



# **Progress Report for 2024 on the Implementation of the TBS Accessibility Plan**

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l'accessibilité du SCT

# Progress Report for 2024 on the Implementation of the TBS Accessibility Plan

From: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

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## Message from the Secretary

As Secretary of the Treasury Board, I am pleased to present the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's (TBS) second progress report on the implementation of its Departmental Accessibility Plan, entitled "Our Future is Accessible."

Accessibility in the federal public service is about ensuring that all employees have everything they need to do their best work in an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible.

That is the spirit of the "[Nothing Without Us](#)" [Accessibility Strategy](#), which ensures that federally regulated entities consult and involve people with disabilities in planning, designing, testing, and implementing the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service.

As a department, TBS continues to make progress in important areas:

- We made improvements to make our office space at 90 Elgin Street more inclusive and accessible by incorporating bright red tape on glass walls and installing new tactile wayfinding on floors in the lobby.
- The Office of Public Service Accessibility's mandate was extended until March of 2026, so that it can continue its important work to implement the Accessibility Strategy and ensure that the public service continues to identify, prevent, and remove barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

- We conducted a pilot with various departments on the digital version of the [Workplace Accessibility Passport](#), which streamlines the accommodation process and helps create an inclusive workplace for employees with disabilities throughout their public service career.

While we are trending in the right direction, there is still much to do. Moving forward, work will continue on several fronts, including the ongoing identification and removal of physical barriers in our workspace, providing greater support for career advancement, and continuing the important work of the Workplace Accommodation Centre.

I invite you to read this report to learn more about how TBS is helping make Canada's public service the most accessible public service in the world.

**Bill Matthews**

Secretary of the Treasury Board

## Message from the TBS Champion for Accessibility and Deputy Minister Sponsor

We are proud to continue serving as Champion for Accessibility at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS), and Deputy Minister Sponsor for the TBS and Department of Finance Canada (TBS-FIN) Accessibility Network, in our efforts to help advance accessibility and inclusion at TBS.

Together we are happy to share this latest report on progress made with the implementation of our [departmental Accessibility Plan](#) titled "[Our Future Is Accessible](#)." Our commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive work environment is stronger than ever. Together, we strive to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to do their best work and pursue the careers of their dreams.

This past year has been both busy and exciting. We have made real progress in enhancing accessibility at TBS, though we acknowledge that it may not be happening as quickly as we all would like. However, we are particularly pleased with our efforts to make 90 Elgin more accessible for everyone, demonstrating our dedication to fostering an environment where everyone can thrive.

We are also advancing important initiatives like the Workplace Accommodation Centre because our employees have made it clear that being accommodated in a more timely and collaborative fashion plays an essential role in building an inclusive work environment our people want and deserve.

We eagerly anticipate the launch of the digital version of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport, which will be a valuable tool in our ongoing efforts. In conjunction with the Workplace Accommodation Centre, the Passport makes it easier for employees and their manager to find solutions, simplifies the accommodation process, and helps employees manage their career trajectory.

We take pride in the relatively new Awards of Excellence in Accessibility, which now form an integral part of our larger awards ceremony. Recognizing outstanding contributions in this area is vital to reinforcing our values.

Working closely with the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network has been a highlight for both of us. Participating in events to commemorate National AccessAbility Week, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and International Day for Persons with Disabilities has been truly rewarding.

We are encouraged by the shift in attitude across our organization. Employees at all levels are starting to incorporate accessibility into their daily practices – from including accommodation request language in meeting invitations to proactively checking for accessibility errors in documents. This change is taking root, and it is a promising sign of our collective commitment. But while we have made significant strides, much work remains ahead of us.

Let's do our best in the coming year to maintain this momentum. Let's continue to learn how we can work in a more accessible and inclusive manner and challenge each other to do better. We are beginning to see real results, and it's exciting to imagine where we might be this time next year and beyond. Together, we can continue to build a more accessible and inclusive TBS.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication and passion.

### **Francis Trudel**

Associate Chief Human Resources Officer and DM Sponsor for the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network  
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

### **Karen Cahill**

Assistant Secretary, Chief Financial Officer and Champion for Accessibility  
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

## **General**

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## Obtaining your feedback

This is the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's (TBS's) second progress report on the implementation of its three-year departmental Accessibility Plan, [\*TBS Accessibility Plan 2022-25: Our Future is Accessible\*](#).

The Director General, Human Resources Division, is responsible for receiving feedback on the TBS Accessibility Plan.

Your feedback on this progress report and on TBS's Accessibility Plan is essential to our ongoing evaluation of our progress. We value the input of employees at TBS, employees who work at other Government of Canada departments and agencies, as well as all Canadians. We welcome your comments, concerns and suggestions about our approach and initiatives to improve accessibility.

All accessibility feedback will be acknowledged in the same way it was received, except when feedback is submitted anonymously.

You are invited to send your feedback through any of the following:

### Mail

Human Resources  
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat  
Office 06-106  
90 Elgin St  
Ottawa ON K1A 0R5

### Email

[AccessibilityPlan-PlanAccessibilite@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:AccessibilityPlan-PlanAccessibilite@tbs-sct.gc.ca)

### Telephone

1-877-636-0656

### Teletypewriter (TTY)

## Anonymous feedback

You can provide feedback anonymously by completing our short and easy-to-use [online form](#).

You are welcome to:

- provide constructive feedback on TBS's Accessibility Plan and this progress report
- identify barriers you have faced at TBS work locations or with one of its programs, initiatives, tools or services
- ask questions

## What we do with your feedback

We will analyze feedback to identify trends and patterns, and to address gaps to improve our efforts to remove barriers and become an accessible and inclusive employer and service provider.

We will publish annual progress reports in the years between our Accessibility Plans, allowing you to monitor our progress and enabling us, with your feedback, to continue to adjust our plan as needed to get the best results.

## Request an alternate format

Use the contact information listed in the [Obtaining your feedback](#) section to request an alternate format of the Accessibility Plan progress report or the feedback process description.

The alternate formats that can be requested include:

- print
- large print (larger and clearer font)
- Braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers)
- audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud)
- electronic formats that are compatible with adaptive technology

## Background

The *Accessible Canada Act* came into force on July 11, 2019. Its purpose is to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040, by removing existing barriers and preventing new barriers. The act applies to all federally regulated organizations, which includes Government of Canada departments, agencies and Crown corporations.

The *Accessible Canada Act* requires federally regulated organizations to:

- publish Accessibility Plans every three years, in collaboration with employees with disabilities
- report annually on progress made in implementing their Accessibility Plans by publishing annual progress reports
- establish a feedback process to receive and address comments, concerns and suggestions from employees and Canadians

The *Accessible Canada Act* is one element of a framework that TBS will follow to create an inclusive, accessible and barrier-free work environment. Other elements of the framework are new accessibility standards and regulations being developed by persons with disabilities in collaboration with Accessibility Standards Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada.

