Canadian Heritage Accessibility Plan 2026–2028

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General

Alternative formats

Large print, MP3 (audio), e-text, and Braille versions of our Accessibility Plan and Progress Reports are available upon request. To request alternative formats of this Plan:

- **Email us at**: accessibilite-accessibility@pch.gc.ca
- **Call us at:**
    - Toll-free: 1-866-811-0055
    - Outside Canada or the United States: 226-748-9603
    - Free video relay service (VRS Canada) or TTY: 1-888-997-3123

Share your feedback

We welcome feedback from the public and Canadian Heritage employees on our Accessibility Plan, our Progress Reports, or any barriers you encounter with our services, website, communications, or events. Your input will help us better serve Canadians and our employees.

Please share your feedback through the following ways:

Online form: Canadian Heritage accessibility feedback mechanism online form

By mail:
Manager, Accessibility
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Office
Canadian Heritage
15 Eddy Street
Gatineau, Quebec
J8X 4B3

By email: accessibilite-accessibility@pch.gc.ca

By telephone:
- Toll-free: 1-866-811-0055

- Outside Canada or the United States: 226-748-9603
- Free video relay service (VRS Canada) or TTY: 1-888-997-3123

What we do with your feedback

We will acknowledge your feedback in the same way it was received unless it is submitted anonymously. If more details are needed to address an issue, we may contact you. Feedback not related to accessibility may be referred to another team or organization. We track all accessibility-related feedback to support our Accessibility Plan and annual progress reports, helping us identify and address barriers.

Canadian Heritage at a glance

Canadian Heritage works to strengthen and advance Canada's unique identity and culture. Our mandate includes arts, culture, creative industries, official languages, Indigenous languages, multiculturalism, and youth. Together, these sectors contribute more than $61 billion to Canada's economy and support over 640,000 jobs.[1]

The Department has approximately 1,910 employees across Canada and five core responsibilities:

- Creativity, arts, and culture
- Heritage and celebration
- Sport
- Diversity and inclusion
- Official languages

Our headquarters are in Gatineau with regional offices in Charlottetown, Edmonton, Halifax, Moncton, Montréal, Ottawa, Québec City, Regina, St. John's, Sudbury, Toronto, Vancouver, Whitehorse, Winnipeg, and Yellowknife.

Accessibility governance at Canadian Heritage

Accessibility at Canadian Heritage is supported through clear governance, accountability, and shared leadership. The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Office is responsible for implementing the *Accessible Canada Act*, meeting reporting obligations, delivering training, and providing strategic advice on accessibility and disability inclusion. It works closely with

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[1] Canadian Heritage, "Departmental Plan 2025–26", *Canada.ca*, 2025, https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/plans-reports/departmental-plan-2025-2026.html

internal and external partners to identify barriers, develop solutions, and establish meaningful commitments.

Each priority in the Accessibility Plan is led by a pillar lead who is a designated senior executive. Working in partnership with the IDEA Office, pillar leads are accountable for defining commitments, integrating accessibility into policies and services, implementing actions, and monitoring progress. This shared leadership model ensures that accessibility is embedded across all branches and functions of the department.

The Bob Fern Centre for Accommodations plays a key role in supporting all employees by helping to create inclusive and accessible work environments. It also offers expert advice and manages a centralized fund to cover accommodation-related costs.

The Advisory Committee on (Dis)Ability is an employee-led volunteer committee that brings together employees with disabilities and their allies to share lived experience, identify barriers, and advise on departmental initiatives. The Committee works to challenge misconceptions, promote understanding, and ensure that programs and services reflect the diverse needs of employees with disabilities.

Oversight of the Accessibility Plan rests with the IDEA Committee which includes the members of the Executive Committee and champions of the various Employment Equity Networks, Committees and Community. This governance body reviews and endorses, for Deputy Minister approval, the Plan to ensure alignment with departmental priorities and compliance with the *Accessible Canada Act*. Together, they uphold accountability for advancing accessibility across the Department.

Message from the Deputy Ministers and Chief Inclusion and Accessibility Officer of Canadian Heritage

We are proud to present Canadian Heritage's 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan. This plan marks the next step in our ongoing journey toward a barrier-free and inclusive department. It also reaffirms our shared commitment to accessibility, equity, and inclusion for persons with disabilities, both within our organization and across the communities we serve.

