Political Parties, we will continue to provide information to political entities about accessible campaigns and accessibility-related campaign expenses.
- We will look at more opportunities to make information about accessibility and disability expenses more available to political entities.
- We will develop a management action plan following the program evaluation. We will also consult on how to carry out the related recommendations.

This plan will include more specific steps to remove the barriers in the area of services to political entities once we identify them. These specific steps will relate to the identified barriers.

### ***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada continually reviews its program materials and communications. We do so to provide clear and cohesive information that supports political entities in complying with their obligations.

#### ***Performance indicators:***

- Political entities are satisfied that political financing products and services are accessible.

- Political entities are aware of the tools that Elections Canada is using to make campaigns more accessible.

## **Civic Education Program**

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada has identified the following barriers in the area of civic education:

**Barrier 1:** The text used for teacher-facing and student-facing products might be difficult for some users to read. This may be because of literacy levels, dyslexia, and low vision or blindness. This might include text in teacher guides, classroom materials (like group work cards and posters), PowerPoint presentations and videos. These products may be used in classroom programs and teacher workshops. They may also be on the Elections and Democracy website, which has all of them.

**Barrier 2:** Teachers and students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing might face barriers to accessing the civic education materials and programs. These include oral instructions—including those given by teachers when using resources with their students—as well as workshop materials and educational videos.

**Barrier 3:** Users with cognitive and learning disabilities and varying fine motor skills or physical mobility disabilities might face barriers to participation with civic education products and programs. Barriers could include the tactile nature of some activities (such as placing cards on placemats or timelines); and the blended-learning online versions of some classroom resources (such as using a mouse to move cards on a screen).

**Barrier 4:** Users who do not have reliable access to high-speed Internet might face barriers to civic education resources. These may include educational videos or downloadable worksheets.

Because the barriers to using civic education resources and programs for accessibility and disability are systemic in nature, we will conduct a full accessibility audit of both the Elections and Democracy website and all our civic education offerings, including Student Vote Canada. We will complete this by 2028. It will help us better understand and identify the barriers to participation that users might face.

### ***Steps to remove identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada continually takes the steps below to remove barriers in the area of civic education. The steps correspond to the numbered barriers described above.

**Barrier 1:** All of the classroom resources in civic education are available in print or online in various formats. They can be used by screen readers and as downloadable files. Three of the 10 classroom resources have language learner versions. They use the same case studies but the reading and comprehension levels on the cards are lower. The videos used in classroom resources include closed captions and descriptive transcripts. The website is WCAG version 2, level AA-compliant. Images include alt text. Tables or graphics on the website are also available in a plain-text HTML version for

screen readers. The materials of Student Vote Canada (parallel student voting program) can be provided in braille upon request.

**Barrier 2:** Educational videos include closed captions for those who cannot hear the audio. All learning materials are available in print and online to read on a screen (or to download and print).

**Barrier 3:** Classroom activities are available in various formats to help remove barriers to access where possible. Learning activities are available in print, PDF and HTML format. Virtual classrooms can use the Google slide files so users can participate online.

**Barrier 4:** Educators can order free copies of all civic education materials. They can have them delivered to their chosen address in Canada. They can also ask for digital copies of the resources and videos. These can be ordered and will be shipped on a USB key for teachers to use in their classrooms.

This plan could include more steps to remove barriers in the area of civic education. Such steps would be added if the accessibility audit of the Elections and Democracy website and the civic education materials described above identifies new barriers.

### ***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada takes or will take the following steps to prevent new barriers in the area of civic education:

- We regularly review the website of Elections and Democracy. We do so to make sure that it meets WCAG requirements, and we make changes when required.
- To help us continually identify barriers to accessibility, we review comments from the optional end-of-semester surveys (January and June) that are sent to educators who ordered classroom resources. We also monitor complaints and feedback that we get through Civic Education, the Public Enquiries Unit and our social media accounts. We adjust resources as necessary and follow up with users to meet their needs.

