CAN/ASC-1.1:2024 (REV-2025) – Employment

National Standard of Canada

ACCESSIBLE

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Accessibility Standards Canada   Normes d'accessibilité Canada

Canada

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1 Accessibility Standards Canada: About us

Accessibility Standards Canada, under whose auspices this Standard has been produced, is a Government of Canada departmental corporation mandated through the *Accessible Canada Act.* Accessibility Standards Canada's Standards contribute to the purpose of the *Accessible Canada Act*, which is to benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities, through the realization of a Canada without barriers through the identification, removal, and prevention of accessibility barriers.

Disability, as defined by the *Accessible Canada Act*, means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

All of Accessibility Standards Canada's standards development work, including the work of our technical committees, is carried out in recognition of, and in accordance with, the following principles in the *Accessible Canada Act*:

- all persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities;

- all persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities;

- all persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities;

- all persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities;

- laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons;

- persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures; and

- the development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

These principles align with the principles of the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,* ratified by the Government of Canada in 2010 to recognize the importance of promoting, protecting, and upholding the human rights of persons with disabilities to participate fully in their communities. Standards developed by Accessibility Standards Canada align with Articles in the Convention.

Accessibility Standards Canada seeks to create standards that are aligned with its vision. This includes commitments to break down barriers to accessibility and abide by the principle of "nothing without us" in our standards development process, where everyone, including persons with disabilities, can expect a Canada without barriers.

As part of the "nothing without us" principle, Accessibility Standards Canada promotes that accessibility is good for everyone, as it can have society wide benefits. As a result, Standards developed by Accessibility Standards Canada are designed to achieve the highest levels of accessibility. This means that Accessibility Standards Canada standards create equity-based technical requirements while taking into consideration national and international best practices, as opposed to focusing on minimum technical requirements.

This approach is meant to push innovation in standards and develop technical requirements that have broad positive impacts. This approach to innovation strives to improve the outcomes for all Canadians, including creating employment opportunities and solutions that contribute to Canada's economic growth.

The standards development process used by Accessibility Standards Canada is the most accessible in Canada, if not the world. Accessibility Standards Canada provides accommodations to meet the needs of Technical Committee members with disabilities. Accessibility Standards Canada provides compensation for people with disabilities to encourage their active participation. Accessibility Standards Canada ensures an accessible public review process, including accessible permission forms and multiple formats of the standard, to encourage Canadians with disabilities to comment. To facilitate an accessible experience for all, our standards are available for free on our website. This includes providing standards in multiple formats, including plain-language, American Sign language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) summaries. This allows the following groups to benefit from the technical content of our standards:

- people with disabilities;

- people without disabilities;

- the federal public sector;

- private sector;

- non-government organizations;

- indigenous communities; and

- society.

Accessibility Standards Canada applies an intersectional framework to capture the experiences of people with disabilities who also identify as 2SLGBTQI+, Indigenous Peoples, women, and visible minorities. Its standards development process requires that technical committees apply a cross-disability perspective to ensure that no new barriers to accessibility are unintentionally created. In addition, standards developed by Accessibility Standards Canada align with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by Canada in 2015 to promote partnership, peace and prosperity for all people and the planet by 2030.

Accessibility Standards Canada is engaged in the production of voluntary accessibility standards, which are developed by technical committees using a consensus-based approach. Each technical committee is composed of a balanced group of experts who develop the technical content of a standard. At least 30 % of these technical experts are people with disabilities and lived experience and 30% are from equity seeking groups including 2SLGBTQI+, indigenous peoples, women and visible minorities. These technical experts also include consumers and other users, government and authorities, labour and unions, other standards development organizations, businesses and industry, academic and research bodies, and non-governmental organizations.

All Accessibility Standards Canada standards also incorporate related findings from research reports conducted through Accessibility Standards Canada's Advancing Accessibility Grants and Contributions program. This program involves persons with disabilities, experts, and organizations to advance accessibility standards research and supports research projects that help with the identification, removal, and prevention of new barriers to accessibility.

Accessibility Standards Canada standards are subject to review and revision to ensure that they reflect current trends and best practices. Accessibility Standards Canada will initiate the review of this Standard within four years of the date of publication. Suggestions for improvement, which are always welcome, should be brought to the notice of the respective technical committee.

As a Standards Council of Canada Accredited Standards Development Organization, all Accessibility Standards Canada standards are developed through an accredited standards development process and follow Standard Council of Canada's Requirements and Guidance for Standards Development Organizations. These voluntary standards apply to federally regulated entities and can be recommended to the Minister responsible for the *Accessible Canada Act* (i.e., the Minister of Jobs and Families).

In addition to its focus on developing accessibility standards, Accessibility Standards Canada has been a leader amongst Canadian federal organizations for promoting and adopting accessibility internal to government. Accessibility Standards Canada is the first organization in the federal government to have a Board of Directors majority-led by persons with disabilities. Accessibility Standards Canada has a state-of-the-art accessible office space for its employees, Board of Directors, and Technical Committee Members. The carefully designed accessible workspace aligns with the organization's belief in the importance of equitable design.

To obtain additional information on Accessibility Standards Canada, its standards or publications, please contact:

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National Standard of Canada

CAN/ASC–1.1:2024 (REV-2025)

Employment

4 Technical committee members

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Andrew Livingston, Chief Executive Officer, Dexterity Consulting (Vice Chairperson)

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Monique Beaudoin, Consultant (semi-retired)

Norma McCormick, Founder and Principal, Corporate Health Works Incorporated

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Mark Wafer, Chair, Board of directors, Canadian Hearing Services

Wendy Lau, Chief Executive Officer, Leads Employment Services

4.3 Policy makers

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Emmanuelle Lopez-Bastos, Human Rights, Equity and Diversity Coordinator, United Food and Commercial Workers Union

Glen Hayes, Senior Human Resources Advisor, Treasury Board Secretariat

Kelsey Baker, Compensation Consultant, Nova Scotia Education Common Services Bureau

Orelie Di Mavindi, Manager, Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, Employment and Social Development Canada

Seema Lamba, National Human Rights Officer, Public Service Alliance of Canada

Pamela Lahey (Member October 2020-April 2024)

4.4 Standards users

Jamie Burton, Chief Executive Officer, INNoVA

Rachel Desjourdy, Accessibility Lead, CBC/Radio-Canada

Steven Lewis, Manager, Senior Legal Counsel and Accessibility Advisor, Capital One Bank (Canada)

4.5 Project manager

Quinn Redekop, Senior Program Advisor, Accessibility Standards Canada

5 Preface

This is the revised version of CAN/ASC-1.1, Employment. It provides updated information from the previous version published in 2024 under the same title.

The following are major changes to the standard since the previous version:

- Clause 6.1 – this Clause is updated to expand on the principle of "duty to accommodate";

- Clause 10.4.1 – Clause 10.4 is restructured to create a distinction between the introductory general statement in Clause 10.4 and the first requirement of the clause. The requirement now appears in the new Clause 10.4.1 with the new title Commitment of all levels and functions of the organization;

- Clause 11 – this Clause is added to introduce additional requirements on the topic of culture, engagement, and education;

- Clause 14 – this Clause is added to cover the topic of development and maintenance of an accessibility support system;

- Annex A: Background and context (Informative) is added;

- Annex B: Lived experience with disability (Informative) is added;

- Annex C: Continual improvement (Informative) has been deleted; and

- Annex E (previously Annex F): Stand-alone accessibility policies and accessibility elements integrated into existing policies (Informative) is added;

This Standard is intended to align with other relevant standards, such as:

- CSA Group (CSA) Z1011 Work disability management system

Note 1: This Standard is also intended to align with the accessibility planning framework requirement for federally regulated entities. This was developed via the office of the Accessibility Commissioner so that entities could fulfill their planning and reporting obligations under the *Accessible Canada Act*.

Note 2: This Standard is also intended to align with relevant human rights codes and employment legislation, including:

a) *Accessible Canada Act*;

b) *Canada Labour Code*;

c) *Canadian Human Rights Act*; and

d) *Employment Equity Act*.

This Standard specifies requirements for a documented and systematic approach to developing, implementing, and maintaining inclusive and accessible workplaces and work environments and provides complementary information in Annexes A through E.

Accessibility Standards Canada models the language used in the *Accessible Canada Act* and the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* by using person-first language (see definition of person-first language in Clause 8). Careful selection of language when referring to a group of people is vital. The proper use of language conveys respect, dignity, and value, and moves away from labelling, stereotyping and discrimination.

This Standard centres on the intersecting identities within which disability is experienced. It recognizes that the lived experience of any person with a disability will be unique and is not reflective of others with the same disabilities or persons with disabilities as a whole. In keeping with the principle of intersectional experience, this Standard provides multiple formats of communication and language that persons with disabilities use to interact with the world and other people. In addition, this Standard takes an equity approach so that one type or subtype of disability does not take precedence over another.

This voluntary Standard can be used for conformity assessment.

Development of this Standard was undertaken by Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC). The content was prepared by the Employment Technical Committee, selected by ASC, under the authority of ASC management, and has been formally approved by the Technical Committee.

Note 1: This Standard was developed by consensus, which is defined as a substantial agreement implying much more than a simple majority, but not necessarily unanimity. Consistent with this definition, a member may be included in the Technical Committee list but not be in complete agreement with all the Clauses in this Standard.

Note 2: This Standard is subject to periodic review, and suggestions for improvement will be referred to the appropriate technical committee.

5.1 International agreements

5.1.1 *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

The United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* protects and promotes the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities without discrimination, and on an equal basis with others. Parties to the Convention are required to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities, including full equality under the law. The Convention has served as the major catalyst in the global movement towards viewing persons with disabilities as full and equal members of society.

This Standard aligns with the following Articles in the Convention:

- Article 5 - Equality and non-discrimination

- Article 6 - Women with disabilities

- Article 8 - Awareness-raising

- Article 9 - Accessibility

- Article 12 - Equal recognition before the law

- Article 16 - Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

- Article 19 - Living independently and being included in the community

- Article 20 - Personal mobility

- Article 24 - Education

- Article 25 - Health

- Article 27 - Work and employment

5.1.2 Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals are a global call to action. They aim to leave no one behind and address social, economic, and environmental challenges. Canada and 192 other United Nations member states adopted the 2030 Agenda in 2015. Standards can provide concrete and actionable guidance towards the achievement of the Goals.

This Standard contributes to the following Goals:

- Goal 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- Goal 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- Goal 9 - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

- Goal 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries

- Goal 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

6 Introduction

This Standard envisions a work environment that is accessible, inclusive, barrier-free, and discrimination-free for all workers, regardless of their lived experience with disabilities.

Note: In the context of employment, an inclusive work environment refers to one where workers feel they are valued, respected and where they have equitable access to opportunities and resources, regardless of their background or circumstances.

To achieve this vision, this Standard shows value through a combination of both systemic and person-centred approaches.

During their employment journey, persons with disabilities encounter numerous barriers to accessibility and inclusion in the work environment. These include, but are not limited to:

a) transitional barriers (barriers to accessing the work environment);

b) attitudinal barriers (differential treatment and discrimination in the work environment);

c) environmental barriers (barriers found within the work environment); and,

d) barriers to ensuring a safe work environment for all workers.

Note: A barrier is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities. Disabilities include physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, sensory disability, and functional limitations (Source: *Accessible Canada Act*).