Since the release of the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan, our progress has been shaped by dialogue, collaboration, and continuous learning. These efforts have yielded concrete results, transforming workplace practices to embed inclusion and accessibility into the Department's work.

Over the next three years, we will continue to advance accessibility across all areas of our work, with a focus on both apparent and non-apparent disabilities, and on neurodiversity in the workplace.

We will also continue to strengthen accessibility standards at major national events, including Canada Day, ensuring that participation and inclusion remain central to how we bring Canadians together.

We will also keep removing barriers, preventing new ones, and engaging persons with disabilities at every stage of our work. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this plan, including our Advisory Committee on (Dis)Ability.

Accessibility is a human right. Each of us has a role to play in turning this right into action through our daily work. Together, we are building a barrier-free workplace and a more inclusive Canada, one where everyone can contribute, participate, and thrive. True change happens when we listen with care, value each person's contributions, and act together with purpose.

Isabelle Mondou
Deputy Minister
Canadian Heritage

Andrew Brown
Associate Deputy Minister
Canadian Heritage

Jenny Ratansi-Rodrigues
Corporate Secretary,
Director General, and Chief
Inclusion and Accessibility
Officer Canadian Heritage

PCH culture statement

At Canadian Heritage (PCH), all of us are committed to realizing a culture of dignity, respect, and value for the diversity of identities and experiences of everyone who works at PCH and the communities we, at the Department, serve. PCH welcomes everyone as they are and makes space for who they are.

PCH is a better organization when it embraces, reflects, and celebrates the diversity within Canada; advances Truth and Reconciliation as well as human rights; identifies and removes barriers according to specific needs; takes creative, impactful and long-lasting actions to change by demonstrating commitment to eradicating hate, invisibilization, and all forms of discrimination.

PCH will earn trust by fostering an environment where people can voice their views without fear and by sharing power in order to advance change, all while ensuring accountability at all levels and spheres of the organization.

Introduction

At Canadian Heritage, accessibility and disability inclusion are central to our vision for an inclusive Canada. This plan sets out our commitments to advance accessibility and foster meaningful inclusion across every part of our organization.

In 2024, Canadian Heritage adopted a Culture Statement, that guides our work in Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA). We recognize that persons with disabilities continue to face barriers to full participation in both the workplace and in society. Many of these barriers stem from ableism, defined as "a system of assigning value to people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness."[2] Ableism operates at individual, institutional, and structural levels. Together, we can work to dismantle it through intentional actions that make our systems and communities more accessible, inclusive, and fair.

According to Statistics Canada, 27 percent of Canadians aged 15 and older, about eight million people, reported at least one disability in 2022, an increase since 2017[3]. The most significant rises were in mental health, pain, and vision-related disabilities. Many individuals experience more than one disability throughout their lives. Recognizing this diversity helps us design policies, programs, and services that respond effectively to people's varied experiences and needs.

Our approach to accessibility is grounded in a broad and inclusive understanding of disability. It encompasses both apparent and non-apparent disabilities and acknowledges that disability can be temporary, permanent, or episodic. We also embrace neurodiversity: the understanding that cognitive differences, particularly among neurodivergent people, should be recognized and respected as part of natural human variation[4]. This perspective deepens how we understand and respond to accessibility needs. Applying an intersectional lens further helps us recognize how barriers can interact and affect individuals differently based on overlapping identities, such as gender, race, culture, language, or Indigeneity.

The *Accessible Canada Act*, enacted in 2019, is a cornerstone of this work. The Act aligns with the [Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service](), which identifies accessibility as a pillar of an inclusive public service. The goal of the *Act* is to achieve a barrier-free Canada by 2040. It requires federal organizations to publish a multi-year accessibility plan every three years, report annually on progress, and maintain a mechanism for feedback.