## Executive summary

This report provides an overview of:

- actions TBS took in 2024
- TBS's planned actions for 2025–26 to address priority areas of the *Accessible Canada Act*

This report also outlines TBS's progress in identifying, removing and preventing barriers in the seven priority areas identified in section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*:

1. employment
2. built environment
3. information and communications technologies (ICT)
4. communications, other than information and communications technologies
5. procurement of goods, services and facilities
6. design and delivery of programs and services
7. transportation

We will also report on progress made in the following priority areas that TBS has identified through consultations:

8. workplace culture (added)

Overall themes of TBS's first Accessibility Plan included the following:

- **Workplace accommodation:** Accommodation requests at TBS go through a rigorous process that has not been satisfactory for all employees. Persons with disabilities have reported feeling disrespected, unvalued and discriminated against when they request

accommodations. Further work is required to improve TBS's workplace accommodation process.

- **Built environment:** TBS's physical work environment, such as buildings, offices and other facilities, has been identified as a stressor for persons with disabilities. Further improvements are required to address barriers reported in employee consultations and in the TBS Built Environment Action Plan.
- **Career advancement:** Persons with disabilities report having limited access to opportunities for career advancement and professional development. They also report being the subject of stereotypical thinking by colleagues and leadership, which can limit their opportunities for career progression. TBS's actions need to focus on:
  - promoting a shared awareness and understanding of the barriers to professional development that persons with disabilities face
  - hiring, retaining and promoting persons with disabilities

This report details TBS's progress in removing the barriers set out in its Accessibility Plan, including the following:

- **physical barriers:** inaccessible facilities and poorly designed workspaces that can create challenges for those with mobility and sensory issues
- **procedural barriers:** inflexible work procedures and complex accommodation request processes
- **technological barriers:** outdated, incompatible or inaccessible technologies that are not user-friendly or that lack accessibility features
- **communication barriers:** insufficient information in alternate formats and a lack of accessible communication tools for those with hearing or speech impairments
- **attitudinal barriers:** negative stereotypes and a lack of awareness that hinder a supportive work environment
- **career advancement barriers:** limited professional development opportunities and unconscious biases that affect performance evaluations

## Overview of progress

### In this section

- Data on the number of TBS employees who self-identify as persons with disabilities
- Impact of the Direction on Prescribed Presence in the Workplace on accommodation requests
- Resolving accommodation requests
- Building awareness of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport
- Raising awareness and removing barriers

- Addressing career development for persons with disabilities
- The path forward

In 2024, TBS made overall improvements in:

- gathering more accurate data to measure change and set goals
- developing analytical tools to standardize how we report on progress
- identifying key performance indicators to hold ourselves accountable

Key TBS achievements in 2024 are:

- advancing the work of the Workplace Accommodation Centre to improve accommodations and promote the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport
- building on the work of the Employment Equity Recruitment Team to measure appointments and related results
- building on existing momentum in improving accessibility
- proactively tackling barriers in accommodation
- improving the recruitment of employees with disabilities

There has been some overall improvement in TBS's work, but we must reflect on and discuss where and why work fell short of goals. Some of this reflection will include the impact of budget constraints and limited resources.

As noted in the 2023 report, more work is needed to improve accessibility, track existing efforts and measure the effectiveness of our actions. As a result, our focus over the last year has been on:

- gathering data
- conducting analyses to improve how we measure progress
- setting ambitious goals, especially in recruitment and representation
- working with employee networks
- sharing data with all TBS employees

TBS continues to address the important issues of physical barriers in the workspace and barriers in terms of workplace culture and attitudes toward persons with disabilities. The Workplace Accommodation Centre is engaged and committed to resolving accommodation requests and promoting the Accessibility Passport.

In the 2023 progress report, TBS used the 2022–23 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) results to evaluate how it was meeting its commitments in support of the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada.

In contrast, the results in the 2024 report are drawn from:

- consultations with the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network

- reports from sectors across our organization
- reports from TBS's human resources databases
- other sources, including employment equity data reports from the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO)

## **Data on the number of TBS employees who self-identified as persons with disabilities**

The most recent TBS internal data showed that, as of September 2024, there are a total of 240 employees who self-identified as persons with disabilities at TBS, representing 10.9% of our workforce, an increase over the same period last year (177) and the year before (141).

The PSES results for 2022–23 indicate 305 TBS employees self-identified as persons with disabilities, but internal data likely under-reports that number compared to PSES results. At this time, it is not possible to compare PSES data from 2022–23 with more recent PSES results, since new PSES numbers will not be available until mid-2025.

With more data, specifically, the new PSES results, TBS will update its reporting on the number of persons who self-identified as persons with disabilities. Furthermore, TBS will report on both PSES results and internal data, as well as develop a performance measurement framework that draws from these and other data sources.

Where does our organization currently stand in terms of persons with disabilities employed at TBS compared to workforce availability goals? According to the most recent workforce analysis report from OCHRO (March 2023), the TBS workforce availability estimate for persons with disabilities was 8.9%. Based on TBS internal data, this shows progress: TBS exceeded this goal, with a representation rate of 10.9%.

Though this is a marked difference from last year, when TBS fell short of its workforce availability goals, a more accurate measurement will once again depend on comparing and reconciling data in the years ahead when further PSES results become available.

In the meantime, TBS will continue to work to ensure better representation of persons with disabilities in our organization, including by:

- gathering data using new human resources systems and disaggregating data (for example, to consider occupational group and level, employee mobility, intersectionality)
- developing analytical tools that allow more standardized and accurate measurement, and transparent reporting (for example, an updated Workforce Intelligence Dashboard to share advances and gaps in employment equity representation with all TBS employees)
- refining goals for representation and recruitment
- developing key performance indicators (for example, using new PSES results)

- establishing consequential accountability

## **Impact of prescribed presence in the workplace on accommodation requests**

The number of duty to accommodate requests is generally increasing. The TBS Workplace Accommodation Centre reported 59 duty to accommodate requests in 2022–23, 60 in 2023–24, and 30 so far in 2024–25 (from April to September 2024). These requests do not all come from employees with disabilities; some requests address barriers linked to temporary or permanent disabilities.

There was also an increase in consultations on duty to accommodate and leave management in 2023–24 (72) compared to 2022–23 (18). The duty to accommodate requests reported by the Workplace Accommodation Centre are not necessarily from employees with disabilities, and do not include requests for exceptions to the prescribed presence in the workplace linked to disability. Those requests are addressed by managers with support from functional specialists.

The TBS Workplace Accommodation Centre also reported a significant increase in the use of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport in 2023–24: 21 passports were completed in 2023–24 compared to 5 completed in the previous year. The number of adjustments to lighting in workspaces also increased: 26 for this year, compared to 21 for the entire year last year, and 4 for the year before.

These increases may be linked to the hybrid work model and changes to the direction on prescribed presence in the workplace that came into effect on September 9, 2024. There was a noticeable increase in duty to accommodate requests leading up to that date. And of all duty to accommodate requests received, the Workplace Accommodation Centre noted that 76% were related to disabilities.