Several social, environmental, and individual factors affect the experiences that persons with disabilities have at various stages of the employment life cycle. These factors include, but are not limited to:

a) the nature of the lived experience with disability;

b) age of onset;

c) intersectional identity;

d) size of the employer;

e) type of workplace;

f) type of work; and

g) formal and informal policies and practices within the workplace.

6.1 Application to the employment life cycle

This Standard is based on the seven key phases of the "employment life cycle" and aims to help users of the Standard throughout all phases of the cycle, namely:

a) recruitment;

b) hiring;

c) onboarding;

d) retention;

e) promotion and career development;

f) performance management; and

g) separation.

Productivity to an organization means having performing workers who contribute to the organizational mandate and success. Inclusive employment emphasizes and values diversity and representation in the workforce, leading to more meaningful worker engagement and motivation, and therefore, a more productive and healthier workplace. This Standard examines how organizations identify, prevent, and remove barriers that persons with disabilities encounter within their employment journey.

Disability confidence and accessibility are crucial for an inclusive workplace, but they should not be viewed in isolation. To create a truly inclusive environment, this Standard promotes integrating accessibility and disability confidence into broader diversity and representation efforts. This ensures that all interconnected elements essential to an inclusive workplace are addressed together.

Note: Disability confidence means an organization being willing and able to effectively manage the diverse spectrum of human needs. It means treating accessibility for persons with disabilities as a business priority by understanding how disability impacts every part of an organization. This is done by identifying and removing barriers and dismantling assumptions about the capabilities and potential of workers with disabilities. Disability confidence entails becoming comfortable and competent in managing a workforce that includes workers with disabilities.

To create a disability-confident workplace, organizations should strive to:

a) recognize the value of individuals with disabilities;

b) create an environment where employees feel comfortable and can choose if they want to disclose their disability;

c) provide training and resources to promote awareness and reduce discriminatory biases; and

d) require leaders to lead by example and champion inclusion at all levels of the organization.

By embracing disability confidence, organizations can build a more inclusive and equitable workplace for everyone.

A comprehensive, proactive approach is promoted with continual improvement to enable employers to have a high-performing, inclusive labour force such that an employer can be at the forefront of inclusive employment. The concept of continual improvement involves recurring activities to enhance performance over time. Examples of these include the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects, programs, policies, and practices in the workplace. This Standard is designed to facilitate a proactive and systemic approach where accessibility is embedded within the work environment.

The requirements within this Standard define a framework of systemic change through environmental solutions and policies to facilitate accessibility and inclusion in the workplace (see Clauses 10, 11, and 14):

a) Clause 10 of this Standard focuses on structural support, policy, and leadership in organizations by emphasizing the development of systems, policies, and practices.

b) Clause 11 discusses culture, engagement, and education within the workplace.

c) Clause 14 highlights the development and maintenance of an accessibility support system in the workplace.

This framework of systemic change is balanced by a person-centred, individualized approach to accessibility and accommodation throughout the employment journey (see Clauses 12 and 13).

● Clause 12 addresses identifying, preventing, and removing barriers encountered during recruitment, hiring, and onboarding.

● Clause 13 addresses the identification, prevention and removal of barriers encountered in worker retention, professional development, pay equity (compensation), performance management and job separation.

This person-centred, individualized approach to accessibility and accessibility support (accommodation) is predicated on the principle of "duty to accommodate." Duty to accommodate is the employer and service provider's legal obligation to adjust rules, policies, or practices, in a timely and appropriate manner, for all workers who fall under the prohibited grounds within the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, to participate fully.

Note: The duty to accommodate means that persons with disabilities are provided adequate supports to perform their job effectively.

Both approaches (systemic change through environmental solutions and person-centred, individualized approach), taken together, are necessary to achieve a truly inclusive work environment. This Standard demonstrates that both approaches are required in equal measure.

Informative annexes provide additional information and context on concepts presented within this Standard:

a) Annex A (informative): Background and context;

b) Annex B (informative): Lived experience with disability;

c) Annex C(informative): Intersectional accessibility lens;

d) Annex D(informative): Anti-Ableism policies;

e) Annex E(informative): Stand-alone accessibility policies and accessibility elements integrated into existing policies; and

f) Annex F(informative): Bibliography.

6.2 Long-Range Objective

The long-range objective of this Standard is to establish and maintain accessible, inclusive, barrier-free, and discrimination-free employment for all people, including anyone identifying as a person with (a) disability(ies).

6.3 Purpose

The purpose of this Standard is to provide direction to organizations and other workplace parties in achieving the long-range objective by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers. This allows all persons to participate in employment fully and equitably, including anyone identifying as a person with (a) disability(ies).

6.4 Guiding principles

The Standard respects and is complementary to the principles, purpose, and requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act*. It supports the end goal of achieving accessibility for persons with disabilities. The Standard considers the range of disabilities, the barriers, and any technical and fiscal considerations/impacts that may be associated with their implementation. Further to the principles of the *Accessible Canada Act* stated in Clause 1, there are additional principles that also apply to this Standard.

The following principles are extracted or adapted from the United Nations' *Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities*: Article 27 Work and Employment; and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*:

a) Discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited for all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring, continuance of employment, career advancement, and safe and healthy working conditions.

b) The rights of persons with disabilities to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances, are protected, on an equal basis with persons without disabilities.

c) Persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others.

d) Employment opportunities and career advancement are promoted for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining, and returning to employment.

e) Reasonable accommodation is provided in the workplace to persons with disabilities.

f) Persons with disabilities acquire work experience in the labour market.

g) Accessible employment is inclusive of all parts of the employment life cycle and is applicable throughout the work environment, workplace location, and workforce.

h) Intersectional identity is embedded in the development and design of workplace policies, programs, services, and structures.

i) Continual improvement principles are embedded in the development and design of workplace policies, programs, services, and structures.

j) Documents generated by the workplace are written in plain language and produced in an accessible format to ensure that they are readable by everyone.

k) Equitable processes are used to achieve full participation within the workplace for all workers, including those identifying as persons with (a) disability(ies).

l) Proactive approaches to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers for persons with disabilities in the workplace are used in concert with reactive, needs-based approaches to create and maintain accessible, and inclusive workplaces.

m) Accessible employment is in alignment with the principles and actions set out in the Calls to Action contained within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report (2015).

7 Scope

Canadian organizations are expected to be compliant with existing legal requirements and regulatory frameworks. This Standard describes additional requirements to ensure accessible and inclusive workplaces.

This Standard is intended to provide guidance to federally regulated entities and persons as specified in Section 7 of the *Accessible Canada Act*. While there is an aspiration for all employers in Canada, including provincial and municipal employers, to follow this Standard, only federally regulated employers, including Agencies, Boards, Commissions, and public appointments made by a government minister, are in scope.

7.1 Intended audience

The primary intended audience of this Standard includes, but is not limited to:

a) employers in federally regulated industries and workplaces listed in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Accessible Canada Act*;

b) third-party contractors in federal jurisdiction;

c) workplace parties;

d) skills training service providers;

e) employment service providers;

f) agencies that receive federal funding to provide service to persons with disabilities; and

g) unions.

7.2 Work

"Work" is inclusive of permanent, full-time paid employment contracts, including temporary, casual, part-time, contract, gig, and any work-related activities that are under the control of the organization. Work-integrated learning and apprenticeship opportunities, paid or unpaid, are in scope.

7.3 Work environments

For the purposes of this Standard, the work environment is inclusive of the physical or virtual settings or both, as well as the policies, practices, culture, procedures, resources, technologies, services, and programs in place for any given employer. This Standard addresses all work settings in federally regulated industries and workplaces.

7.4 Terminology

In this Standard, three terms are defined as follows:

a) Shall: Expresses a requirement, or a provision that the user is obliged to satisfy to comply with the Standard.

b) Should: Expresses a recommendation, or that which is advised but not required.

c) May: Expresses an option, or that which is permissible within the limits of the Standard.

Notes accompanying clauses do not include requirements or alternative requirements; the purpose of a note accompanying a clause is to separate from the text explanatory or informative material.

Annexes shall be designated as normative (mandatory) or informative (non-mandatory) to define their application.

8 Definitions and abbreviations

The following definitions shall apply in this Standard.

Ableism – individual and societal discrimination and exclusion in the form of attitudes, prejudices, and actions that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities.

Source: [Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability](#).

Note: Ableism, like other forms of discrimination, can be conscious, unconscious, intentional, unintentional, blatant, or casual, and can be embedded in institutions, systems, or the broader culture of a society.

Accessibility – enabling persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, having access to all aspects of society on an equal and equitable basis with others.

Source: [United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, Article 9 – Accessibility](#).

Note: This includes but is not limited to employment, physical environment, transportation, information, communications (including information and communications technologies and systems), financial security, social services, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public.

Accessibility Policies – those supporting systemic and environmental approaches (including technical and human supports) to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers in the work environment.

Note: Accessibility policies can include existing policies, stand-alone policies, or language integrated into existing policies (Refer to Clause [10.5](#)).

Accessibility support (accommodation) – adjustment to rules, policies, workplace cultures, and physical environments to ensure that they do not have a negative effect on a person with a disability within the employment life cycle.

Accessible Format – documentation that is designed to be read and interacted with by all workers and is barrier-free.

Allyship - the active and intentional support of disability inclusion by individuals who do not share the same lived experience (including those without disabilities and those with different disabilities).

Anti-Ableism – an active approach that includes strategies, theories, actions, and practices that challenge and counter ableism, inequalities, prejudices, and discrimination of persons with disabilities.

Note: Discrimination against persons with disabilities is often linked to prejudicial attitudes, negative stereotyping, and the overall stigma surrounding disability.

Attitudinal barriers – lack of understanding, awareness, and knowledge that reinforces stereotypes, dehumanizing behaviours, and discriminatory practices.

Note 1: Unconscious bias underpins attitudinal barriers.

Note 2: Attitudinal barriers can be amplified by persons as well as existing workplace culture

Bona fide occupational requirement – a requirement that meets the following three-step test:

   a) Was adopted for a purpose or goal that is rationally connected to the function being performed;

   b) Was adopted in good faith, in the belief that it is necessary to fulfill the purpose or goal; and

c) Is reasonably necessary to accomplish its purpose or goal, in the sense that it is impossible to accommodate the worker without undue hardship.

Source: The Supreme Court of Canada

Communications – information that an organization shares with its workers, including but not limited to:

a) policies;

b) organizational updates;

c) health and safety information;

d) job aides or training materials;

e) multimedia presentations; and

f) workplace activities.

Consultation – the process by which an organization, in a planned and coordinated manner, seeks the input and feedback of workers and other workplace parties before it makes decisions.

Continual improvement – recurring activity to enhance performance.

Note: Continual does not mean continuous, so the activity does not need to take place without interruption or in all areas simultaneously.

Discrimination – an action or a decision that results in the unfair or negative treatment of a person or group because of their disability, race, age, religion, sex, etc.

Note: Some types of discrimination are illegal under federal human rights legislation (see prohibited grounds in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*).

Employer – a person or organization that employs or engages a person to perform work arising in and out of the course of employment.

Employment accessibility strategy – a framework of policies and practices that establishes a vision for, and a roadmap towards, a workplace that is accessible and inclusive by design.

Note 1: An employment accessibility strategy is not limited to only accessibility-specific policies and practices, but also ensuring that all policies and practices are inclusive and barrier-free.