### **By 2024:**

- When we update or add new resources, we will continue to consult with AGDI and our Advisory Circle of Educators. We will conduct user testing with persons with disabilities. We will do this during the update of Digital Skills for Democracy in 2024.

### ***Performance Indicators:***

- Resources in civic education meet accessibility standards.
- Students and educators are satisfied that products and services are accessible.

### **Stakeholder Mobilization Program**

Elections Canada's Inspire Democracy program tries to address barriers to electoral participation among Indigenous electors, persons with disabilities, youth and new

Canadians. We will make sure that the resources and services in the program follow design principles that are universal and inclusive and are based on users' needs.

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada has identified the following barriers in the area of stakeholder mobilization:

**Barrier 1:** Text in products used for outreach workshops with stakeholders might be hard for some users to read: some of these users have cognitive, reading or processing disabilities, low vision or are blind. The text may be in Inspire Democracy toolkits and supporting materials of Elections Canada, PowerPoint presentations, videos and on the Inspire Democracy website.

**Barrier 2:** Participants who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing might face barriers to accessing materials and programs, including workshops, videos and presentations.

**Barrier 3:** People with cognitive and learning disabilities, low vision, blindness and auditory disabilities and who take part in virtual workshops might face barriers to participation. These barriers may be due to the technology used, such as background and text colours and sizes, or the use of PDFs, video vignettes and PowerPoint presentations.

#### **By 2028:**

We realize that the accessibility barriers of the outreach resources and programs of Inspire Democracy are systemic in nature. We will conduct a full accessibility audit of both the Inspire Democracy website and the toolkits and workshops. This will help us better understand and identify any barriers that users might face.

### ***Steps to remove identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada continually takes the steps below to remove barriers in the area of stakeholder mobilization. The steps correspond to the numbered barriers described above.

**Barrier 1:** All of the resources for stakeholder mobilization are available in print or online. They come in various formats that work with screen readers and as downloadable files. The videos used in the toolkits and workshops of Inspire Democracy include closed captions and descriptive transcripts. Key print resources are available in braille and digital audio formats. The website is WCAG version 2, level AA-compliant. Images include alt text. Tables or graphics on the website are also available in plain-text HTML versions that can be used with screen readers.

**Barrier 2:** Virtual workshops and presentations include ASL/LSQ and closed captioning. Videos include closed captions for those who cannot hear the audio. All resource materials are available online to read on a screen, or to download and print.

**Barrier 3:** Resource materials and activities are available in various formats, such as print and HTML. This helps to remove barriers to access where possible. Virtual

participants are told about ways technology, when available, can accommodate them in virtual workshops and presentations.

This plan could provide for more steps to remove barriers in the area of stakeholder mobilization if new barriers are identified following the accessibility audit of both the Inspire Democracy website and toolkits and workshops.

### ***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada takes the following steps to prevent new barriers in the area of stakeholder mobilization:

- We regularly review the Inspire Democracy website. We do so to make sure that it meets WCAG requirements, and we make changes when required.
- To help us continually identify barriers to accessibility, we review feedback through consultations with stakeholders and year-end reports. We also monitor feedback received through the Inspire Democracy and Consultations inboxes, the Elections Canada Public Enquiries Unit and our social media accounts. We then make changes to meet users' needs.
- When we update resources or create new resources, we will continue to consult with AGDI and our stakeholders. We will conduct user testing with persons with disabilities.

### ***Performance indicators:***

- Stakeholder mobilization and Inspire Democracy materials meet accessibility standards.
- Stakeholders are satisfied that products and services are accessible.