In terms of telework as an accommodation measure to address workplace barriers, some of the reasons cited for accommodation requests included:

- mental health issues or medical conditions exacerbated by presence in workplace
- barriers limiting the ability to use transportation or commute (for example, car, public transportation, carpool)
- medical conditions where the presence in the workplace would put employee health at risk or exacerbate conditions (for example, immunocompromised, high-risk pregnancy with limited movements, fluorescent lighting, noise)
- medical conditions requiring equipment or supports that cannot be brought into the workplace or are not available in the workplace

Some key measures taken to address requests for accommodation included dedicated workspace assignments (32 in 2023–24 compared to 6 in 2022–23) and adjustments to light in workspaces (21 in 2023–24 compared to 6 in 2022–23). As well, the Workplace Accommodation Centre noted the following specific considerations – particularly regarding neurodivergence – in the continued shift to a hybrid work environment:

- it is necessary for TBS to gain a better understanding of neurodivergence and accommodation measures available for individuals who are neurodivergent
- neurodivergent employees can experience challenges in concentrating in an open concept workplace
- with a limited number of closed office spaces available, further innovative options should be explored to help improve the workplace experience of employees with sensory or auditory challenges

## **Resolving accommodation requests**

A key action for 2025 will be to improve the process for requesting accommodations, specifically, service standards, client satisfaction and achieving appropriate resolutions. In 2024, TBS made some improvement in meeting this goal.

Most requests resulted in an email response within 48 hours. While the tracking system used was ineffective in measuring the time taken to respond, complex requests generally took more time to resolve.

Since April 2024, the Workplace Accommodation Centre handled:

- 30 duty to accommodate requests
- 49 ergonomic requests
- 31 consultations on duty to accommodate and leave management
- 48 requests for accommodation measures related to dedicated workspace assignment and light adjustments to workspace

In 2025, TBS will work to improve tracking and look at the intake model, with assistance from the TBS information technology team. When the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport is online, statistics on requests will be easier to access.

## **Building awareness of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport**

The Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport (the Passport) is an initiative led by the Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA). OPSA promotes its use across the federal public service, and the Human Resources Division is responsible for promoting its use at TBS.

To promote the Passport, OPSA ensured that a reference to accommodation requirements and the Passport was added to TBS letters of offer. The reference invites employees to share their Passport or accommodation needs with their manager and the Workplace Accommodation Centre. Sharing the Passport helps the Workplace Accommodation Centre equip employees with the tools and supports they need as quickly as possible.

At the department level, TBS adopted the new Microsoft Word version of the Passport and shared it with employees.

## **Raising awareness and removing barriers**

TBS is continuing to raise awareness of the experiences of persons with disabilities and to foster a supportive and barrier-free work environment. Collaboration with the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network is key in much of this work. In 2024, the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network implemented several actions, including engaging members on accessibility issues, advocating for improved emergency procedures, and championing better use of IT accessibility features.

TBS also worked with the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network and the public service Infinity network (the Network for Neurodivergent Public Servants) to organize an event at 90 Elgin, with kiosks and a panel discussion, to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

TBS also offers departmental awards in accessibility, including:

- the Luna Bengio Accessibility Award of Excellence, recognizing an employee who leads by example in making our work environment more accessible and inclusive and who actively promotes best practices in accessibility
- the Yazmine Laroche Team Accessibility Award of Excellence, recognizing a team for its work on a project, initiative or tool that contributes to a more accessible and inclusive work environment

## **Addressing career development for persons with disabilities**

TBS supported the career development of persons with disabilities through programs focused on employees from employment equity and equity-seeking groups. Two of those programs are Mentorship Plus and Mosaic Leadership Development program.

The fourth cohort of the TBS Mentorship Plus was launched in 2024, with 25 sponsor-protégé pairings. TBS improved the collection and reporting of disaggregated data, which helped better measure results, such as the fact that seven of the protégés for this year's cohort self-identified as persons with disabilities.

OCHRO performs regular pulse checks to improve program design and implementation. Additionally, the Human Resources Division regularly surveys and consults current TBS participants to ensure that the program is meeting their needs, and surveys past TBS participants to evaluate the impact the program has had on their careers.

For Mosaic, TBS as a department had applications from nine TBS employees, and two were nominated to participate in the program. Two is the maximum number that TBS can put forward for this public service-wide program, which is run by OCHRO.

Data on the promotion of persons with disabilities at TBS, along with statistics on retention (arrivals and departures) can help provide insights for development of programs, measurement of their impact, and setting goals for improvement. As a preliminary step in collecting and analyzing data, TBS has gathered initial statistics from internal data on the promotion of persons with disabilities at TBS, and on arrivals and departures that help show retention rates:

## **Promotion and retention rates**

Persons with disabilities (2022–23)

Arrivals: 40

Departures: 36

Promotions: 34

Persons with disabilities (2023–24)

Arrivals: 39

Departures: 27

Promotions: 38

TBS (2022–23)

Arrivals: 385

Departures: 399

Promotions: 359

TBS (2023–24)

Arrivals: 266

Departures: 414

Promotions: 276

## **The path forward**

In the year ahead, TBS will focus on:

- building on the work of the Employment Equity Recruitment Team by:

- sharing best practices across TBS
- promoting use of the pools created
- measuring results in terms of appointments
- analyzing hiring and recruitment, for example, by identifying drop-off rates in the Employment Equity Recruitment Team’s processes and developing recommendations on how to address drop-off rates
- continuing to address physical barriers at work by:
  - promoting best practices in technology, tools and equipment
  - providing more accessible physical spaces, such as washrooms that are fully accessible
- supporting professional development by:
  - developing tailored mentorship/sponsorship and other career development opportunities for persons with disabilities, and through continued use and support of the Mentorship Plus and Mosaic programs
- advancing a positive workplace culture by:
  - ensuring resources to support the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network in its work to promote and organize events and initiatives to raise awareness of accessibility and the contributions of persons with disabilities at TBS

## Feedback

▼ in this section

- [Feedback received in 2024](#)

TBS values feedback from its employees and others because it fosters a healthy organizational culture and drives continual improvement. It not only enhances employee engagement and morale but also helps identify areas for growth and innovation. This open dialogue empowers employees, leads to better decision-making and ultimately drives organizational success.

TBS collects feedback using several methods, outlined in the [Obtaining your feedback](#) section of this report. Most feedback received has been through a dedicated email address and an online form that can be completed anonymously.

The Human Resources Division retains all feedback received to inform future actions while respecting the privacy of contributors.

Key takeaways from feedback received in 2023 included:

- the need for more support for employees in junior or mid-level positions to advance their careers

- improvements to emergency procedures for employees with disabilities
- the need to tie executive performance management to specific measurable accessibility targets
- barriers remain in the built environment at 90 Elgin
- TBS needs to do better with including targets and measuring success in its plan and progress reports

To address the need for more support for employees at an earlier stage of their public service career, the Human Resources Division created a working group of experts from its Learning Team and members of the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network to discuss the issue, identify the barriers and propose solutions. The working group is in early stages, but it is clear that additional tools and resources beyond programs such as Mentorship Plus and Mosaic are needed.

Members of the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network are looking to the Human Resources Division to create tools or programs that will create a feeder system of junior to mid-level employees with disabilities who are ready to advance to senior analyst or advisor roles, which will then qualify them for programs such as Mentorship Plus and Mosaic.