Note 2: The employment accessibility strategy will inform an organization's accessibility plan if an accessibility plan is required by a particular jurisdiction or industry.

Equity – when workers receive treatment that is fair, just, and necessary to achieve the same outcome in the workplace. Individual workers are provided with what they need to access resources and workplace opportunities.

External Experts – individuals outside the organization who can be consulted or contracted at any stage of the employment life cycle to address third–party (or insurance) provisions, medical, accommodation, accessibility, or any other employment-related needs.

Gig work – employment that includes non-standard work arrangements, which are often temporary and involve a pay-per-service relationship that is often mediated through a digital platform.

Interested party – a person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity.

Internal experts – individuals inside the organization who are involved in informing or managing components of the inclusive and accessible employment system within the employment life cycle.

Intersectional Accessibility Lens – the analytical framework that starts with/centres on experiences of persons with (a) disability(ies) and that examines the complex, cumulative ways multiple forms of discrimination and oppression overlap, interact, or intersect with persons with (single or multiple) disabilities' experiences of ableism at the same time.

Intersectionality – a framework that explains the cumulative way in which a person or group of people are affected by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantages.

Source: Adapted from Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. 1994. "Mapping the Margins". In The Public Nature of Private Violence, ed. Fineman, M. and Mykitiuk, R. New York: Routledge. Google Scholar.

Note 1: The effect of multiple characteristics of diverse groups can exist within a single person.

Note 2: Systems of oppression such as ableism, racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and transphobia combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

Lived experience – personal knowledge gained by persons with disabilities.

Performance management – encompasses all activities related to assessing and improving worker performance, productivity, and effectiveness with the goal of facilitating worker success.

Person-first language – language and expressions that emphasize the individual first, rather than the disability.

Note: Not every disability group uses person-first language.

Plain Language – wording, structure, and design that are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information.

Source: Plain Language Association International

Practice – a commonly accepted method, formal or informal, of completing a procedure or an action within a work environment.

Procedure – a documented way to carry out an activity.

Retention – an organization's ability to keep its workers through policies and practices that meet diverse worker needs and create an environment that incentivizes workers to remain with the organization.

Support person - a person designated to provide assistance to a worker with a disability in completing job duties, providing personal care, or supporting their inclusion in the workplace.

Worker – a person who performs work or work-related activities that are under the control of the organization.

Note: Includes paid or unpaid workers, supervisors, managers, leaders, contractors, service providers, volunteers, students, and others engaged in performing activities for the benefit of the organization.

Worker representative – a person who is authorized by the worker to represent the worker.

Note: a person who is authorized by the worker to advocate on their behalf may include a labour representative, a legal representative, disability service provider, or other representative as relevant.

Work-integrated learning – practical learning opportunities in a work environment which may be part of formal or informal education.

Workplace party – an interested person who has a role in identifying, removing, or preventing barriers within the workplace and may include human resources staff, workers, managers, clients, worker representatives, student interns with disabilities, etc.

9 Reference Document

This Standard refers to the following publication, and where such reference is made, it shall be to the edition listed below.

CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 Accessibility requirements for information and communications technology (ICT) products and services

10 Structural support, policy, and leadership (systems, policies, and practices)

10.1 Overview

This Clause establishes the requirement for an employment accessibility strategy with:

a)   measurable objectives;

b)   supporting policies;

c)   clear roles and responsibilities of the key workplace parties whose support is necessary for an inclusive and accessible employment system; and,

d)   evaluation plans.

This Clause emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the organization's policies support accessibility and the inclusion of workers with disabilities. It provides direction for the development and review of organizational policies and identifies policy domains that are essential components of the organization's policy structure to promote an accessible and inclusive workplace. See Clause 10.5.2 for more details and requirements regarding policy domains.

This Clause also requires the organization to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessing information and to allocate resources to provide information in accessible formats. This includes the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility in existing information technology tools, solutions, and equipment, as well as in those that are newly acquired or deployed. Where a Human Resources Information System or an Applicant Tracking System is used, the organization must identify and establish accessibility criteria to ensure that these systems support the organization's accessibility objectives.

Finally, this Clause identifies the need for emergency preparedness in the workplace by planning, preparing for, and responding to potential emergency situations. It requires the involvement of persons with disabilities in the development of the planned response to a specific emergency situation to ensure that emergency responses meet the needs of all workers, including workers with disabilities.

10.2 Development, implementation, and monitoring of an employment accessibility strategy

In the development, implementation, and monitoring of an organizational employment accessibility strategy, the organization shall:

a)   develop an employment accessibility strategy with measurable objectives and supporting policies;

b)   demonstrate accountability for implementing the employment accessibility strategy and honouring its commitments, including the health and safety of all workers;

c)   publish the strategy;

d)   monitor progress of this strategy;

e) review and update the strategy based on feedback and suggestions for improvement to accessibility in the workplace every three years; and

f) communicate any updates to the employment accessibility strategy to workers and interested parties annually.

10.3 Key components for a successful employment accessibility strategy

For the employment accessibility strategy to be successful, the organization shall:

a) define and communicate the roles and responsibilities of all internal workplace parties required to support the inclusive and accessible employment system consistent with this Standard (refer to Clause 10.4 for further explanation of the inclusive and accessible employment system);

b) provide workplace parties with the necessary resources to effectively participate in establishing, implementing, maintaining, and continually improving the inclusive and accessible employment system. Such resources include, but are not limited to:

   i) the premises;

   ii) equipment;

   iii) communication tools; and

   iv) work time; and

c) organize discussions about inclusive employment issues among workplace parties, including persons with disabilities and lived experience, external experts, service providers, and program administrators, while respecting the worker's right to privacy.

10.4 Roles and responsibilities

This Clause details the roles and responsibilities of key workplace parties in support of inclusive and accessible employment policies, processes, programs, procedures, and practices (herein termed "the inclusive and accessible employment system").

10.4.1 Commitment of all levels and functions of the organization

The successful implementation of this Standard requires commitment of all levels and functions of the organization and by workers at all levels.

Senior management shall demonstrate this commitment by:

a) allocating, in a timely and efficient manner, the financial, human, and material resources required to improve inclusive and accessible employment practices; and achieve its employment accessibility strategy and objectives .

10.4.2 Role and responsibilities of senior management

Senior management shall develop, lead, and promote a culture of accessibility and inclusion within the organization by:

a) communicating to all workers on an ongoing basis:

   i) the value of working together to address and innovate accessibility in the workplace; and

   ii) the value of ensuring equitable commitment to the Standard to benefit everyone;

b) actively engaging workers (with and without disabilities) in dialogue on all aspects of accessible employment;

c) providing anti-ableism training to reduce the impact of attitudinal barriers;

d) establishing or supporting committee(s) that promote accessibility, anti-ableism, and inclusion;

e) establishing a confidential complaints process;

f) designating one or more neutral representatives who, irrespective of other responsibilities, have defined roles, responsibilities, accountability, and authority to establish, implement, maintain, and continually improve the organization's confidential complaints process;

g) protecting all workers from reprisals when reporting incidents of discrimination based on disability;

h) protecting all workers from reprisals when identifying barriers to accessibility;

i) supporting workers to demonstrate leadership in accessibility as it applies to roles and areas of responsibility;

j) implementing this Standard to achieve its intended outcome(s);

k) providing opportunities for confidential worker feedback and suggestions for improvement;

l) measuring, evaluating, and reporting progress toward achieving accessibility objectives to demonstrate continual improvement;

m) facilitating worker representative participation in the development, implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement of the inclusive and accessible employment system consistent with this Standard;

n) encouraging participation of both internal and external interested parties in the development, implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement of the inclusive and accessible employment system consistent with this Standard;

o) ensuring that persons with disabilities are consulted/included in the development, implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement of the organization's inclusive and accessible employment system;

p) establishing a mechanism for regular reporting to senior management on the performance of the inclusive and accessible employment system, using this feedback to support continual improvement; and

q) including the leadership and implementation of an inclusive and accessible employment system in their performance management objectives.

10.4.3 Role and responsibilities of managers, supervisors, and internal experts

The organization shall ensure that managers, supervisors, and internal experts:

a) support the development, implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement of the organization's inclusive and accessible employment system, considering the specific role they play within the system. This includes, but is not restricted to:

   i) policy development, implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement;

   ii) proactive remediation of known and hidden systemic barriers and unconscious bias;

   iii) development of an information system to support the evaluation of its effectiveness if no such system exists;

   iv) oversight of day-to-day operational effectiveness;

   v) encouraging disclosure of accessibility supports (accommodation) needs as appropriate (excluding diagnosis and any non-relevant medical conditions);

vi) ensuring a process is in place for confidential disclosure of disability;

vii) ensuring accessibility supports (accommodation) plans are up-to-date; and

viii) promoting and supporting good faith in the accessibility supports (accommodation) process;

b) communicate policies, processes, programs, procedures, and practices for inclusive employment to workplace parties;

c) support workers in navigating inclusive employment policies, processes, programs, procedures, and practices;

d) ensure all workplace parties receive appropriate training for their role and responsibilities within the inclusive and accessible employment system;

e) promote an inclusive culture where workers feel comfortable disclosing their need for accessibility supports (accommodation) without fear of reprisal or negative consequences;

f) permit workers the time away from their work, as necessary, to contribute to the process of continually improving the inclusive and accessible employment system; and

g) consult with external experts, disability organizations, and persons with disabilities, as needed, to provide expertise on elements of the inclusive and accessible employment system to enhance effectiveness and impact.

10.4.4 The role of an organization in a unionized workplace

The organization shall provide clear, understandable, and relevant information about the inclusive and accessible employment system and consult with union representative(s) on ways to promote a culture of accessibility and inclusion within the organization by encouraging:

a) participation in developing, implementing, maintaining, and continually improving the inclusive and accessible employment system. This includes, but is not restricted to:

   i) participating in meetings with management to ensure the various stages of the inclusive and accessible employment system are collaborative and meet the needs of the workers;

   ii) working with management to identify outdated policies and recommend new ones;

   iii) ensuring that the inclusive and accessible employment system complements the collective bargaining process and does not contravene negotiated contract language;

   iv) negotiating workplace-specific worker protections through the collective bargaining process; and

   v) holding employer representatives accountable for their responsibilities within the inclusive and accessible employment system;

b) promotion of work disability awareness and disability competency within the workplace;

c) promotion of a work environment where reporting or disclosing issues are done in a respectful and supportive manner;

d) support for workers throughout the accessibility supports (accommodation) process;

e) representation of members as per union responsibilities (as needed or as requested); and

f) promotion of an inclusive culture where workers feel comfortable disclosing their need for accessibility supports (accommodation) without fear of reprisal or negative consequences.

10.4.5 Worker Role

The organization shall support workers to promote a culture of accessibility and inclusion within the organization by:

a) participating in developing, implementing, maintaining, and continually improving the organization's inclusive and accessible employment system. This includes, but is not restricted to:

    i) identifying barriers to participation, communicating these barriers through the appropriate channels, and, where appropriate, working to remove and prevent these barriers;

    ii) following the policies, processes, programs, procedures, and practices as outlined in the system; and

    iii) providing feedback on the effectiveness of the inclusive and accessible employment system;

b) actively engaging in the accessibility supports (accommodation) process in good faith; and

c) promoting an inclusive culture where all workers feel comfortable disclosing their need for accessibility supports (accommodation) without fear of reprisal or negative consequences.