### **Election Delivery Through Field Operations in Electoral Districts**

One key priority for Elections Canada is to improve the accessibility of federal elections for election administrators. These include returning officers, assistant returning officers, field liaison officers and additional assistant returning officers. They also include other local election workers, such as those who work in local Elections Canada offices and at the polls during an election. Unlike employees at Elections Canada headquarters, they are not members of the public service. They are hired for the duration of an election or, in the case of poll workers, for one or a few days. We have a long-term vision to identify and remove barriers so that we can recruit, hire, and train persons with disabilities at the local level. We are also committed to making sure that local election workers can meet the needs of electors and employees with disabilities.

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Although we know that barriers in the area of election delivery through field operations are systemic in nature, we are currently unable to identify these barriers. We need to review our current policies, programs, practices and services in this area to better understand and identify these barriers.

### ***Steps to identify barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

To better understand and identify the barriers in the area of election delivery through field operations, we will:

#### **By 2026:**

- Share business requirements to make sure that new systems for recruitment and pay of election workers can record data on self-identification.

#### **By 2028:**

- Review our policies, programs, practices and services to identify systemic and attitudinal barriers for Elections Canada field staff. The goal is to identify gaps in representation and begin addressing barriers.
- Develop tools that allow election administrators, local staff and poll workers to self-identify. Begin collecting data on equity-seeking groups.

### ***Steps to remove identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

In the meantime, although we have not yet identified barriers to election delivery through field operations, we will take the following general steps to remove them:

#### **By 2024:**

- Expand field recruitment policy guidance to promote employing persons with disabilities.
- Develop direction and options for field staff to promote the use of diverse training methods. This is so they can meet needs of individual learners.

Here are some general steps that we will take to remove the barriers in the area of election delivery through field operations once we identify them:

#### **By 2028:**

- Develop a plan to address barriers to recruiting and hiring persons with disabilities and reduce the representation gap. To do this, we will use the findings from the systems review.
- Make sure election workers know about available accommodations, products and services and how to request them. We will also track accommodation requests to better serve their needs.

- See if the training portal, content and delivery methods that are used to train election administrators are accessible.

**By 2029:**

- Explore alternate training methods and formats that may better meet the needs of persons with disabilities who want to access the training material.
- Publish information on the accommodations that can be made for poll workers and office staff.

This plan will provide for more specific steps to remove the barriers once we identify them. These steps will be linked to the applicable identified barriers.

***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada will take the following steps to prevent new barriers in the area of election delivery through field operations:

- Consult with field candidates with disabilities. We will do this to increase their trust in sharing self-identification data from field staff with disabilities. We will also proactively offer accommodations that can make field offices more accessible.
- After the 45th general election, convene a working group of field office workers and election administrators with disabilities. We will do this to get their feedback about field positions: whether and how they have become more accessible and how well the new ways to promote accessibility worked.

***Performance indicators:***

- Elections Canada collects data to understand and close representation gaps for field staff with disabilities. We also set up systems to let people self-identify and make accommodation requests for all field positions.
- Field staff have access to accessible tools to give feedback about the accessibility of work in a field office and about the accommodations they need to do their work.
- Election administrators and field office workers know about and use available accommodations. They do so to make their workplace more accessible to them.

**Transportation**

Although Elections Canada understands that there are barriers in the area of transportation for employees, consultants, staff in field offices, and voters with disabilities. Many of these barriers are complex. Also, different businesses at Elections Canada overlook them. Further, transportation takes place across the country in areas outside of Elections Canada’s jurisdiction. However, we recognize that transportation is connected to travel to and from work locations, travel for events, and travel for delivering goods.

### ***Identified barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

At this time, Elections Canada has identified the following barrier in the area of transportation:

**Barrier 1:** During general elections and by-elections, some electors face barriers traveling to voting locations in some electoral districts.

### ***Steps to remove barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Elections Canada continually takes the following step to remove the barrier in the area of transportation described above:

#### **By 2024:**

**Barrier 1:** Elections Canada does not generally provide transportation for electors when they go to vote. However, we do and will continue to work with organizations that represent people with disabilities to engage with public transit authorities. The aim is to reduce barriers to voting in person by providing accessible and reliable transportation on voting days. To this end, we will expand the network of public transit authorities to increase awareness of barriers to voting. We will also engage these authorities in serving persons with disabilities on voting days.