On the emergency evacuation front, the Human Resources Division worked with the Corporate Services Sector to bring key teams together on a quarterly basis to look at potential issues with emergency procedures. Some progress has been made, including editing the information available on the intranet for accessibility and plain language.

However, the hybrid work model presents unique challenges, and the ongoing quarterly meetings will help address these evolving issues, which include knowing who floor wardens are, where to find that information and whether they are in the office on any given day.

The Human Resources Division continues to explore greater accountability for executives to meet specific and measurable accessibility targets. This issue will remain a priority in future years.

TBS continued to make good progress eliminating barriers to accessibility at its building at 90 Elgin Street. More detailed information is available under [Completed activities in 2024](#) in the “Built environment” section of this report.

TBS continues to improve the data it collects and uses to track the department’s progress with accessibility. However, TBS knows there remains room for improvement, especially with tracking the success of individual initiatives. Refer to the [Overview on progress](#) section for data on how TBS is doing.

## Feedback received in 2024

TBS saw an increase in feedback collected in 2024. Much of this feedback is related to the return to office and recent direction on prescribed presence in the physical workplace. The feedback received revealed the following concerns:

1. The return to the office and recent Direction on Prescribed Presence in the Workplace negatively impacts employees with disabilities to a greater extent than other employees.
2. The open concept workplace at 90 Elgin may not always contribute to a comfortable work environment nor a productive environment, especially for neurodivergent employees.
3. Employees remain uncertain about the accommodation process and feel that decisions are applied unevenly across TBS.

In early November 2024, the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network provided detailed feedback from its members on the draft TBS progress report on the implementation of its departmental Accessibility Plan for 2022–25.

This feedback:

- focused on the eight priorities identified in the Accessibility Plan
- provided detailed comments on current progress for each priority area

## Key takeaways from the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network

- The TBS-FIN Accessibility Network is consulted often on initiatives across TBS, and too often network members feel that they are not given enough time to provide meaningful feedback. They would like more time than the two weeks allotted for this report.
- Members would like greater clarity in the progress report regarding which are the government-wide initiatives that TBS is leading as a central agency and which initiatives are internal to TBS as a department.
- Members want to see action with career progression for employees with disabilities. It has been a priority for them since the launch of the departmental Accessibility Plan and they would like to see results. They feel that targeted initiatives are required to make a difference and that the Human Resources Division needs to do more to create a type of feeder system that moves employees with disabilities along to provide programs like Mentorship Plus and Mosaic with an abundance of qualified candidates. Currently, not enough employees with disabilities are able to meet admittance criteria for these programs.
- The TBS-FIN Accessibility Network wants to see evidence that their ideas and concerns are not only being collected but addressed.

- Members continue to push for greater measurement of progress under each pillar and each initiative where possible.

## Consultations

### ▼ In this section

- [Call-out to sectors \(July 22, 2024\)](#)
- [Meetings with TBS subject matter experts](#)
- [Special meeting of TBS-FIN Accessibility Network on prescribed presence](#)
- [TBS-FIN Accessibility Network hosts discussion with Chief Accessibility Officer](#)
- [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Engagement and Advisory Committee](#)

Consulting with employees with disabilities and subject matter experts across TBS is crucial for creating effective initiatives aimed at improving accessibility and inclusion in the workplace. Employees with disabilities provide invaluable insights into their unique challenges and needs, ensuring that solutions are relevant and practical. Meanwhile, subject matter experts bring specialized knowledge on best practices, legal frameworks, and innovative strategies for fostering an inclusive environment.

This collaborative approach not only helps identify and address specific barriers but also promotes a culture of respect and empowerment. By actively involving these voices in the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives, TBS can create a more equitable workplace that values diversity and drives organizational success.

The Human Resources Division provided employees and subject matter experts with the opportunity to consult on this progress report in face-to-face and virtual discussions, as well as written submissions. Opportunities to consult included the following activities.

### **Call-out to sectors (July 22, 2024)**

In July 2024, the Human Resources Division emailed sectors across TBS asking for an update on progress with the accessibility-related initiatives under their purview. The request explained the kind of information needed and contained a link to a form to help simplify the process.

Sectors were given more than a month to complete the form, which would inform the bulk of this report. Essentially, the sectors were asked about the progress made in the previous calendar year, whether their targets for their initiatives were met, and their priorities and targets for 2025.

## **Meetings with TBS subject matter experts**

Following the call-out to all sectors for input, the Human Resources Division scheduled meetings with teams that are leading accessibility initiatives to discuss progress. The meetings were intended to clear up any confusion and ensure that the team producing the progress report would receive the information it needs. The meetings also helped identify any priorities for the year to come. These meetings were scheduled throughout August and into September.

## **Special meeting of TBS-FIN Accessibility Network on prescribed presence**

On September 24, the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network co-hosted a meeting with the TBS Champion for Accessibility to discuss the prescribed presence in the workplace and its impact on employees with disabilities. Employees had the opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions either in person at the event, in writing during or after the event, or anonymously after the event.

Comments from network members included the following:

- Consultations with employees with disabilities should have taken place long before the prescribed presence measures were put in place.
- The prescribed presence in the workplace negatively impacted employees with disabilities to a far greater extent than other employees.
- The concept of “hotelling” or reserving a workstation for each workday an employee is in the office is a step backward for accessibility and inclusion.
- The open concept in our physical workplace can be a very distracting and overwhelming environment for employees with disabilities, especially those who are neurodivergent.

## **TBS-FIN Accessibility Network hosts discussion with Chief Accessibility Officer**

On October 11, the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network welcomed Stéphanie Cadieux, Chief Accessibility Officer of Canada, to have a frank discussion with network members on progress on the employment of people with disabilities. Ms. Cadieux wanted to hear directly from employees with disabilities about what they were seeing at the working level.

The following are comments from network members:

- “Having the spirit of ‘Nothing Without Us’ – a collaborative approach involving people with disabilities – integrated into the *Accessible Canada Act* is proving effective. Employees with

disabilities are increasingly being consulted from the outset and throughout every stage of planning, design, creation and implementation of policies, programs and initiatives.”

- “Emphasizing collaboration has contributed to the rise in employee-led networks in departments and agencies across the federal public service. Employee networks, like the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network, are poised to play a major role in driving change from within.”
- “Gathering and compiling better and more accurate data to track progress with accessibility is leading to better accountability and the ability to identify barriers that remain and opportunities to improve.”

## Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Engagement and Advisory Committee

This report has been circulated for review by members of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Engagement and Advisory Committee (IDEA EAC), and individual members have participated in reviewing.

# Addressing priority areas in section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*

### ▼ In this section

1. Employment
2. Built environment
3. Information and communications technologies
4. Communications other than information and communications technologies
5. Procurement of goods, services and facilities
6. Design and delivery of programs and services
7. Transportation
8. Workplace culture

- TBS’s activities in 2024 to address accessibility barriers identified in our consultations
- Actions to be completed by 2025–26
- Updates on work to address the **eight priority areas** of the Accessibility Plan, seven of which derive from the *Accessible Canada Act*

For each of the following priority areas, completed actions and future actions are outlined.