10.5 Organizational policies

Policies reflect the organization's commitment and intention. Achieving a barrier-free workplace for all requires that the organization's policies support accessibility and the inclusion of workers with disabilities.

10.5.1 Policy development

The organization shall:

a) review existing policies to ensure they are consistent with accessibility objectives;

b) develop policies that facilitate the achievement of these objectives and are compatible with the requirements of this Standard;

c) state its commitment and intention to achieve a barrier-free workplace, and support accessibility and inclusion of workers with disabilities in all its policies and practices;

d) review and assess policies using an intersectional accessibility lens (see Annex C) to identify policies that create or sustain barriers to the employment of workers with disabilities and revise policies as required; and

e) consult with workers representing diverse disabilities and unions in developing and modifying the organization's employment policies and practices.

10.5.2 Policy domains

Policy domains are essential components of the organization's policy structure.

The organization shall ensure that its policies address accessibility through the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers in the following policy domains:

a) anti-discrimination (includes anti-ableism);

b) pre-employment (e.g. recruitment, screening, interviewing, assessing, hiring, onboarding);

c) retention, career development, job exit;

d) individual accessibility supports (accommodation) (e.g. including devices and equipment);

e) performance management;

f) pay equity, complying with Clause 13.5

g) individual and organizational training, learning, and development;

h) internal communications, accessible communications, communications support;

i) workplace emergency response;

j) support persons;

k) guide dogs and service dogs;

l) procurement; and,

m) maintenance

    i) preventative maintenance; and

    ii) cleaning.

10.5.3 Accessibility policy

10.5.3.1 Contents of accessibility policy

The organization shall develop an accessibility policy suitable to its purpose, size, and context that:

a) includes a commitment to providing an accessible workplace by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility;

b) provides a framework for setting its accessibility objectives;

c) commits to fulfilling legal requirements and other requirements related to accessibility; and

d) identifies a process for measuring, monitoring, enforcing, and evaluating progress toward achieving accessibility objectives.

10.5.3.2 Development and publication of accessibility policy

The organization shall:

a) encourage the participation of workers and their representatives in the development of an accessibility policy;

b) document the policy;

c)   make it available to workers;

d)   communicate it within the organization; and

e)   publish it to communicate with the public, complying with Clause 10.6 item c).

10.6 Access to information

The organization shall identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessing information by:

a)   ensuring there is accountability and resources for producing accessible format materials;

b)   ensuring in-house workers or contracted external expertise or both, can provide internal and external communications in plain language, signed languages, and accessible formatting;

c)   planning and creating communication (continuous or temporary) with accessible formats (e.g., large print) and languages (e.g., braille, signed languages, protactile sign language, plain language);

d)   maximizing full access by delivering accessible communications, complying with Clause 10.6.1;

e)   documenting the process for requesting individualized accessible formats and communicating it to all workers;

f)   providing job applicants and prospective workers with the same accessible communication formats offered to current workers;

g)   providing information on work opportunities in accessible formats;

h)   making digital information retrievable in the requested format by any worker, complying with Clause 10.7; and

i)   providing accessible document storage and archiving platforms, complying with Clause 10.7.

10.6.1 Accessibility of communications

The organizations shall monitor and improve the accessibility of communications by:

a) designating those responsible for managing requests for accessible formats;

b) establishing a timeline for responding promptly to requests for accessible formats;

c) monitoring requests for accessible formats and the time taken to respond;

d) obtaining worker feedback and providing it to the continual improvement process on an annual basis; and

e) providing electronic communications in a format that meets CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 Accessibility requirements for information and communications technology (ICT) products and services.

10.7 Information technology

Information technology is the use of any computers, storage, networking and other physical devices, infrastructure, and processes to create, process, store, secure, and exchange all forms of electronic data. The commercial use of information technology encompasses both computer technology and telecommunications.

Everyone within the organization who designs, develops, deploys, recommends, procures, or manages electronic equipment and information technology has responsibilities to include accessibility of software and hardware throughout their use in the workplace.

The organization shall:

a) follow and meet the requirements of [CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024;](CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024;)

b) identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility in existing information technology tools, solutions, and equipment;

c) prioritize identifying, preventing, and removing accessibility barriers when acquiring and deploying new information technology tools, solutions, and equipment;

d) integrate accessibility in the lifecycle management process for existing information technology solutions, tools, and equipment, including web content;

e) enable the accessibility features of tools and equipment to support the highest level of accessibility provided by information technology solutions;

f) make accessibility a priority when acquiring or developing internal and public-facing information technology solutions, tools, and equipment to allow information technology to be useable by all; and

g) determine if products, services, and technology used in, or purchased for the workplace result in accessibility limitations for persons with disabilities.

   Note: Such products, services, and technologies may include but are not limited to:

   i)   audiovisual content;

   ii) websites;

   iii) web applications;

   iv) mobile apps;

   v)   software; and

   vi) kiosks.

10.7.1 Human Resource Information System

A Human Resource Information System is a software solution that maintains, manages, and processes detailed worker information and human resources-related policies and procedures.

The organization shall:

a) identify and establish accessibility criteria that support its accessibility objectives, in selecting a new Human Resource Information System; and

b) review and assess any existing Human Resource Information System using accessibility criteria to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to employment for workers with disabilities.

Note: A Human Resource Information System may be used as part of a Human Resource Management System.

11 Culture, engagement, and education

11.1 Overview

Everyone deserves respect and dignity at work. An organization helps and includes people with disabilities by:

a)   creating a positive workplace culture;

b)   having strong leadership;

c)   sharing clear communication;

d)   enabling active worker participation;

e)   implementing effective training; and

f)   providing ongoing education.

It is important that an organization encourage the active participation of interested parties, especially workers, in the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of employment best practices.

Improving the workplace for workers with disabilities requires cultural and systemic change. When workplaces operate within a culture of silence, intimidation, fear, and bystander apathy, any actions to support worker rights will remain reactive and retaliatory instead of prevention focused. Creating a disability-confident culture means supporting all workers by proactively removing barriers, avoiding discrimination, and promoting anti-ableism.

To foster a workplace culture that values individuals with disabilities and prioritizes eliminating workplace barriers, it is important to anchor the culture in an intersectional accessibility lens (see Annex C). Potential barriers include systemic, transitional, environmental, and attitudinal barriers. This approach requires strong support and enforcement from leadership, as well as active involvement and commitment from all workers.

11.2 Workplace culture

To establish an equitable disability-confident workplace culture that supports and includes persons with disabilities, the organization shall:

a) adopt a proactive and systemic approach to identify, prevent, and remove transitional, environmental, and attitudinal barriers that result in discrimination on the job;

b) proactively implement workplace protections against a culture of silence, intimidation, fear, and bystander apathy, and reactive and retaliatory actions;

c) implement an intersectional accessibility lens approach (see Annex C) to identify how individual oppression and systemic ableism may be experienced at work; and

d) provide for worker-centred, barrier-free, and discrimination-free access to the workplace in all aspects of the employment life cycle.

11.2.1 Comprehensive communication strategies and efforts

To implement comprehensive communication strategies within the workplace, the organization shall:

a) make all workplace communication in verbal, non-verbal, signed language(s), and written formats, accessible to all workers;

b) share all workplace communications in diverse ways (described in item c)), regardless of self-disclosure;

c) provide visual aids, signed language(s) (American Sign Language (ASL), Langue des signes Québecoise (LSQ), Indigenous Sign Language(s), Protactile Sign Language(s)), described video and captions for worker-directed communication based on worker needs, complying with Clause 10.6 d);

d) actively ensure that communication is clear and consistent throughout all stages of employment;

e) provide communications that are digitally accessible;

f) incorporate the use of inclusive language with a focus on eliminating ableist, racist, colonialist, and gendered terminology; and

g) practice message equivalency across teams and formats to ensure accuracy in the message.

Note: Message equivalency refers to retaining the meaning of the same message or content information conveyed when translating from one language to another language (i.e., avoiding being lost in translation or missing important information because of interpreting inaccurately or misinterpreting when translating occurs).

11.2.2 Worker-centred actions

Worker-centered actions include identifying barriers and fostering anti-ableist attitudes in activities adjacent to job tasks. These activities include but are not limited to:

a) interpersonal social interactions;

b) impromptu meetings;

c) hallway discussions;

d) lunchroom discussions; and

e) any formal or informal interactions among interested parties.

It is important to identify barriers and foster anti-ableist attitudes in these activities to achieve a healthy workplace culture.

To help identify barriers and foster anti-ableism, the organization shall:

a) focus workplace actions on acceptance and collaboration instead of tolerance, as inclusion is critical to the creation of a healthy workplace culture;

b) take steps to eliminate discrimination, microaggressions, violence, and harassment in the workplace and informal work-related settings;

Note 1: A microaggression is a comment or action subtly expressing a prejudiced attitude toward a person. A microaggression can be a result of unconscious bias.

Note 2: Discrimination of workers with disabilities could take subtle forms, including but not limited to use of ableist or discriminatory language, disrespectful behaviour, covert or overt bullying, misrepresentation or misinterpretation of accessibility supports, and discouragement of achievement or growth.

c) use timely and effective processes in response to infractions to reinforce its commitment to this goal to all interested parties; and

d) design intersectional leadership approaches, communication, training, and education that advance disability inclusion efforts.

11.3 Leadership and communication

Leadership within an organization can exist at any level. Effective leadership is prevention-focused and involves support and enforcement from leadership. This also includes active commitment and participation from all workers.

Leadership at all levels shall provide a clear commitment to disability inclusion, accountability, transparency in prevention and performance measures, role modelling, and leading by example.

The organization shall create and maintain a strong disability-confident workplace culture by:

a) applying an intersectional accessibility lens at all levels of management, including upper management, Human Resources, and others who are accountable, responsible, or have influence within the organization;

b) creating a responsive environment that encourages workers with disabilities to identify concerns and issues;

c) ensuring that there is no reprisal when workers with disabilities identify concerns and issues;

d) acknowledging and responding to issues raised by the worker in a timely and effective manner;

e) resolving issues in a timely and effective manner in a way mutually agreeable to the worker(s) involved;

f) providing worker access to all resources required to do their jobs (including but not limited to tools, technologies, and training); and

g) removing workplace attitudinal barriers, whether formal or informal, by using inclusive, clear, and consistent communication for all workplace parties.

11.3.1 A commitment to inclusion and training from all levels of leadership

Commitment to applying an intersectional accessibility lens starts with all parties with professional influence over anyone in the workplace.

To remove attitudinal workplace barriers, whether they are formal or informal, using clear, consistent, and inclusive communication, the organization shall:

a) require management to use data to compare the participation of persons with disabilities in given roles within an organization against the labour force availability of their occupational classification;

b) establish representation targets for its workplace against workforce availability; and

c) provide workplace training opportunities on disability-related issues for all workplace parties.