### ***Steps to identify barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

Further, to better understand and identify other barriers in the area of transportation, we will:

#### **By 2025**

The Accessibility Office will coordinate a working group to consult across businesses to understand all the areas of the agency that are connected to transportation. We will also identify barriers within each business line. After these consultations, we will create a clear plan to remove current barriers in the area of transportation. We will put this in our next Accessibility Plan.

### ***Steps to prevent new barriers in policies, programs, practices and services***

- The Accessibility Office will coordinate across businesses to review new barriers to transportation and try to stay ahead of them.
- Elections Canada will create a critical path to solutions to respond to new barriers to transportation.
- Elections Canada will consult with AGDI and other subject matter experts when developing new products related to transportation.

### ***Performance Indicators:***

- There is an increase in the number of engaged transit authorities that are reducing barriers in transportation to go vote.
- Elections Canada has a critical path to solutions to address new barriers for employees who travel for work.
- Elections Canada has a clear process for supporting transportation for consultants, contractors, field staff, and employees.

# Reporting

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Every year, Elections Canada will report on the progress made toward meeting its targets in accessibility. The first progress report was published in December 2023. Under the *Accessible Canada Act*, the report will outline the steps taken to meet the commitments of the Accessibility Plan; the feedback received on accessibility and how it is being considered; and how the agency consulted persons with disabilities when preparing the reports.

Elections Canada will go into more detail on the progress toward performance indicators for each priority area. We will also validate the approach used to evaluate the indicators with members of the disability community before publishing the report.

# GLOSSARY

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## **Barrier**

A barrier is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

## **By-Election**

Election held in an electoral district to fill an empty seat in the House of Commons at any time other than during a general election.

## ***Canada Elections Act***

The [law that outlines the rules for holding and participating in federal elections](#) in Canada.

## **Candidate**

Person who wants to be elected as a member of Parliament for a specific electoral district.

## **Chief Electoral Officer**

Person who reports to Parliament and is responsible for the administration of elections, referendums, and important aspects of the electoral system. This person is appointed for a 10-year non-renewable term by the House of Commons.

## **Critical Path**

The series of activities that determines the duration of the project.

## **General election**

An election held simultaneously in every electoral district in Canada.

## **Election worker**

Someone who works for Elections Canada during a federal election.

## **Electoral district**

A place or territorial area that is represented by a member in the House of Commons.

## **[Employment Systems Review](#)**

An in-depth analysis of employment practices, policies and processes to identify systemic and attitudinal barriers faced by members of designated groups.

**Expense**

Money that candidates spend. See the [Political Financing Handbook for Candidates and Official Agents](#) for more information.

**Official agent**

The official agent is responsible for administering the campaign's financial transactions and reporting those transactions to Elections Canada as required by the *Canada Elections Act*. The candidate may have only one official agent at a time.

**Political entities**

A person or organization whose election-related activities are regulated under the CEA. There are six political entities that are covered by the political financing regime of the CEA: parties, associations, candidates, nomination contestants, leadership contestants and registered third parties.

**Political financing**

The rules for raising and spending money and using resources for an election campaign.

**Political party**

A group that supports particular candidates in an election. They usually share similar values, priorities and a vision for Canada.

**Polling station**

A public building where people go to vote in a federal election. It's often a school or a community centre.

**Poll worker**

Poll workers work primarily at polling places, that is, where electors go to vote. During an election, poll workers are on the front line and make it possible for electors to vote in an orderly fashion.

**Referendum**

A vote when a group of voters are invited to vote on a proposal or question.

**Returning officer**

The person responsible for the delivery and control of federal elections, by elections and referendums in their electoral district.

**Voter information card**

A card that Elections Canada sends during an election campaign to every elector whose name appears on the preliminary lists of electors. It tells electors when and where they can cast their ballots.