At Canadian Heritage, our approach goes beyond compliance. We are shifting from meeting requirements to intentionally designing accessibility into everything we do, from policies and

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[2] Talila A. Lewis, "Working Definition of Ableism: January 2022 Update," talilalewis.com, January 1, 2022, https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/working-definition-of-ableism-january-2022-update

[3] Statistics Canada, "New data on disability in Canada, 2022," December 1, 2023, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023063-eng.htm

[4] Nick Walker, "Neurodiversity: Some Basic Terms & Definitions," *Neurocosmopolitanism* (blog) https://neuroqueer.com/neurodiversity-terms-and-definitions/

programs to services, workplaces, and technologies. Accessibility is a shared responsibility and an essential part of how we serve Canadians.

Since our first 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan, consultations and experience have shown that barriers remain and continue to evolve with changing workplace and societal realities. This new plan reflects what we have heard and learned through our engagement processes and from multiple sources, including an internal audit review, interdepartmental working group, and surveys.

This 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan outlines how Canadian Heritage will address barriers across the following priority areas:

- Culture change toward disability inclusion
- Employment
- Built environment
- Information and communications technologies (ICT)
- Communication methods other than ICT
- Procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- Program and service design and delivery
- Transportation

We will measure outcomes, report on progress, and adjust our actions based on evidence and feedback. Guided by our Culture Statement and the principle of "nothing without us," we will continue our journey toward a barrier-free department and contribute to a more inclusive Canada.

The following sections describe how this plan was developed and outline our commitments in each priority area.

How this Plan was developed

Canadian Heritage's Accessibility Plan for 2026 to 2028 is the product of collaboration and co-creation between the IDEA Office and key internal stakeholders. It reflects input gathered through consultations in both official languages with Canadian Heritage employees and senior leadership, particularly that from employees with disabilities. These engagements, along with other internal and external sources, have informed the plan's vision, guiding principles, and commitments. Findings from the Canadian Heritage Accessibility Maturity Model Gap Analysis (Phases 1 and 2) also provided strategic insight on systemic and operational issues, helping shape priorities and actionable commitments.

Consultations

Consultations focused on weaving accessibility into how Canadian Heritage meets the needs of employees with disabilities, and in delivering programs and services to Canadians. We consulted extensively with internal stakeholders to help shape our Plan.

What we consulted on

The consultations aimed to gather feedback and suggestions on:

- progress made since the first [Accessibility Plan (2023](#)–[2025)](#)
- existing gaps and barriers across the eight priority areas
- recommendations to create a more inclusive and accessible workplace

To give participants context, a presentation was shared outlining progress made under the first Accessibility Plan, and two open-ended questions guided the discussions:

- "What progress has been made under each priority area since the first Accessibility Plan?"
- "What are the gaps or obstacles to be overcome under these pillars?"

When, how and who we consulted

Between June and July 2025, Canadian Heritage invited all employees to take part in virtual consultations on the 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan. Separate series of consultation sessions were held respectively for employees with disabilities and for all Canadian Heritage employees. Each series had one English and one French session.

Pillar leads, who lead on the Department's commitments toward specific priority areas under the Plan, also met with the IDEA Office to review progress and plans for their respective priority areas. In addition to the sessions, employees could provide feedback in writing via the [Canadian Heritage accessibility feedback mechanism](#).

Three key themes emerged from these consultations:

- Culture is at the core of advancing accessibility and disability inclusion at Canadian Heritage. It requires a culture where employees feel safe to express their needs and identify issues. Employees emphasized the importance of respectful dialogue on disability and accessibility in the workplace and leadership that is responsive to feedback.
- Improving hiring and accommodations processes is essential. The process to obtain accommodation measures must be clarified and better communicated to avoid unnecessary delays. Accessibility barriers in hiring must continue to be identified, so that they can continuously be removed.

- Build accessibility in from the start: Tools and systems should be accessible by design, not retrofitted.

Additional consultations were held with the Advisory Committee on (Dis)Ability (ACD), a network of employees with disabilities and allies from across the Department. This committee plays a vital role in identifying access barriers, raising awareness of ableism and discrimination, and promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace. It also identifies best practices for accessibility and disability inclusion and serves as a consultative group for departmental initiatives.

Furthermore, Accessibility Allies in the department help embed accessibility in daily work by sharing resources, encouraging inclusive practices, fostering culture change, and serving as points of contact with the IDEA Office.

In addition to these sessions, employees were invited to submit written feedback through [Canadian Heritage accessibility feedback mechanism](), through which we received four additional contributions.