11.3.2 Accountability

The organization shall demonstrate its commitment to inclusion, accountability, and evaluation by:

a) supporting a leadership team that demonstrates effective knowledge and experience about barriers and discrimination faced by workers with disabilities and other equity groups;

b) assigning financial resources for the development of an inclusive and accessible workplace so that budgets do not create a barrier;

c) establishing leadership criteria for appointments to agency, board, commission, or senior management positions that promote equitable representation, including the appointment of persons with disabilities;

d) providing the option for workers to remain anonymous when making accessibility support (accommodation) needs known or raising accessibility issues and concerns, without prejudice or reprisals, complying with Clauses 10.4.2 and 10.4.3;

e) creating mechanisms incorporated into employer-led prevention efforts to resolve issues to satisfy all workplace parties;

f) supporting persons with disabilities throughout the course of their careers, profession, or work relationship by implementing and maintaining inclusive accessibility and measurement plans that are collaboratively developed;

g) conducting independent review(s) to assess whether targets and objectives have been met and where gaps continue to exist; and

h) creating accessibility strategies that include Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) goals and targets.

11.4 Worker engagement

Engaging workers is crucial for creating an inclusive workplace culture. It helps ensure that everyone, including workers with disabilities, is supported through effective mechanisms.

Workers have a unique perspective on existing and potential barriers, as well as how to strengthen inclusion in the work environment.

The following processes work to advance these goals.

11.4.1 Needs assessments

To support its inclusive and accessible employment system, complying with Clause 10.4, the organization shall:

a) engage workers and their representatives in a needs assessment to identify existing and potential gaps that impede the creation of an inclusive and disability-confident workplace culture; and

b) conduct a needs assessment at least every two years to support the existing Accessibility Support System complying with Clause 14, inform prevention efforts, and eliminate barriers, including attitudinal barriers.

11.4.2 Employment accessibility strategy

To support employment accessibility (complying with Clause [10.2](#)), the organization shall:

a) engage workers and their representatives in the development of an employment accessibility strategy to comprehensively and accurately measure yearly inclusion targets for hiring, promotions, training, and retention;

b) include a section on worker engagement efforts and anti-ableism training in the employment accessibility strategy; and

c) harmonize the employment accessibility strategy with employment equity plans, diversity and inclusion plans, and evacuation plans if applicable.

11.4.3 Championing inclusion

Workers can take on the most important role in championing an inclusive workplace culture. To achieve this, workers shall be provided with opportunities during their employment to support and raise awareness of disability inclusion efforts.

As such, the organization shall:

a) establish a senior role of an accessibility lead or accessibility officer;

b) support worker networks (e.g., self-organized, employer-supported, union-supported);

c) provide workers with opportunities to raise awareness around disability inclusion and champion an inclusive workplace culture;

d) support worker-led and disability-led initiatives to identify, remove and prevent barriers for workers with disabilities;

e) raise awareness of how conscious and unconscious bias challenges inclusive practices; and

f) participate in company-funded activities recognizing disability-specific days of observances (e.g., National Disability Employment Awareness Month, National Accessibility Week, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities).

11.5 Training and education

11.5.1 Leadership training

To foster a truly inclusive and barrier-free workplace, leadership must be equipped with the knowledge and tools to champion accessibility and equity.

The organization shall:

a) provide training for leadership on an ongoing basis;

b) ensure that the training is created and delivered, in consultation with persons with disabilities, to address attitudinal bias, (un)conscious bias, ableist attitudes, and prejudices;

c) ensure that the training is accessible to the leaders that would attend; and

d) ensure the training includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

  i) anti-ableism, accessibility, duty to accommodate, anti-discrimination, and anti-harassment;

  ii) literacy on disability issues, accessibility measures and ways to create a barrier-free work environment (e.g., disability confidence);

iii) applicable disability-related legislation and collective bargaining processes (including the *Employment Equity Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Accessible Canada Act*, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*); and

iv) how to strengthen accessibility measures by creating barrier-free work environments.

11.5.2 Organizational training

The organization shall advance workplace inclusion targets and raise awareness of barriers in the workplace by:

a) providing mandatory, formal, proactive and strategic training and education opportunities for all interested parties, and workplace parties;

b) providing training on understanding and navigating inclusive employment policies, processes, programs, procedures, and practices;

c) at minimum, undertaking training on disability issues which impact the work environment including:

   i) anti-ableism, accessibility, anti-discrimination, and anti-harassment;

   ii) duty to accommodate;

   iii) elimination of barriers in the workplace;

   iv) accessible information and communication;

   v) early intervention, policy, and system reviews;

   vi) allyship and bystander intervention; and

   vii) training on roles and responsibilities for specific teams, including, but not limited to:

1) persons responsible for administrating functions related to disability management to ensure comprehensive accessibility. This includes human resources, payroll and benefits, and third-party contractors responsible for Employee Assistance Programs;

2) persons responsible for procurement contracts or for communicating the organization's expectations for third-party contractors to provide services (e.g., Employee Assistance Programs) in an accessible format; and

3) other teams such as IT, communications, policy, etc.;

d) conducting ongoing training on a timely basis;

e) making training content accessible in multiple formats to accommodate diverse participant learning needs (e.g., online, in-person, conferences, etc.); and

f) incorporating inclusive language that emphasizes an equity, anti-oppression and intersectional accessibility lens, centering persons with disabilities and recognizing different disabilities. (See Annex C).

12 Recruitment, hiring, and onboarding

12.1 Overview

This Clause focuses on the first phase of the employment life cycle. It emphasizes the recruitment, hiring, and onboarding of workers, or prospective workers, with disabilities. When the recruitment process is fully accessible, it enables organizations to diversify the workplace, reach qualified applicants, and reduce the likelihood of discrimination. The principle of non-discrimination is to be respected throughout the recruitment and hiring process, to ensure maximal benefit to the organization and equitable opportunities for workers with and without disabilities.

12.2 Recruitment

12.2.1 Commitment statement

The organization shall:

a) develop a statement of commitment to accessibility, equity, and inclusion in recruitment procedures and job advertisements;

b) post its statement of commitment publicly and make it accessible to all applicants;

c) invite applications from underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities; and

d) provide accessibility supports (accommodations) at no cost to applicants throughout every stage of the process (including recruitment, selection, and assessment, where applicable) to ensure full and equal participation.

12.2.2 Candidate recruitment process

The organization shall:

a) develop recruitment processes and advertising practices to attract applications from as many qualified people as possible;

b) publicize job vacancies in formats accessible to persons with disabilities, and consult with employment services for disabled persons or other relevant agencies to obtain feedback on an as-needed basis;

c) encourage candidates to identify any accessibility supports (accommodations) required throughout the recruitment process;

d) provide or arrange for suitable accessibility supports (accommodation) considering the candidate's accessibility needs;

e) maintain privacy with respect to disclosure and the reason for it when a candidate self-identifies;

f) inform workers and the public of the accessibility supports (accommodations) available to candidates in its recruitment processes; and

g) provide all recruitment materials in an accessible format.

Note: As technology is updated periodically, accessibility present in earlier versions may be lost in later versions. Materials would need to be regularly reviewed and updated as technology advances.

12.2.3 Applicant Tracking Systems and Artificial Intelligence

Organizations shall implement the following Applicant Tracking System and Artificial Intelligence requirements in conjunction with Clause 12 of this Standard.

Note: Where the organization uses an Applicant Tracking System or other Artificial Intelligence for job candidate recruitment, screening, and hiring, compliance with anti-discrimination legislation is required under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. This demonstrates that the selection criteria of any hiring assessment tools are job-related, consistent with business necessity, and do not systemically disadvantage members of employment equity groups.

Where the organization uses an Applicant Tracking System or other Artificial Intelligence for job candidate recruitment, screening and hiring, the organization shall:

   a)   ensure that Applicant Tracking Systems and Artificial Intelligence screen applicants for bona fide occupational requirements as defined in Clause 8 of this Standard;

   Note: This requirement enables employers to test a worker's relevant skills or abilities, rather than appraising a person's potentially impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

   b)   take reasonable steps to demonstrate the Artificial Intelligence or the Applicant Tracking System is not discriminatory, by:

   i)   producing and making public evidence that they have required suppliers to demonstrate they have taken reasonable steps to make sure their products are not discriminatory to candidates with disabilities;

ii) routinely and regularly utilizing the following indicators of acceptable practice for Applicant Tracking Systems and Artificial Intelligence systems to remove bias in the hiring process, by:

1) explaining to candidates if Artificial Intelligence is being used as part of the process, how they will be evaluated, and what protections are in place to ensure the use of the Artificial Intelligence is unbiased;

2) telling candidates whether supplemental assessment tools as part of the Artificial Intelligence screening are accessible to persons with disabilities;

3) providing clear guidelines on how to request accessibility supports (accommodation); and

4) ensuring every candidate is treated equitably when requesting accessibility supports (accommodation), without prejudice, reprisal, or discrimination, and ensuring accessibility supports (accommodations) are delivered in a non-stigmatizing manner;

c) take steps to prioritize the mitigation of Artificial Intelligence bias, even when utilizing third-party tools; and

d) ensure that there are mechanisms for ongoing analysis of the Artificial Intelligence data and algorithms shared for fairness.

Note: Companies and organizations can increase transparency on how their Artificial Intelligence systems work and arrive at decisions while also participating in revisions by allowing code audits.

The organization shall ensure that external Artificial Intelligence hiring tools used to conduct screening and evaluation have been programmed and implemented with a data set that includes not only persons with disabilities but diversity within disabilities.

12.2.4 Job postings

The organization shall develop job postings that:

a) ensure inclusivity and do not exclude persons with disabilities, complying with Clause 10.6 items f) and g);

b) list the job requirements for the position that have been reviewed and confirmed to be accurate by human resources and the hiring manager;

c) encourage candidates with different abilities, relevant alternative expertise or experience who can perform the essential and critical job functions, with or without support(s);

d) indicate the option, where appropriate, to provide a portfolio or work samples as an alternative to written descriptions of skills and experiences;

e) identify only bona fide occupational requirements that form part of the selection criteria, where such bona fide occupational requirements exist for the position;

f) make the organization's accessibility supports (accommodation) policies available to applicants;

g) identify a contact person who is aware of the organization's commitment statement and who will answer questions about the essential job requirements;

h) frame requirements to highlight desired skills or outcomes rather than specific, potentially exclusionary, capabilities;

i) provide the contact details of the organization's representative managing the job posting;

j) describe the work environment, where relevant, in relation to accessibility considerations, including but not limited to office layout, scent policies, noise level, lighting, and workstation setup, to help applicants visualize the workspace; and

k) outline the subsequent stages of the recruitment process.

12.2.5 Job application process

The organization shall provide accessible job application processes by:

a) requiring the use of plain language for questions and to identify job requirements;

b) accepting candidate's materials in alternate formats;

c) clearly identifying mandatory response fields and those that are optional;

d) identifying fields for which candidates can provide additional related information;

e) scheduling communication with candidates in advance to provide more time to process and respond to pre-screening questions;

f) informing candidates if they will be tested to demonstrate their ability to perform actual or simulated tasks and providing a description of the test format in advance, along with a notice that accessibility supports (accommodations) are available upon request;

g) focusing pre-employment tests and selection criteria on the specific skills, knowledge, and abilities that are essential to the position so that they do not inadvertently exclude persons with disabilities;

h) removing consideration of length of time to complete education from evaluation criteria in assessing an application;

i) assessing the candidate's ability to do the job based on the required soft skills and attitude and not exclusively the outcome of a competence test;

j) permitting alternatives to references, if used during the assessment process; and

k) identifying how an interested person can request support in completing the application at any time in the process.