# 1. Employment

TBS is addressing barriers that:

- impact the recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities
- limit professional development and career advancement
- reduce the effectiveness of workplace accommodations

TBS will address these barriers by:

- making the job application and assessment processes more accessible
- increasing hiring of persons with disabilities and other equity-seeking groups, including those with intersectional identities
- improving the accommodations process by offering clear guidance to employees and managers on how to submit requests, streamlining the processing time, and ensuring respectful treatment of employees throughout the process

## The Workplace Accommodation Centre

The Workplace Accommodation Centre is likely the most ambitious initiative in the TBS departmental Accessibility Plan. It also has the potential to make the most impact. The Workplace Accommodation Centre continues to evolve as it responds to the needs of TBS employees in a workplace that is also evolving under a new hybrid model.

TBS launched the Workplace Accommodation Centre in 2023 to:

- improve TBS's accommodations process by focusing on user experiences
- reduce wait times for the review and completion of workplace accommodation requests
- make outcomes generally more positive for persons with disabilities
- prevent employees from being off work by providing them with everything they need in a timely fashion

## Completed activities in 2024

- Reduced red tape and provided timely accommodations to employees needing the most frequently requested measures, which included dedicated workspace assignments and adjustment to workspace lighting.
- Provided neutral case management on all duty to accommodate requests, focusing on the success of the employee.
- Provided advice and guidance to employees and managers on duty to accommodate and leave management.
- Helped employees develop Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passports.

- Arranged for the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport to be featured in every letter of offer coming from TBS Staffing, inviting new employees to share their current Passport or to create one that details their accommodation requirements to ensure their success at TBS as quickly as possible.

## Priority actions for 2024–25

- Complete the realignment of the internal business model for the Workplace Accommodation Centre, which consists of sick leave and disability management services being transferred from the Corporate Services Sector to the Human Resources Division at TBS. Those services represent the bulk of the Workplace Accommodation Centre's workload, and the move to the Human Resources Division will ensure that accountable and qualified experts provide guidance to clients. The Corporate Services Sector will continue operational and accommodation-related services. The centralized service model and neutral case management style will remain in place for employees in what will be a seamless transition, with a completion date of winter 2025.
- Permanently fund and recruit full-time employees for the Workplace Accommodation Centre with disability case management and accommodations expertise.
- Review the Workplace Accommodation Centre's services to inform recommendations and the overall direction of the Workplace Accommodation Centre for the new TBS departmental Accessibility Plan in 2026.
- Publish a new intranet page devoted to the Workplace Accommodation Centre and its services by March 31, 2025.
- Promote the use of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport and track the creation of new Passports through the Workplace Accommodation Centre.
- Explore potential service standards for accommodation requests to identify key opportunities for improving the process and ensuring a positive employee experience. Key factors under consideration include:
  - **timely initial responses:** ensuring that employees receive acknowledgment of their accommodation requests as quickly as possible builds trust, reduces uncertainty and demonstrates respect for their needs
  - **resolution timelines:** developing a framework to address requests based on their complexity may help streamline the process and set realistic expectations for employees and managers (this exploration will consider a range of options to accommodate varying levels of complexity)
  - **transparency and tracking:** providing employees with a way to track the progress of their accommodation requests could promote transparency and accountability, helping to ensure that no request is overlooked or delayed unnecessarily

- **escalation mechanisms:** establishing clear pathways for escalation could help address unresolved cases in a timely and equitable manner, reducing frustration and ensuring that no employee is left unsupported
- **feedback mechanisms:** gathering employee feedback on their experience with the accommodation process is essential for continual improvement, helping to identify areas for enhancement and tracking the success of any future initiatives

## The Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport

Persons with disabilities across the public service are encouraged to use the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport to:

- document barriers they face at work
- collaborate with their manager to find solutions to overcoming these barriers

The Passport is a government-wide initiative led by the Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) with the Workplace Accommodation Centre leading its promotion and adoption at TBS. The Passport is a tool that employees can use to identify and document their barriers. The Passport also supports conversations between employees and managers about workplace conditions and any necessary adjustments required, including adaptive equipment or measures to ensure that employees have the support they need to be successful at work.

### Completed activities in 2024

- Conducted extensive user engagement and user testing with more than 70 Government of Canada employees to inform the development of a digital version of the Passport.
- Promoted the adoption of the Passport across the government and kept early adopters of the Passport informed through its Passport Adopter Community of Practice. This community has grown to include more than 60 organizations.
- Met an increase in demand for engagement and guidance by developing a Facilitators Training Program. The program trained 36 facilitators from 16 organizations. They delivered nearly 40 presentations and workshops to federal organizations and communities of practice.
- Updated the Microsoft Word version of the Passport to streamline content and improve usability.
- Conducted a pilot of the digital version of the Passport from October 1 through mid-December 2024. The departments and agencies that participated in the pilot included Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, Canadian Heritage, the Canadian Transportation Agency, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Shared Services Canada, and TBS.

### Priority actions for 2025

- Compile lessons learned from the pilot conducted in late 2024 to improve on the early version of the digital Passport.
- Make the lessons learned from the pilot phase publicly available by fall 2025.
- Continue to raise awareness and increase adoption through the Facilitators Training Program and the Passport Adopter Community of Practice.
- Launch the digital version of the Passport more broadly and make it available on the TBS Applications Portal (TAP) by early 2026. (TAP only available to those with access to the Government of Canada network.)

## **Employment Equity Recruitment Team**

TBS's Human Resources Division established a temporary Employment Equity Recruitment Team in 2022 to address accessibility barriers. The team worked to increase the recruitment and hiring of persons with disabilities and other employment equity and equity-seeking groups, and make the application and staffing process for jobs at TBS more accessible. With the establishment and ongoing use of the pools, the Employment Equity Recruitment Team has transitioned to other responsibilities.

Still, the objective of promoting a diverse workforce through employment equity processes remains unchanged. Despite a lack of staff resources in the TBS Human Resources Division dedicated to following up on the specific work by the Employment Equity Recruitment Team, the Human Resources Division continues to conduct employment equity-focused recruitment, ensuring access to diverse talent sources. Furthermore, former Employment Equity Recruitment Team members remain available to support TBS staffing advisors with their expertise and insights.

## **Completed activities in 2024**

- Promoted the employment equity pools across TBS, for instance, by sending out a message to management units, heads of TBS sectors, and senior management committees; there are some challenges with the use of pools, as TBS has fewer new staffing actions.
- Consulted with all TBS sectors as part of the department's human resources planning exercise.
- Provided expertise to human resources advisors across TBS on how to create their own pools using the best practices and lessons learned through the work of the Employment Equity Recruitment Team.
- Began the analysis of results from the processes, for instance, by tracking appointments and disaggregating data in reviewing the number of persons with disabilities who applied

and were hired in each process, and by analyzing the drop-off rate throughout the various steps of the staffing processes.