Ongoing engagement

The IDEA Office will work with pillar leads and departmental sectors and branches to implement and evaluate this Plan, holding regular meetings to track progress for annual Progress Reports.

Canadian Heritage employees and members of the public can provide ongoing feedback through the [Canadian Heritage accessibility feedback mechanism](), which will contribute to the overall work on disability inclusion, and inform both the annual Progress Reports and future Accessibility Plans. We will ensure that we adapt our actions based on what we learn.

Other sources of information

In addition to consultations, the plan's commitments were informed by several other sources:

- An Accessibility Gap Analysis led by the Office of the Chief Audit Executive, concluded in summer 2025, which included in-depth interviews across regions and priority areas. This analysis revealed persistent barriers and progress since 2022 and provided recommendations for systemic change.
- The interdepartmental Better Accommodations Project (BAP), led by the Deputy Minister Champion for Federal Employees with Disabilities (with Canadian Heritage as one of eight partner departments), which offers best practices and tools to streamline accommodation processes.
- Insights from internal surveys such as *Over to You,* and the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES), which enriched our understanding of employee experiences.

Guiding principles of the PCH Accessibility Plan

The implementation of this plan is guided by a clear and forward-looking vision. The following principles shape our commitment to working collaboratively to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers across all areas of our organization:

- **Nothing without us:** We are committed to involving persons with disabilities meaningfully at every stage of decision-making. We seek insights rooted in lived experience, test solutions directly with those who will use them, and act on feedback through clear, measurable actions.
- **Intentional design and delivery:** We design and deliver accessible services, spaces, and tools from the start. Our goal is to prevent barriers before they arise, set measurable objectives, and embed equity and intersectionality in all areas of our work.
- **Collaboration and empowerment:** We envision a workplace where employees, managers, and leaders work together to make accessibility a shared responsibility. We will continue empowering employees with disabilities to express their needs and contribute their expertise. Building capacity through training, communication, and knowledge sharing at all levels is central to this effort.
- **Transparency and accountability:** We are committed to taking concrete, high-impact actions informed by lived experience and best practices across government and industry. We will define roles clearly, monitor progress, and communicate results in plain language. Using clear indicators, including the IDEA Index from the IDEA Action Plan, we will measure and report on progress toward greater inclusion and accessibility over time.

Areas described under section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*

This Accessibility Plan is organized by priority area to address the needs of both employees and the public we serve. Each commitment and action item corresponds to one or more of the priority areas outlined in section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*, which identifies the key priority areas where organizations must proactively identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility.

The following sections describe each priority area, the barriers that were identified, and the actions Canadian Heritage will take to address them. Each area is overseen by a designated senior executive (pillar lead) responsible for coordinating implementation, monitoring progress, and reporting on results.

Culture change toward disability inclusion

Lead

Corporate Secretary, Director- General, and Chief Inclusion and Accessibility Officer and the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Office.

Objective

Promote a culture of accessibility and inclusion, including neurodiversity and non-apparent disabilities through leadership engagement, awareness, training, and inclusive decision-making across the organization.

Barriers

Efforts to promote disability inclusion have advanced in recent years, including the availability of training and growing awareness. Still, employees with disabilities indicated that stigma remains a barrier. Some hesitate to share their needs, concerned they may not be taken seriously or could face negative treatment.

Consultations revealed that training on disability inclusion is not applied consistently, and many managers are seeking clearer guidance to respond effectively to accommodation requests. Some employees also reported encountering resistance when raising concerns. These insights highlight the need to strengthen leadership engagement, normalize open dialogue, and ensure consistent, informed responses that build trust and support inclusion.