12.3 Interviews and assessment process

The organization shall enable candidates to participate and perform in interviews and assessment processes on an equitable and inclusive basis by:

  a) providing interviewers and assessors with disability awareness coaching and training, inclusive of how to relate appropriately with persons with disabilities in a disability-confident manner;

  b) providing information on getting to the interview location, including but not limited to accessible parking options, accessible transit options and building accessibility features;

  c) providing information about relevant policies and protocols, including but not limited to chemical sensitivity policies and guide dog and service dog policies;

  d) inviting the candidate to specify, in advance, any accessibility considerations for the location of the interview;

  e) where virtual interviews are deemed appropriate, providing instructions regarding the preferred platform, means of access and usage, and any accessibility-related considerations;

  f) providing candidates with an accessible format text copy of any oral interview instructions and questions;

  g) providing an estimate of interview duration and expected end time to assist with facilitating transportation arrangements; and

  h) encouraging candidates to self-identify any assistance or accessibility supports (accommodations) needed during the interview/selection process without asking about the exact nature of their disability, for example, by permitting a sign language interpreter, an advocate, or a support person to be present at an interview.

12.3.1 Interview panels

The organization shall remove barriers by:

a) establishing an interview panel of members with required training in equity, diversity, and inclusion, including at least one from the requesting team familiar with the role to be filled; and

b) providing interview panel members with guidance on making the interview and selection process accessible for all applicants.

12.3.2 Interview questions

The organization shall remove barriers by:

a) developing an interview scoring grid that reflects the job criteria and skills being assessed in an equitable, objective, and methodical process;

b) scoring the responses consistently across all candidates in a way that mitigates the effect of biases;

c) focusing the development of the interview questions on determining how a candidate will:

   i) apply their skills to perform job tasks and core competencies; and

   ii) apply their ability to perform specific job functions;

d) asking only questions that do not require a candidate to disclose a disability directly or indirectly, or discuss the use of assistive aids (guide dogs/service dogs/persons/equipment) or technologies, unless the question is related to fulfilling a bona fide occupational requirement;

e) assessing interpersonal skills as related to job requirements or the functions of the role and to promote an inclusive culture; and

f)   preventing disqualification of candidates because they are unable to perform non-essential job functions.

> **Note:** non-essential job functions are tasks or duties that are not bona fide occupational requirements. These tasks/duties can often be reassigned or removed without significantly affecting the job's core responsibilities or the overall business operation.

12.4 Hiring

The organization shall:

a)   notify the successful applicant of its current policies for accommodating workers when making offers of employment;

b)   notify the successful applicant that tailored accessibility supports (accommodations) for their specific disability-related needs are available; and

c)   ensure that the successful applicant receives pay equity (equal pay of equal value) commensurate with the job roles and responsibilities and is paid no less than minimum wage.

12.5 Onboarding

For each new worker, the organization shall:

a)   provide an orientation that includes:

i)   an introduction to the organization;

ii)   familiarization with the work environment and job duties; and

iii) addresses specific individual accessibility requirements;

b)   provide policies related to accessibility supports (accommodations);

c)   identify a support person, mentor, service provider, or "go-to" person who will assist in the onboarding process;

d) confirm that evaluation of the worker during the probationary period begins once accessibility supports (accommodations) have been provided;

e) communicate information essential to the job and workplace (including but not limited to job instructions, work manuals, information on staff rules, grievance procedures, and health and safety procedures) in accessible format(s);

f) confirm that the format(s) identified in e) meets the needs of the worker(s), complying with Clause 10.6;

g) consult with the worker to understand their needs and whether additional accessibility supports (accommodations) are necessary before implementing any change(s);

h) provide the worker with the time and tools necessary to formulate their individualized accessibility supports (accommodation) request(s); and

i) provide a process for the worker to communicate to the employer the accessibility supports (accommodations) needed.

12.6 Ongoing employment support

The organization shall:

a) provide all workers with training on disability awareness, equity, and inclusion;

b) provide follow-up services to promptly identify and resolve problems for the benefit of the organization and the new worker;

c) review and update accessibility supports (accommodations) if required following completion of orientation and onboarding; and

d) in cases where accessibility supports (accommodation) cannot be provided directly by the employer and necessitates engaging a service provider, consult with the individual to consider their preferences in the selection of the service provider.

13 Retention and career development

13.1 Overview

This Clause speaks to policies and practices that strengthen job retention and career advancement for all workers, with a focus on workers with disabilities. It details responsibilities for creating an accessible work environment that will:

a) foster the continued employment of workers;

b) provide workers with equitable training and promotion opportunities; and

c) ensure workers receive compensation based on merit.

In addition, this Clause details senior management's responsibility for providing accessibility supports (accommodations) that will not disadvantage workers with disabilities. This Clause also provides senior management with direction on job exits, emphasizing learning job retention strategies during this part of the employment journey.

13.2 Retention

The organization shall support the retention of all workers, including persons with disabilities, and provide incentives to remain with the organization by:

a) providing updated information on changes to policies for job accessibility supports (accommodations) that impact a worker's accessibility needs; and

b) providing a simple, inclusive, equitable, universally applicable, and dignified way for every individual, regardless of their specific needs or circumstances, to request accessibility supports (accommodation) at any stage of the employment lifecycle.

The organization should support retention by:

c) designing human resource policies and practices that maintain and improve the representation of persons with disabilities at all levels of the organization, from leadership to entry-level;

d) setting and communicating representation targets against workforce availability that is consistent with the retention rate and targets for the organization, and not related to attrition; and

e) reviewing these policies and practices at least once every three years in consultation with persons with disabilities to identify, remove and prevent barriers to retention.

13.3 Promotion and career development

The organization shall:

a) encourage the promotion of persons with disabilities into jobs at a higher organizational level, responsibility or pay based on merit, equity, and seniority;

b) consider seniority alongside merit to safeguard against the sole use of personal judgement to grant or deny a promotion;

c) provide career development support to enhance skills and experience and gain recognition through training, education, leadership, speaking engagements, and other opportunities;

d) remove barriers inherent in criteria for career development and promotional opportunities by using an intersectional accessibility lens;

e) provide support to workers with disabilities through individual accessibility supports (accommodation) plans as required for success to advance within the organization; and

f) measure the representation of persons with disabilities in the organization's promotion and career development initiatives.

Note: Refer to Clause 12 for requirements applicable to promotions that require an internal application and interview process.

13.3.1 Redeployment

The organization should:

a) identify the need for a redeployment policy to facilitate continuing employment if a specific position is eliminated, or an entire team has transitioned or been outsourced; and

b) facilitate the reassignment of workers to other teams or functions as an alternative to laying them off.

13.3.2 Redeployment policy

Where organizations have a redeployment policy, the policy shall:

a) provide for employment stability by identifying opportunities for re-employment;

b) apply to all workers, with specific reference to persons with disabilities;

c) consider individual accessibility supports (accommodation) needs or plans; and

d) include consultation with the workers or the worker representatives or both, upon request.

13.4 Performance management

The organization should use a performance management system to facilitate worker success when assessing and improving worker performance, productivity, and effectiveness by:

a) ensuring that the performance management process is accessible and inclusive to all, including workers with disabilities;

b) adjusting accessibility supports (accommodations) as requested by the worker or their representative, or both;

c) providing accessibility supports (accommodations) before assessing the worker's performance and productivity level;

d) putting mitigation factors in place if the performance discussion reveals a potential need for accessibility supports (accommodation) so that the worker with a disability is not faulted negatively;

e) applying the performance management process in an equitable manner across the organization for all workers, including workers with disabilities;

f) supporting the movement of accessibility supports (accommodation(s)) to a new role or area, including the worker's accessibility supports (accommodation) plan, as appropriate, to make the transition as seamless a process as possible; and

g) identifying and addressing repercussions or negative consequences to a worker resulting from the organization's delay or failure to provide accessibility supports (accommodation(s)) or failure to respond to an accessibility supports (accommodation) request.

13.5 Compensation

The organization shall:

a) apply objective criteria to prevent and eliminate compensation discrepancies between persons with disabilities and other workers with the same responsibilities and job functions;

b) apply the equal wages provision as set out in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* in such a way as to apply to workers with disabilities; and

c) pay their workers no less than minimum wage.

13.6 Job exit

The organization shall:

a) ensure that job exit policies and procedures are accessible and equitable;

b) provide job exit policies and procedures in an accessible format;

c) apply these policies and procedures equally to workers with and without disabilities;

d) use job exit information to identify trends and opportunities to improve the retention of workers with disabilities;

e) report aggregate information of all job exits of workers with disabilities to senior management; and

f) request a statement from persons with disabilities on unresolved and removed barriers faced during their employment tenure.

14 Development and maintenance of an accessibility support system

14.1 Overview

This Clause specifies policies, processes, and programs for the development and maintenance of an Accessibility Support System, with the term accessibility support used synonymously with accommodation. An Accessibility Support System, which is part of the overarching Inclusive and Accessible Employment System, complying with Clause 10.4, aims to address the accessibility support (accommodation) needs of workers with disabilities, whether they are in the process of being recruited, hired, and onboarded, or have been at the organization for some time.

This Clause addresses issues of accessibility support (accommodation) requests, whether they arise with or without disclosure. It emphasizes the proactive removal of barriers and the provision of facilitators (defined as someone or something that assists with the end goal). Emphasis is on addressing requests for accessibility supports (accommodations) on a timely basis to ensure barriers to participation do not hinder engagement in work roles and a worker's sense of inclusion and belonging.

14.2 Principles

To actively implement accessibility supports (accommodations), organizations shall adhere to the following principles:

a) prevent or address workplace barriers to minimize adverse impact and support participation in work activities with responsive accessibility supports (accommodation);

b) take a worker-centred approach;

> **Note:** A worker-centred approach prioritizes the person with a disability, including their psychological and social needs, and respects their integrity when they describe their needs.

c) consider the environmental and social factors that create the disabling condition/situation (known as the social model of disability) when addressing a worker's accessibility support (accommodation) needs to promote work engagement whenever possible, and ensure inclusion and belonging;

d) actively discuss with the worker any external expert advice received and address the worker's needs with strong consideration of their preferences, unless there is evidence of possible harm to the worker or others;

e) in the case of health absence, apply a targeted, safe, timely, and documented return-to-work plan with a hierarchy that begins with:

   i) return to the worker's own position;

   ii) return to the worker's own position with accessibility supports (accommodations);

   iii) an alternative position; and

   iv) if required, an alternative position with accessibility supports (accommodations);

f) direct efforts to provide a worker with optimal level of accessibility supports (accommodations) at the workplace and in the work ecosystem;

g) engage input from all workplace parties using a collaborative approach to achieving optimal effectiveness of accessibility supports (accommodations) and to promote the worker's sense of inclusion and belonging; and

h) ensure no contravention of a collective bargaining agreement by the Accessibility Support System.

14.3 Components of comprehensive Accessibility Support System

An Accessibility Support System is a framework of policies, processes, programs, procedures, practices, and plans designed to remove barriers experienced by workers with disabilities in the workplace. The Accessibility Support System is designed to proactively remove barriers. It ensures that workers with disabilities can fully utilize their skills, expertise, and experience in the workplace. This approach promotes a sense of inclusion and belonging for all employees. The Accessibility Support System also addresses stay-at-work and return-to-work processes following a health absence.