- The Employment Equity Recruitment Team processes are for AS-01, AS-02, EC-05, EC-06, EX-01 and EX-03 candidates. In total:
  - 21% of applicants self-identified as persons with disabilities
  - 22% of the people who qualified for the pools self-identified as persons with disabilities
  - 27% of people appointed from the pools self-identified as persons with disabilities
- There are no appointments to date for any of the targeted employment equity and equity-seeking groups for the EC-06, EX-01 and EX-03 processes. The overwhelming majority of appointments, for all the targeted employment equity and equity-seeking groups, have been for the AS-01 and AS-02 pools.

## **Priority actions for 2025**

- Identify lessons learned from the Employment Equity Recruitment Team initiative to improve future employment equity-focused processes, and share such information across the organization.
- Gather disaggregated data on appointments from the Employment Equity Recruitment Team pools and analyze the results of the processes to identify priority areas for future recruitment efforts.
- Gather disaggregated data on other, non-employment equity-specific TBS-led processes, both internal and external, to set goals, measure results and identify gaps regarding the hiring of persons with disabilities (for example, to improve representation of persons with disabilities at all groups and levels), and explore how automation can improve the collection and analysis of data.
- Share data on Employment Equity Recruitment Team results with employee networks, including the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network (especially in reference to TBS's contribution to the goal of 5,000 new hires of persons with disabilities by 2025), and continue to gather input on how to improve recruitment of persons with disabilities.
- Increase transparency of data on representation and goals by improving tools such as the Workforce Intelligence Dashboard, and continue to gather input from the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network and other employment equity employee networks on how such tools can best meet their needs.
- Continue to promote awareness of the Employment Equity Recruitment Team pools across TBS, for example, via efforts to encourage staffing advisors to use the pools during key periods in the financial planning process as part of the Integrated Business Planning process.

- Continue to review employment systems, as required under the *Employment Equity Act*, to identify and remove systemic and attitudinal barriers to employment opportunities for designated group members.
- Explore career and mentorship opportunities for junior and intermediate employees who may not qualify for the Mentorship Plus program, and actively recruit participants who identify as persons with disabilities for future Mentorship Plus cohorts.

## Career development programs

In 2024, various TBS initiatives aimed to enhance the professional growth and career progression of employment equity groups, such as persons with disabilities, as they get ready for executive leadership roles.

## Completed activities in 2024

### Mentorship Plus

This program is a collaborative initiative co-created by individuals from employment equity and equity-seeking groups to enhance leadership development. Mentorship Plus is led by OCHRO at the government-wide level and administered by the Human Resources Division at TBS. It specifically targets under-represented groups interested in leadership and executive roles.

**TBS's** fourth cohort of **Mentorship Plus** will run until June 2025.

Accomplishments for the TBS Mentorship Plus program in 2024 include the following:

- The third cohort of the TBS Mentorship Plus was launched in September 2023, with 22 protégés completing the program in June 2024 (no disaggregated data was available on the number of persons with disabilities).
- For the fourth cohort, the program was promoted to employment equity and equity-seeking employees through the employee networks. (Mentorship Plus is open only to employees who identify as members of employment equity and equity-seeking groups, including persons with disabilities, and who are identified as ready for advancement).
- For the fourth cohort, prospective protégés were asked to identify whether they are members of any employment equity or equity-seeking groups, to improve reporting (for example, to enable collection of disaggregated data).

### Mosaic Leadership Development program

Mosaic is a program led by OCHRO at the government-wide level for equity-seeking employees at the EX-minus 1 level that aims to address barriers to entering the EX category or other EX-equivalent leadership groups. The Human Resources Division at TBS manages the nomination of TBS applicants.

TBS received nine applications, and two were nominated by the department to participate in the program. Both nominees were accepted into the program by OCHRO.

### **Talent enabling strategies**

In fall 2023, OCHRO heard from over 400 executives with lived experience of disability across the public service regarding their unique experiences of professional development and well-being.

The findings highlighted significant and ongoing challenges related to:

- accountability for leadership behaviours and human resources decisions
- raising awareness of bias and barriers
- increasing opportunities for networking and sponsorship

### **Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities**

The Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities is a national program that enables 18-month internships for persons with disabilities across the federal public service. Interns can develop their work skills and increase their employability.

Established in 2019, this program offers tools and resources to interns and managers, focusing on recruitment, integration, development and retention.

The program works with various groups to identify candidates, namely, supported employment agencies and post-secondary institutions across the country.

### **Priority actions for 2025**

#### **Mentorship Plus program**

- Monitor and support the departmental program's fourth cohort, launched in September 2024, with 25 sponsor-protégé pairings. Seven protégés self-identified as persons with disabilities (the cohort is expected to run until June 2025; the fifth cohort will start in fall 2025).
- Assess the Together platform for accessibility and ease of use by tracking the experiences for mentors and mentees.
- Evaluate results through TBS-OCHRO pulse checks and the Human Resources Division's internal surveys and check-ins to improve program design and implementation.

#### **Mosaic Leadership Development program**

- Review best practices on the departmental self-nomination process and address areas of improvement, such as data collection and sharing, and the selection process of nominees to submit to OCHRO for consideration.

## Talent-enabling strategies

- Next steps for OCHRO's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism and Leadership (IDEAL) team will include sharing the findings with partners to determine and inform meaningful actions.

## Additional targeted training and mentorship

- HRD will continue to host the career progression working group with experts across TBS, as well as those with lived experience of disability from the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network, and will prioritize developing tools, resources or a program to help advance the careers of employees with disabilities at the entry to intermediate levels. Feedback received over the last two years on accessibility suggests that TBS needs to support people earlier in their careers to develop a type of feeder system to help employees move into manager roles and beyond.

For information regarding the modernization of the *Employment Equity Act*, refer to the [Design and delivery of programs and services](#) section.

## 2. Built environment

This section outlines completed and upcoming actions to address physical barriers identified at TBS, as outlined in the TBS Built Environment Action Plan developed in collaboration with Public Services and Procurement Canada. These challenges particularly impact individuals who have mobility and sensory issues.

### Completed activities in 2024

- Provided clearance underneath kitchen sinks: All cabinet skirting has been removed and the clearance under the sinks has been increased to allow wheelchair users access to kitchen sinks.
- Provided barrier-free washrooms: All identified barriers were removed from the washrooms at 90 Elgin. Should any additional barriers be encountered, they will be treated as a priority. More work needs to be done to provide barrier-free and inclusive washrooms on every floor and not only outside of the security turnstiles. The 2SLGBTQIA+ Network has collaborated with the Accessibility Network in advancing this activity.
- Provided contrasting colours for washroom doors: New high-contrast logos were applied to washroom doors at 90 Elgin.
- Reviewed emergency preparedness procedures: Updated emergency procedures are now published in an accessible and easy-to-read format on the TBS intranet. The TBS-FIN Accessibility Network, the Occupational Health and Safety committees, and Accessibility

Standards Canada were consulted to address barriers faced by persons who require assistance during emergency situations. More than 120 floor wardens have been recruited and trained.