Commitments

1. Design and launch a visibility campaign featuring stories of employees with disabilities to reduce stigma and strengthen representation.
2. Integrate awareness of ableism across all levels to promote inclusive practices and prevent discrimination.
3. Support inclusive leadership by advising people managers on targeted training. Expand department-wide learning on accessibility, including awareness of accommodations available in hybrid workplace settings. Prepare for the rollout of the Inclusive Leadership Toolkit (including content on regional realities and best practices).
4. Maintain coordination support and annual funding for the Advisory Committee on (Dis)Ability and provide greater visibility and recognition for the Accessibility Allies network, featuring their work in internal communications, formal acknowledgments.
5. Advance inclusion for neurodivergent employees and those with non-apparent disabilities by publishing communication and awareness products, and guidance for managers, across the department.
6. Provide support to the interdepartmental Infinity - The Network for Neurodivergent Public Servants, and pilot the distribution of informational brochures on neurodivergent conditions in the workplace.
7. Work with employees with disabilities at Canadian Heritage to test artificial intelligence (AI) tools in order to proactively address accessibility gaps and mitigate bias in the design and implementation of these systems.
8. Use IDEA Index results to inform accessibility improvements based on employee experiences.
9. Improve the internal and external Canadian Heritage accessibility feedback mechanism to ensure it is confidential, accessible, continuously available, and reliable for all accessibility issues.

10. Continue to provide department-wide training and guidance on creating accessible documents, including using accessible templates, plain language, and inclusive formatting.

Employment

Lead

Director General of the Human Resources and Workplace Management Branch

Objective

Ensure that recruitment, onboarding, accommodations, and career development processes are inclusive and accessible for all employees. Provide safe, timely, and accessible mechanisms for reporting, investigating, and resolving workplace harassment and violence.

Barriers

Consultation feedback shows that employment rates for persons with disabilities have improved since 2022, reflecting important progress toward inclusion. At the same time, employees and candidates identified opportunities to make recruitment, onboarding, and accommodation processes more accessible and responsive to foster greater inclusion. Recruitment processes, job postings, and onboarding need to be improved to ensure clearer guidance, accessibility, and proactive conversations about accommodation needs. Ensuring timely implementation of approved accommodations will reduce frustration and support employees in performing at their best. Career development can also be expanded by improving availability of accessible training materials, adaptive testing, and language learning opportunities. Psychologically safe environments encourage employees to share their needs, building trust in workplace systems.

Other areas of improvement include streamlining timelines for accommodation measures and clarifying processes for accessing supports such as interpretation services during confidential or sensitive discussions. By taking a coordinated, proactive, and organization-wide approach, Canadian Heritage will continue to strengthen inclusion and equitable access, while fostering employee engagement.

Commitments

11. Continue to identify and remove systemic barriers for persons with disabilities in human resource processes including onboarding, staffing, learning and development, workplace accommodation services, classification, labour relations, and harassment/violence prevention. This will be done in part by implementing recommendations from the Employment Systems Review (ESR).
12. Normalize regular check-ins with employees to discuss accommodation needs, language training needs and career development supports by providing tools to managers.
13. Track and assess points where candidates with disabilities exit or are screened out of staffing processes, to identify and address potential systemic barriers.
14. Strengthen the prevention of harassment and discrimination by ensuring that reporting, support, and resolution mechanisms are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the

needs of persons with disabilities, including mental health and psychological safety considerations.

Built environment

Lead

Director General of the Human Resources and Workplace Management Branch

Objective

Design, maintain, and adapt physical spaces to be barrier-free and compliant with accessibility standards, ensuring the workspace supports all employees.

Barriers

Employees with disabilities shared that the physical workspace can influence their ability to perform at their best. Open-concept office layouts, for example, continue to present challenges for concentration or sensory needs, and limited access to quiet or private areas for calls, focused work, or rest can make some employees feel excluded or find the office environment overwhelming.

Changes to office spaces, such as moves, renovations, or redesigns, present valuable opportunities to enhance accessibility when guided by meaningful consultation with employees. Ensuring that all accommodation requirements are considered during planning helps create inclusive workspaces that support the diverse needs of all employees.

These insights highlight the importance of involving employees with disabilities in workspace planning and design. Ongoing, inclusive consultation and dialogue can help ensure that physical environments are accessible and supportive of everyone.