14.3.1 Policies

14.3.1.1 Accessibility Support System policy development

Accessibility Support System policies provide strategic direction to the organization and shall be documented and available to all workers in accessible formats, complying with Clauses 10.5.1 and 10.6. The organization shall develop policies that:

a) ensure that the development of and modifications to the Accessibility Support System do not create new barriers;

b) offer individualized accessibility supports (accommodations) plans (e.g., through an accessibility passport) that support portability of a workers' needs across the organization;

    Note: An accessibility passport is a tool for workers to document the barriers they might encounter at work and the adaptive tools and support measures they need to succeed. The passport follows a worker from position to position. (This explanatory note was adapted from the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport.)

c) ensure there are no disincentives arising from accessibility supports (accommodations) expenses being included as a part of departmental budgets;

d) ensure accessibility supports (accommodations) are provided on a timely basis;

e) ensure clear and honest explanations are provided when the requests for accessibility supports (accommodations) cannot be fully implemented;

f) take a "yes by default" approach to providing accessibility supports (accommodations) and have zero tolerance for the "policing" of them;

   Note: a "yes by default" approach refers to the mindset and shift in culture within an organization. In such an approach the organization evaluates, responds, or both evaluates and responds to requests that embrace accessibility supports (accommodations) as a way to equip all workers to contribute to their full potential;

g) minimize the need for the disclosure of personal information (including medical or other disability-related information);

   Note: For example, an organization would identify resources that are available to all workers without documentation or permission. Alternatively, organizations would identify thresholds of resources below which do not require medical documentation. Thresholds can depend on the size of the organization and the nature of the needs.

h) ensure that documentation is used to fairly evaluate, rather than deny or delay, the requested accessibility supports (accommodations);

i) integrate feedback mechanisms, including options for anonymous feedback, to inform the Accessibility Support System and support the identification and prevention of emerging barriers;

j)   include case examples where possible; and

k)   respect the dignity, confidentiality, and privacy of the worker.

In developing policies according to the above requirements, organizations shall comply with Clause 10.5.3 and Clause 14.3.2.

14.3.1.2 Policy requirements

Management of the organization shall establish and maintain the organization's Accessibility Support System policies in consultation with workers, including those with varying disabilities, and other relevant internal workplace parties, including worker representatives. The policies shall:

a)   be appropriate to the nature and scale of the organization;

b)   be structurally supported and clearly documented;

c)   include a framework for setting and reviewing program objectives and targets;

d)   be documented, implemented, maintained, and periodically reviewed (e.g., after 6 months, a year, and then annually thereafter) based on an established and appropriate review frequency to ensure continual improvement;

e)   be communicated to all workers;

f)   be available to external interested parties, as appropriate; and

g)   be integrated with other programs and systems within the organization.

The Clauses that follow are about specific areas where policies need to be developed.

14.3.2 Disclosure and accessibility support (accommodations) provision

A successful Accessibility Support System ensures that workers feel safe to self-identify as a person with a disability. It fosters confidence that this disclosure will result in increased support, not reprisals, from others within the organization. It also fosters an environment where individuals with disabilities receive the necessary support to excel in their roles, independent of formal disclosure or request processes. The key to this is the development and implementation of a comprehensive, individualized accessibility supports (accommodations) policy and accompanying process.

An individualized accessibility supports (accommodations) policy is a policy that provides guidance on accessibility supports (accommodations) for job candidates and workers with lived experience of disabilities where the addressing of barriers encountered is beyond the level of accessibility of the organization.

Note 1: These policies can be categorized into policies applicable to job candidates (internal to and external to the organization) and policies applicable to workers.

Note 2: Policies applicable to job candidates address accessibility and individualized accessibility support (accommodation) in the context of the job application process, the interview, hiring, and onboarding.

Note 3: Policies applicable to workers address accessibility and individualized accessibility support (accommodation) in the context of the work environment, including the performance of work tasks, meetings and events, work-related travel, social, and informal settings.

This policy and accompanying process shall:

a) outline the roles and responsibilities of all workers involved in the accessibility supports (accommodations) process;

b) apply to all workers, regardless of lived experience with disability or position within the organization;

c) provide for continuity of support while workers are employed by the organization (e.g., through an accessibility passport);

d) acknowledge a worker's request for accessibility supports (accommodations) in a timely manner and ensure they are in place before any evaluation of the worker;

e) make accessibility supports (accommodations) available without medical documentation or disclosure, where possible, and in exceptional cases where it is not possible:

i) require the employer to cover the cost of obtaining the medical, or other disability-related, documentation it requests, including any lost time, and

ii) minimize the amount of personal information requested, respecting the worker's privacy and confidentiality regarding their medical condition;

f) focus on the removal of barriers, to inform the provision of accessibility supports (accommodations);

g) require the worker's input and informed consent regarding how the implementation of accessibility supports (accommodations) will be communicated to others on a need-to-know basis;

h) where the workplace is unionized, require the employer to inform the worker of their right to union representation and, in consultation with the worker, involve worker representatives in accessibility supports (accommodations), where needed;

i) involve a disability organization representative or a competent alternative to assist workers with disabilities in accessibility supports (accommodations) processes in a non-unionized workplace, where needed;

j) train managers and workers responsible for supporting accessibility supports (accommodations) requests on the Accessibility Support System and the duty to accommodate;

k) keep the accessibility support (accommodation) provision process agile and adaptable to changes in a worker's responsibilities to minimize the risk of losing accessibility supports (accommodations) through career development and advancement within the organization;

l) promote equity across the organization by providing workers in all positions within the organization with access to reasonable accessibility supports (accommodations);

m) make assistive technologies and adaptive workplace supports broadly available to maximize access;

n) provide protection for workers and their allies making disclosures or requesting accessibility supports (accommodations), including a non-reprisal approach (avoiding any loss or negative impact of financial compensation) to prevent a negative impact on their career opportunities, growth, and advancement;

o) disseminate information about the Accessibility Support System to all workers and have the information available to all workers without restrictions to accessing the information;

p) include development and implementation of a feedback mechanism for workers to evaluate their experience accessing accessibility supports (accommodations);

q) provide workers with frequent and meaningful opportunities to request accessibility supports (accommodations) prior to making a decision that would adversely affect them;

r)   require the organization to inquire with the worker about the need for accessibility supports (accommodations) when the organization is aware, or reasonably ought to be aware of a relationship between a disability and a worker's job performance;

s)   require the organization to provide documented explanations for accessibility supports (accommodation) denials; and

t)   require documentation of accessibility supports (accommodations) provided to ensure continuity over the course of employment with the organization.

14.3.3 Benefits and other supports

The organization shall have a formal policy on the provision of benefits programs and services for workers. The policy shall:

a)   focus on supporting worker engagement, sense of inclusion and belonging, health and well-being;

b)   require that information on benefits and services and how to access them is readily available to workers in accessible formats;

c)   minimize the requirement for medical documentation and paperwork to access benefits; and

d)   include a worker-centred process for periodic identification of needs, gaps in needs, and opportunities to address them through additional programs and services.

14.3.3.1 Programs

The organization should consider the following in the development of programs:

a)   paid sick leave;

b)   Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)/Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP);

c) dental plan;

d) extended health care;

e) pharmaceutical plan;

f) vacation time beyond the minimum requirement of the law;

g) short-term disability (STD) and long-term disability (LTD);

h) paid casual absences;

i) personal/family leave;

j) reimbursement of costs for securing supporting documentation required for benefits receipt;

k) supplemental assistance for workers when the need for benefits coverage (e.g., health, dental) extends over or beyond what is currently covered;

l) a centralized accessibility supports (accommodations) fund to address accessibility supports (accommodations) needs; and

m) removal of financial disincentives within operations to hire, retain, and promote workers with disabilities within a team or department, and support the duty to accommodate.

Note: An example of a financial disincentive would be a manager's concern that accessibility support (accommodations) costs will reduce their operating budget.

14.3.3.2 Implementation of the Accessibility Support System

The organization should:

a) provide timely information sessions for workers on the benefits and services available from the organization and in the community, and how to access them; and

b) review accessibility requirements of third-party programs and service providers to confirm that the needs of workers are met and seek out alternative providers as necessary.

15 Annex A: Background and context (Informative)

Persons with disabilities make up 27% of the Canadian population (Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022). Persons with disabilities have been historically marginalized in Canadian society and denied full and equitable opportunities to contribute and participate in their communities. The broader term of "disability" includes many types of disabilities (i.e., mental health, including post-traumatic stress disorder; intellectual, physical, episodic, developmental, sensory disabilities; brain injury).

Historically, Canadian society has been built upon systemic frameworks of oppression, including systemic ableism. Similar to systemic racism, systemic ableism is a result of centuries of prejudice and deeply rooted beliefs about the abilities, competencies, and contributions of persons with disabilities. Systemic ableism is internalized by decision-makers, including employers and hiring managers, as a form of "othering" of persons with disabilities, and a sense that persons with disabilities cannot perform relevant tasks and are "less than" persons who live without disabilities.

Systemic ableism does not exist in society in isolation. It is bound up in other forms of systemic discrimination, as disability is but one part of a person's lived experience and identity (which also includes race, culture, gender identity, Indigenous identity, sexual orientation, degree of assimilation into Canadian culture, language, and so on). Moreover, approximately 24% or 4.8 million working-age adults (25 to 64 years) have one or more disabilities (Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022). Everyone – including persons with disabilities – lives with multiple intersecting identities, and any standard that identifies, prevents, and removes barriers for persons with disabilities needs to embody intersectionality.

Systemic ableism encompasses both systemic and structural barriers, both within and outside the workplace, and different types of oppression (individual, interpersonal, institutional, metaphorical/ideological). Types of oppressions include individual, (i.e., making inappropriate statements like disability slurs, unacceptable behaviours, and actions), institutional (i.e., unacceptable policies, systems, and practices that discriminate against persons with disabilities) or ideological (i.e., philosophies, theories, and ideas that are against persons with disabilities such as deficit or pathological views).

This historical marginalization extends to employment; as of 2022, the employment rate of persons with disabilities is approximately 20.5% lower than the rest of the working-age population (Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022). Many persons with disabilities who are employed are under-employed – working fewer hours, earning less, and not given the opportunity to advance in their jobs or careers. COVID-19 has magnified these historic inequities; some studies have shown that more than 30% of persons with disabilities who were employed lost their jobs or had their jobs changed in a negative way in the first three months of the pandemic (CNIB, 2020, 2021; Maroto et al., 2021). It is also important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the labour market through labour disruptions and increased remote work opportunities in some sectors (Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022).

It is important to recognize the medical, economic, social, and cultural models of disability that have preceded where we are today. In the medical model, disability is a characteristic of the person and can be treated, cured, or rehabilitated. The economic model of disability approaches disability through an economic and productivity lens and argues that disability is in fact a challenge to productivity. The economic model views persons with disabilities in a specific light. It perceives them as less productive than others, attributing this to their lived experience with disabilities. This model suggests two main reasons for their perceived lower productivity. First, it expects persons with disabilities to take more time off work more for disability- or health-related reasons ("absenteeism"). Second, it assumes that when they are present at work, they will be less productive over the same amount of hours ("presenteeism").

Note: presenteeism is the lost productivity that occurs when workers are not fully engaged in the workplace.

In the social model, disability is a result of barriers that exist that lead to a discriminatory environment. The social model of disability provides a framework that focuses on abilities based on a humanistic view (i.e., focus on what accessibility supports (accommodation) persons with disabilities need for equal participation or effective functions such as a white cane, captioning, or ramp). In this model, "disability" is the result of the interaction between people living with disabilities and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication, and social barriers. The social model of disability carries the implication that the physical, attitudinal, communication, and social environment must change to enable people living with disabilities to participate in society on an equal basis with others. The social model of disability is the internationally recognized way to view and address "disability". The cultural model of disability, in contrast, takes into account multiple factors in conceptualizing disability and focuses on how different ideas of disability and non-disability may operate in a given culture.