- Simplified common onsite accommodation requests: The Workplace Accommodation Centre is now able to take requests via email and can quickly act as a one-stop shop to simplify the process. Requests such as dimming office lighting for certain workstations or removing certain workstations from the booking tool are now handled more easily and quickly by the Workplace Accommodation Centre.

## **Priority actions for 2025–26**

Priority actions are identified in consultation with the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network while also considering budget and the time required to complete the project. The priorities for 2025 include the following:

- Ensure ongoing emergency exercises, with special attention paid to lockdown and shelter-in-place exercises. Adapt procedures based on lessons learned.
- Continue to recruit and train volunteers and educate all employees.
- Purchase assorted types of chairs to make the kitchens more accessible and usable for all TBS employees.
- Provide greater colour contrast to warn employees with low vision to the trip hazard presented by the escalator.
- Update 90 Elgin’s public address system to one capable of connecting to hearing aids via loop or radio frequency.
- Equip public changing rooms with adult changing tables.
- Install visual emergency alarms in washrooms, showers, and other areas where a person may be expected to be alone.

## **3. Information and communications technologies**

Obsolete, incompatible or hard-to-access technologies make it harder for employees with disabilities to perform their roles effectively. TBS is assessing both existing and new information and communications technology (ICT) products, services and content to guarantee they meet accessibility standards. The success of this initiative relies on ongoing input from persons with disabilities, ensuring that accessibility is prioritized throughout the entire life cycle of any ICT product or service.

## **Completed activities in 2024**

**The Accessibility Hub (accessible only on the Government of Canada network)**

- The Office of Public Service Accessibility continued to update its central digital repository of accessibility tools, resources, training and best practices.
- Increased use of the Accessibility Hub by departments and agencies: Government of Canada employees accessed the Accessibility Hub's home page over 16,000 times since 2020, and shared resources and pages with various stakeholders in the Government of Canada (through the general inbox, various interdepartmental networks, TBS reports, communications and more).
- Helped increase awareness of accessibility gaps across the government: The Accessibility Hub is an important tool used to promote compliance with the *Accessible Canada Act*. As needed, pages have been added to the Accessibility Hub, such as the Accessibility Plans page, to help organizations meet their obligations under the Act.
- Began exploring the possibility of transitioning the Accessibility Hub to a more accessible platform (to be continued in 2025).

## Priority actions for 2024–25

### The Accessibility Hub (accessible only on the Government of Canada network)

- Ensure the Accessibility Hub remains a relevant and trusted one-stop shop for accessibility tools, resources and information for Government of Canada employees by:
  - featuring content that is timely and up to date, especially the Digital Accessibility Toolkit
  - uploading new resources and information as it becomes available
  - circulating resources across the government through communities of practice, employee networks and direct email blasts
  - driving traffic to the Accessibility Hub and aiming to have at least 3,000 unique page visits in 2025
- Identify and test a more accessible platform that the Accessibility Hub could potentially migrate to in 2025–26.

### Revamping the TBS Intranet (InfoSite)

- Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs will continue to migrate InfoSite content to the new platform, with the intent to complete the migration by 2026.
- All content for the new platform will be checked for accessibility and will adhere to the recommendations of the Canada.ca style guide.

## 4. Communications other than information and communications

## technologies

TBS is committed to ensuring that its communication with employees and Canadians is always accessible and easy to understand. TBS takes pride in leading by example and sharing its knowledge of best practices in communication within TBS and to other departments and agencies.

### Completed activities in 2024

- Strategic Communication and Ministerial Affairs employees delivered accessible communication across all platforms and channels in 2024. For example, it aimed to ensure that:
  - videos they produce are accessible, with appropriate colour contrast and subtitles, and that they have manually verified audio descriptions
  - all images, whether static or animated, meet *Accessible Canada Act* requirements
  - the Government of Canada wordmark complies with alternate text requirements
  - all web content on the Canada.ca website that is under their responsibility is compliant with the Government of Canada web standards on accessibility, usability and interoperability as well as written in plain language as laid out in the Canada.ca Content Style Guide
  - on social media, they use SRT (SubRip Subtitle) files to create open captions in videos; use alternate text for images that contain text, including subtitles for videos; and limit the use of emojis; in addition, content is written in plain language, at the appropriate reading level and available in both official languages
  - TBS social media continues to follow and implement the Federal Identity Policy Centre's *Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible*. The guidelines were developed in consultation with communications and subject matter experts in departments. The guidelines align with commonly shared accessibility guidance and best practices used across government and apply to communications products and activities aimed at both internal and external audiences.
  - any of their products found to be inaccessible were corrected
- TBS's participation in the Plain Language Technical Committee is complete. The committee produced the first edition of *CAN/ASC-3.1, Plain Language Standard*, which underwent public review from April 9 to July 8, 2024.
- Participation in the Interdepartmental Terminology Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is still ongoing. As of the end of March 2024, the *Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology* contained 128 entries.
- Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs conducted a photo shoot with employees from equity-seeking groups to build a photo bank to represent the true diversity of its

employees. SCMA will use those images in its various communications products in the coming year.

## Priority actions for 2025

- Linguistic services personnel will continue to represent TBS on the Interdepartmental Terminology Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and will contribute to the development of the *Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology*.
- Strategic Communications and Ministerial Affairs will continue to ensure that all of its products are accessible and usable by everyone and will identify opportunities to share lessons learned and best practices with sectors across TBS and the federal public service.

## 5. Procurement of goods, services and facilities

TBS prioritizes accessibility when procuring equipment to ensure that all employees, including those with disabilities, can fully participate and contribute to the workplace. Accessible equipment fosters an inclusive environment, enhances employee morale and increases productivity by removing barriers to use.

Furthermore, considering accessibility during procurement not only complies with legal and ethical standards but also reflects a commitment to diversity and inclusion. This proactive approach can lead to a more engaged workforce, improved retention rates and a positive organizational reputation.

TBS is working to:

- simplify processes
- use clear language when describing goods and services
- add accessibility features where needed

## Completed activities in 2024

- **Making procurement courses more accessible:** Mandatory government-wide procurement courses are being updated and developed. The Office of the Comptroller General's Acquired Services and Assets Sector continues to ensure that accessibility guidelines are at the forefront for all updates to existing content.
- **Guidance for accessibility in procurement:** TBS's 2022–2025 Accessibility Plan included plans for developing a TBS Guide to Accessibility in Federal Procurement. Public Services and Procurement Canada's Accessible Procurement Resource Centre has developed guidance on how to meet new obligations for accessibility in procurement obligations and continues to provide direction, guidance and advice on accessible procurement to all

federal organizations. Accordingly, TBS is removing this item from the plan for future years.

TBS encourages those interested in how accessibility in procurement works to consult the following resources:

- what Public Service and Procurement Canada is doing to [improve accessibility in procurement](#)
- Accessibility Standards Canada's [standard and funded grants and contributions research related to procurement of goods, services and facilities](#)
- [video gallery created by the Accessible Procurement Resource Centre](#)
- the [ICT Accessibility Requirements Wizard](#), which can help generate requirements documents specific to ICT procurement

## Priority actions for 2025

- The Acquired Services and Assets Sector will ensure that the new government-wide procurement course content adheres to accessibility guidelines.