Commitments

15. Make accessibility a priority in all new workspace designs, applying Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) accessibility standards.
16. Respond promptly to reported accessibility issues in workstations, meeting rooms, and collaboration areas.
17. Ensure that relevant practices, protocols, and directives on workplace accommodations are applied consistently during moves between different buildings, drawing from lessons learned during past moves.
18. Maintain a process for continuous monitoring and improvement of physical spaces, as well as proactively identifying and communicating limitations of a given space that fall outside the control of Canadian Heritage or PSPC.
19. For PCH-led worksites, ensure all emergency evacuation procedures and equipment are fully accessible and meet the needs of employees with disabilities. For worksites where PCH is not the lead, actively communicate the importance of accessible emergency procedures and equipment that address the needs of employees with disabilities.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Lead

Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Objective

Improve the accessibility of digital systems, platforms, and tools (including assistive technologies) by integrating accessibility into technology planning and lifecycle management.

Barriers

Access to assistive technologies, such as adaptive software and specialized devices, has improved in recent years, supporting employees with disabilities in their daily work. However, some barriers remain. Employees noted that older IT systems continue to pose accessibility challenges, and externally provided Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) products are not always designed to meet current standards.

Consultations also revealed that delays in resolving accessibility issues can hinder productivity. Responses from vendors and internal IT teams vary, and some issues remain unresolved for extended periods. These insights highlight the need for stronger accountability, greater awareness, and timely action to ensure that all digital systems and services are accessible by design and responsive to employee needs.

Commitments

20. Ensure accessibility criteria are built into the planning, procurement, and deployment of all information and communication technologies. Any new public software or system must meet accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1 AA for web content) or have a plan in place to become compliant.
21. Continue a "buy not build" strategy for information and communication technologies solutions when possible, favoring commercially available products that meet accessibility standards out-of-the-box.
22. Use lifecycle management to address accessibility gaps in legacy systems. This includes the review of existing systems for compliance, upgrading or replacing inaccessible systems, or implementing assistive technologies that bridge gaps while long-term fixes are in progress.
23. Sustain internal capacity to deliver accessible Information and communication technologies by continuing to train IT staff in accessibility best practices, inclusive design, and troubleshooting assistive technology issues. Incorporate accessibility checks into quality assurance and testing processes for new systems or updates.
24. Track and report accessibility improvements in information and communication technologies systems annually. This includes maintaining targets for accessibility compliance in new and existing information and communication technologies projects and reporting on progress to increase accountability.

Communications (other than Information and communication technologies)

Lead

Director General of the Communications Branch

Objective

Make internal and external communications clear, accessible, and inclusive, including documents, web content, and multimedia materials.

Barriers

Consultations with employees with disabilities highlighted that, despite progress in recent years, including the availability of training on accessible formatting, barriers remain when working with departmental files and documents. Many templates and materials on internal platforms, such as SharePoint, have not yet been reviewed for compatibility with assistive technologies like screen readers.

Inaccessible formats, such as untagged PDFs, images without alt text, and videos without captions, continue to affect their ability to work effectively and limit public access to information. Strengthening accessibility standards, improving monitoring, and reinforcing accountability will help ensure that all documents and communications are accessible by default.

Commitments

25. Continue improving the accessibility of digital content for both the public and employees. This includes ensuring all new web content and documents meet guidelines (e.g., providing alt text for images, captions for videos, and using proper document structure in PDFs and Word documents).
26. Strengthen standards and tools for an accessible intranet and internal documents. Update templates, checklists, and style guides to emphasize accessibility. Ensure that internal and external platforms comply with accessibility requirements.
27. Support communications teams (and all content creators) in consistently creating accessible content. This includes regular training refreshers, an easy-to-find guide on accessible communication, and an expert point of contact for questions.
28. For Canadian Heritage's new Common Look, ensure all department templates include a page on best practices to make our documents more accessible, particularly for people who use screen readers.

Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

Lead

Chief Financial Officer (CFO), responsible for Contracting and Materiel Management Directorate

Objective

Embed accessibility requirements in the planning, contracting, and delivery of goods, services, and facilities.

Barriers

Consultations with employees revealed opportunities to improve access to ASL, LSQ, and CART services. Request forms are not always clear, and coordination across teams varies. Embedding accessibility in procurement tools and streamlining procedures will support timely, consistent access to communication supports.

Commitments

29. Ensure that accessibility considerations are integrated into procurement planning, templates, and evaluation tools.
30. Continue updating procurement and contracting forms to explicitly include accessibility requirements in contracts and agreements.
31. Ensure access to tools and resources that support accessibility in procurement activities.
32. Maintain procurement agreements (e.g., standing offers or supply arrangements) that help meet departmental accessibility obligations.