This Standard seeks to disprove the medical and economic models of disability, and reinforces the social and cultural models by emphasizing proactive approaches to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers in the workplace.

This Standard is a departure from the past in that it emphasizes the role of the employer in proactively identifying, preventing, and removing barriers in the work environment for persons with disabilities.

16 Annex B: Lived experience with disability (Informative)

This Standard is intended to apply to the following contexts for workers with disabilities:

- Scenario 1: A job applicant with a lived experience with a disability comes to work for the organization.

- Scenario 2: A worker acquires a lived experience with a disability while working for the employer or requires accessibility supports (accommodation) because of changes in working conditions made by the employer. The former may occur through accident, illness, or injury unrelated to the workplace, as well as accident, illness, or injury while at work. The latter may occur through changes in workplace policies or the working environment.

- Scenario 3: A worker becomes aware of a pre-existing disability while working for the organization.

These three scenarios are distinct from one another, such that a "one size fits all" work disability management framework would not be successful. This Standard proposes instead a system that is comprised of equal parts, responsiveness to a person-centred identification of accessibility needs and systemic implementation of environmental solutions for accessibility and inclusion in the workplace. Such a system is more likely to be responsive to the individuality of lived experience and work conditions for workers with disabilities.

Conditions leading to disability can occur at any age (birth, childhood, young adulthood, working age) - be progressive, episodic, or situational - and have diverse functional impacts based on severity. Thus, disability doesn't fit into a neatly framed disabled/non-disabled dichotomy (Lightman, 2009), and accessibility solutions for workers with disabilities may evolve over time and/or apply in some circumstances, but not others.

Disability and accessibility are not static concepts. Their definitions are always evolving. Both terms reflect concepts and lived experiences that are understood and applied in many different ways depending on circumstance and approach. For example, the lived experience of a young adult with a disability transitioning from school to work – potentially through work-integrated learning opportunities – is, at its root, distinct from the lived experience of an older adult who acquires a disability while on the job. This Standard views disability and accessibility through a lens that captures this fluidity.

Because someone may acquire a disability at any time in their life, it is important for this Standard to be inclusive of return-to-work and stay-at-work approaches for workers who acquire a disability while in the workforce, as well as offering accessibility solutions for workers who come to the workplace with a disability.

17 Annex C: Intersectional accessibility lens (Informative)

17.1 Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality was coined by American legal and critical race expert Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s to explain how race intersects with gender to produce unique barriers for Black women not faced by White women or Black men.

17.2 Defining the core components of an intersectional accessibility lens

An intersectional accessibility lens is the analytical framework that starts with/centres experiences of persons with (a) disability(ies). This analytical framework is used to examine the complex, cumulative ways multiple forms of discrimination and oppression overlap, interact, or intersect.

The following are the core components of an intersectional accessibility lens:

a) Various grounds of discrimination that may be included in an intersectional analysis may include, but are not limited to:

    i) Ableism;

    ii) Racism;

    iii) Sexism;

    iv) Homophobia;

    v) Transphobia;

    vi) Classism; and

    vii) Ageism, etc.;

b) Cumulative effects of these diverse types of discrimination produce a unique and distinct form of discrimination and oppression, which may otherwise not be clear and is different from each separate grounds of discrimination;

c) Intersectionality is not only about identity. It also considers the historical, social, and political context underlying systemic inequities and institutions and the power relationships that shape and affect the experiences of individuals and communities. This results in excluding some people and privileging others. For example:

   i)   a racialized woman with a disability will experience oppression differently than a non-racialized man with a disability. In addition to ableism, a racialized woman with a disability also experiences racism and sexism, while a non-racialized man with a disability might experience ableism but have white male privilege; and

   ii) a blind transgender woman with a learning disability will experience oppression differently than an Indigenous woman with a mobility disability. A blind transgender woman with a learning disability will experience multiple forms of ableism and transphobia, while the Indigenous woman with a mobility disability will experience ableism and racism; and

d) The identification, removal, and prevention of barriers considers both the environment and an individual's identity(ies).

17.3 Benefits of an intersectional accessibility lens

At the individual and organizational level, the organization can:

a) become more aware of accessibility issues and better understand inequities in the workplace for persons with disabilities with multiple identities, from accessing the workplace and in the workplace;

b) have an inclusive, positive, and respectful work environment;

c) identify how initiatives could be tailored to be inclusive of persons with disabilities;

d) incorporate diverse perspectives of persons with disabilities to strengthen the capacity of work teams;

e) recruit and retain workers who are representative of the communities;

f) develop and provide better results in services and programs that are responsive to all clients and communities; and

g) identify and address systemic barriers and inequities in accessing and benefitting from the initiative.

Adopted from: City of Ottawa and City for All Women Initiative, "Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook." Version 2018. Expanded from page 6.

Adopted from: Introduction to GBA Plus - Women and Gender Equality Canada.

17.4 Questions

Questions to ask at outset:

a) How does each element or stage (development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation) of an initiative, policy, program, procedure, process, or service affect persons with disabilities in general? As a manager? As a worker?

b) Next, how does it affect diverse disabilities and diverse identities, such as for:

    i) Persons with multiple disabilities?

    ii) Women with disabilities?

    iii) Indigenous persons with disabilities? (First Nations, Inuit, Metis)

    iv) Racialized persons with disabilities? (Black, South Asian, Chinese, etc.)

    v) 2SLGBTQI+ persons with disabilities?

    vi) Muslims and other religious minorities with disabilities?

    vii) Etc.

c) Taking a whole person approach which enables full and equitable participation of all workers by examining answers to the following questions:

    i) Are diverse disabilities and diverse identities represented and involved throughout all processes from planning to implementation, including in the decision-making process?

    ii) What could be contributing to that exclusion?

    iii) Who is important to be brought into the process in a meaningful way?

d) In asking these questions, do my experiences, biases, and assumptions limit my understanding of the impact on persons with disabilities in general and specifically persons with multiple disabilities and diverse identities?

18 Annex D: Anti-ableism policies (Informative)

Effective implementation of anti-ableism policies ensures that organizational practices do not disadvantage persons with disabilities due to discriminatory behaviour. Their purpose is the full inclusion of all workers. This annex outlines a comprehensive approach to understanding how ableism functions on an individual basis, including how discrimination against persons with disabilities is interrelated with how stigma appears and functions in the workplace.

18.1 Anti-ableism policy

Recognizing that an anti-ableism policy is distinct from an accessibility policy, complying with Clause 10.5.3, the goals of an anti-ableism policy are to:

a) ensure that organizational practices, systems, and communications do not reflect or perpetuate ableist exclusionary practices that may directly or indirectly promote, sustain, or entrench discrimination;

b) establish and maintain hiring, promotion, and work-related policies that will build and support an inclusive employment environment where these individuals participate and contribute fully;

c) ensure that services are provided in a fully respectful manner that addresses and removes any barriers to service and the workplace, including ableist practices and attitudes; and

d) meet the requirements of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Accessible Canada Act*.

By contrast, an accessibility supports (accommodation) policy is one that outlines the accessibility supports process. Its purpose is to outline for the organization their approach to addressing individual needs.

18.2 Ableism, negative attitudes, stereotypes, and stigma

Ableism is discrimination and prejudice rooted in pathological thinking and attitude. This results in a negative stigma towards diverse persons with disabilities based solely on their abilities and attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. A set of practices and beliefs that assign inferior value (worth) to persons with disabilities.

Ableism refers to a belief system, similar to racism and other forms of discrimination, that sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, or of less inherent value than others. Perceived limitations on an individual's ability to perform an activity may stem from permanent or temporary disability(ies), or disability(ies) that occur at various points in one's life. Stigma towards persons with disabilities limits their potential and opportunities when societal attitudes devalue their abilities.

Ableism may be conscious or unconscious, may exist in individuals or be systemic, embedded in institutions or the broader culture of a society. Stereotyping, prejudice, stigma, and discrimination surrounding disability are interconnected. One can lead to the other, such as when stereotyping and prejudice result in stigma, which in turn could lead to discrimination and reduce a person's full inclusion in communities.

18.3 Why are anti-ableism policies important?

Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against persons with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the false assumption that disabled people require "fixing" and defines people by their disability.

18.4 Examples of ableism

Examples of ableism range from blatant hostility and aggression to less obvious everyday interactions and microaggressions. Some examples of these include but are not limited to:

a) asking someone what is "wrong" with them;

b) saying, "you do not look disabled," as though this is a compliment;

c) viewing a person with a disability as inspirational for doing typical things, such as having a career;

d) assuming a physical disability is a product of laziness or lack of exercise;

e) using public facilities that are for persons with disabilities, such as parking spaces or toilets; and

f) questioning whether a person's disability is real.

18.5 Employment discrimination

Employers may be biased against those with disabilities, believing they make less productive workers. They may also refuse accessibility supports (accommodations) to existing workers or allow workplace bullying to go unpunished.

18.6 How to avoid casual ableism

When communicating about disability, some ways of avoiding casual ableism include but are not limited to:

a) learning from individuals with disabilities by listening when they share their lived experience;

b) focusing on abilities, not limitations;

c) remembering that people come first;

d) asking about an individual's language preferences;

e) using neutral language;

f) emphasizing the need for accessibility, not the presence of a disability; and

g) avoiding condescending euphemisms.

19 Annex E: Stand-alone accessibility policies and accessibility elements integrated into existing policies (Informative)

19.1 Stand-alone accessibility policies

Stand-alone accessibility policies may include but are not limited to:

a) an accessibility and inclusion commitment statement;

b) a policy statement on accessibility and inclusion in the workplace (see Clause 11.2.2);

c) policies on establishing an Accessibility Office, including its staffing, budget, roles, and responsibilities; and

d) policies on accessibility and inclusion competencies within the work environment.

19.2 Accessibility elements integrated into existing policies

Policies within which accessibility considerations may be integrated include but are not limited to:

a) anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies;

b) communication and information policies;

c) emergency preparedness policies;

d) human resource policies;

e) remote, telework, and hybrid work policies;

f) information and technology policies;

g) pay equity;

h) performance management;

i) policies on in-person, hybrid, and virtual meetings and events;

j) procurement policies; and

k) training and education policies for workers.

Note: The order of items above does not indicate priority.

Organizations should ensure that any of the above policies address accessibility through the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers in domains outlined in Clause 10.5.2.

20 Annex F: Bibliography (Informative)

This Standard refers to the following publications. References are attributed to the specific editions listed below:

City of Ottawa and City for All Women Initiative
Version 2018
Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook

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Canada Labour Code

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Canadian Human Rights Act

Government of Canada
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Employment Equity Act

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw
Mapping the Margins: The Public Nature of Private Violence

Library of Parliament
Publication No. 2013-09-E
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Ontario Human Rights Commission
978-1-4606-8612-6
Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability

Plain Language Association International

"What is plain language?"

[What is plain language? - Plain Language Association International (PLAIN) (plainlanguagenetwork.org)](#)

The Canadian Human Rights Commission

Accessible Canada Act

Women and Gender Equality Canada

Version 2022

[Introduction to GBA Plus](#)

National Standard of Canada

CAN/ASC–1.1:2024 (REV-2025)

Employment