Design and delivery of programs and services

Lead

Chief Financial Officer, responsible for the Grants and Contributions Centre of Excellence, and Director General, Major Events, Commemorations and State Ceremonies

Objective

Ensure programs and services are accessible from the outset, including grants and contributions processes and related tools.

Barriers

Consultations with employees highlighted opportunities to better integrate accessibility into the design of programs, services, and events. While progress has been made, many forms, templates, and guidance documents remain difficult to access for persons with disabilities. Outdated systems, such as the Grants and Contributions Information Management System (GCIMS), and complex language in key documents can limit participation.

Training is available but must be tailored to reflect the tools and processes used across teams. Strengthening leadership and engaging persons with disabilities in design processes will help ensure services meet diverse needs. As Canadian Heritage continues to deliver major public events, embedding accessibility from the outset will support inclusive participation and a barrier-free experience for all.

Commitments

33. Through the Grants and Contributions Transformation initiative, redesign program delivery to ensure processes, systems, and forms are accessible.

34. Promote ongoing self-learning and provide training for employees in accessible service delivery and the use of accessible tools. This will strengthen inclusive practices by helping staff understand how to accommodate diverse needs in program delivery.
35. Ensure that national events such as Canada Day celebrations at official sites in Ottawa meet high accessibility standards each year and strive to make official Winterlude sites as accessible as possible.
36. Publish clear, up-to-date accessibility information for all public events and services, as well as for events and services internal to Canadian Heritage.
37. Any announcement of an event or new service will include information on accessibility features and how to request accommodations, so that persons with disabilities know what to expect and how to get support.

Transportation

Lead

Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Objective

Provide accessible business travel through clear guidance, dedicated support, and accommodations for employees with disabilities.

Barriers

Consultations with employees highlighted opportunities to improve business travel for persons with disabilities. While supports exist, clearer guidance and more consistent processes, especially for service dogs, mobility aids, and seating needs, would reduce stress and improve planning. Standardized procedures and centralized information will help ensure inclusive, confident participation in work-related travel.

Commitments

38. Publish a departmental guide on accessible business travel. This guide will draw from resources like the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Service Dog Toolkit and will include step-by-step advice on planning trips that accommodate various needs.
39. Establish a dedicated departmental service to support accessible business travel. This includes designating the Travel Help Centre as the official logistical support resource for employees with accessibility needs and offering personalized training or consultation for employees who require assistance with travel planning.

Monitoring and reporting

This three-year plan outlines focused actions across programs, services, workplaces, technologies, and events to create lasting change that improves accessibility for clients and all employees with disabilities. Implementation will take place in collaboration with persons with disabilities, employee networks, partners, and governance committees.

In keeping with the *Accessible Canada Act*, Canadian Heritage will publish a new accessibility plan every three years, with annual progress reports in the intervening years. Each report will

summarize the feedback received and describe how it has shaped our actions and decisions. The first progress report under this plan will be released by December 31, 2027.

The IDEA Office is responsible for coordinating, tracking, and reporting on the plan's implementation. It will lead monitoring efforts using clear indicators and measurable targets aligned with the Government of Canada's results framework for accessibility.

Progress will be measured using multiple data sources, including feedback collected through the Canadian Heritage accessibility feedback mechanism, service usage data from the Bob Fern Centre for Accommodations, insights from the Infinity network, findings from consultations, and survey results such as *Over to You* and the Public Service Employee Survey.

Plain language updates on progress will be published regularly to keep employees and stakeholders informed. Actions will be adjusted as needed to address emerging gaps and reflect new evidence or best practices. This work will continue to be guided by our Culture Statement and the principle of "nothing without us," with shared accountability across all levels of the department.

Conclusion

Canadian Heritage remains committed to embedding accessibility and inclusion into goals, actions, and accountability. This 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan represents more than a set of objectives. It is a commitment to meaningful, sustained action. By working together across all levels of the department, and in partnership with persons with disabilities and their communities, we will continue to identify and remove barriers so that everyone can contribute their talents fully.

Accessibility is an ongoing journey of learning, reflection, and improvement. We will keep listening, adapting, and strengthening our practices to ensure lasting progress.