## 6. Design and delivery of programs and services

Many government programs and services have historically overlooked accessibility in their design and implementation, leading to barriers for people with disabilities.

TBS emphasizes accessibility and inclusion by tackling issues identified by employees and experts throughout the public service. These issues stem from a lack of consideration for persons with disabilities in program design and delivery.

Without engaging persons with disabilities or making accessibility a priority in program development, these challenges will persist.

The focus of our actions is to eliminate existing barriers for people with disabilities. Actions include implementing inclusive procurement practices and ensuring that technology uses clear and accessible communication. Below are examples of completed actions and future initiatives to address these challenges.

### Transition to new Self-Identification (Self-ID) Questionnaire and application

TBS is updating the Self-ID Questionnaire it uses to collect information on employment equity groups in the public service, including employees with disabilities. The goal is to improve the quality and quantity of TBS's self-identification data to help us design, deliver and evaluate plans and programs to make the Government of Canada more diverse and inclusive.

The modernized Self-ID Questionnaire is a key commitment OCHRO made to meet equity, diversity and inclusion policy and legislative requirements. It is planned to launch by December 2024 or winter 2025, making significant achievements toward aligning with TBS's response to the 2024 Office of the Auditor General audit report.

## **Completed activities in 2024**

- Aligned the modernized Self-ID Questionnaire with the recommendations from the *Employment Equity Act Review*, consultations with Statistics Canada data standards, and other legislative and policy instruments.
- Engaged with Indigenous stakeholders, including the Knowledge Circle for Indigenous Inclusion, to understand how Indigenous identity is evolving in society at large, while considering the socio-cultural, legal and regional contexts.
- Briefings provided to TBS President's Office, deputy ministers and heads of human resources in preparation for a successful launch.

## **Priority actions for 2025**

- TBS is aiming to reach data stability as soon as possible.
- OCHRO will continue to monitor changes in the legal and policy environment post-launch and update the questionnaire as required.

In phase two of the modernization of the Self-ID Questionnaire, TBS-OCHRO will explore employee consent to use self-ID data for individual benefit (such as talent management and Indigenous employees).

## **Maturity Model on Diversity and Inclusion**

OCHRO continues to develop and refine its Maturity Model on Diversity and Inclusion as a self-assessment tool that Government of Canada organizations can use to assess and improve their diversity and inclusion efforts over time.

The Maturity Model on Diversity and Inclusion outlines progressive stages of maturity, helping organizations identify their current position, set clear goals and develop strategies for improvement. By providing benchmarks and best practices, the maturity model fosters a shared understanding of what effective diversity and inclusion looks like, encouraging accountability and transparency.

Using a maturity model allows organizations to address gaps in their diversity and inclusion initiatives, ensuring that efforts are not only well intentioned but also impactful. It helps leaders recognize the complexities of diversity and inclusion, guiding them in creating a more

equitable workplace culture. Ultimately, a maturity model facilitates ongoing learning and adaptation, enabling organizations to create sustainable change that benefits both employees and the broader community.

## **Completed activities in 2024**

- Drafted a second iteration of the Maturity Model on Diversity and Inclusion by refining some questions, adding new questions and increasing the number of PSES questions automatically pulled into the report, after consulting with Affinity Group members from across the enterprise.
- Automated portions of the Maturity Model on Diversity and Inclusion 2.0 by switching the platform where the questionnaire will be hosted from Simple Survey to Microsoft Forms, to increase the sense of privacy for departments.
- Developed a new GCXchange page for users of the Maturity Model on Diversity and Inclusion.
- Will be launching the Maturity Model on Diversity and Inclusion 2.0 in December 2024 or winter 2025.

## **Priority actions for 2025**

- Maintain ongoing communication and engagement efforts with heads of human resources, the community of practice of the Designated Senior Official for Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and the Affinity Group.
- Address any feedback received from users.
- Review and update the Self-ID Questionnaire to better equip departments with knowledge of their diversity, equity and inclusion maturity levels, and recommend actions as needed.

## **Modernization of the *Employment Equity Act***

The modernization of the *Employment Equity Act* is an important step in advancing the state of equity, diversity and inclusion in federally regulated workplaces. This modernization will include addressing the need for better retention and leadership opportunities for under-represented groups at some of Canada's largest corporations.

Creating more equitable, diverse and inclusive workplaces will also improve productivity and contribute to better retention. Taken together with other measures, such workplaces will help build a country where every Canadian has a fair and equal chance to reach their full potential.

## **Completed activities in 2024**

- OCHRO shared its report titled *What We Heard From Employee Networks on Task Force Recommendations and the Government's Initial Commitments to Modernize the Employment Equity Act*.

The report summarizes what was heard during the 23 consultation sessions that OCHRO conducted on the modernization of the *Employment Equity Act* with:

- various interdepartmental networks of employees from equity-seeking groups
- designated senior officials for employment equity, diversity and inclusion
- employment equity chairs and champions

The report has been shared with heads of human resources and interdepartmental equity-seeking networks, and it has also been posted on the GCwiki page to support *Employment Equity Act* consultations (available only on the Government of Canada network).

- The report was submitted to the Labour Program on August 28, 2024, and translated into French.

## **Priority actions for 2025**

- Maintain engagement and communication with the Labour Program, as the lead on this initiative.

## **Federal Speakers' Forum on Lived Experience**

The Federal Speakers' Forum on Lived Experience (the Forum) combines the services of the former Federal Speakers' Forum on Diversity and Inclusion and Federal Speakers' Bureau on Mental Health.

Through the Forum, OCHRO aims to build a community of speakers who share lived experience related to:

- mental health
- accessibility
- diversity and inclusion

By sharing ideas and building connections, the Forum aims to open hearts and minds to inspire action toward a more inclusive workplace.

## **Completed activities in 2024**

- Matched guest speakers to 151 events since April 2024, of which 72 were individuals who spoke about accessibility, disability, neurodiversity, mental health and inclusion.
- Began exploring migrating the Forum from the Government of Canada intranet to a new and more accessible platform.

## Priority actions for 2025

- Complete migration to a new online platform.
- Update communications and engagement strategy.

## Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund

In March 2024, the Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund's mandate ended. By investing in new tools and resources, research studies and experimental projects, the Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund was instrumental in helping the public service move toward becoming barrier-free.

In May 2024, the Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund published its final report. The report looks at the work achieved by the Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund during its mandate and lessons learned. It also provides five recommendations for a more accessible public service that leaves no one behind.

## Horizontal engagement on accessibility

The Office of the Comptroller General conducts horizontal engagement on accessibility, which is included in its Risk-based Audit Plan 2023–2025 (pending Comptroller General and Secretary approval).

The preliminary objective is to determine whether governance structures and management practices have been designed, implemented and aligned with accessibility requirements to support barrier-free workplaces.

The risk-based audit planning exercise considers government-wide priorities and risks in selecting horizontal internal audit engagements conducted in large and small departments.

## Completed activities in 2024

- Consulted with OCHRO and OPSA for their expertise and lessons learned in their respective consultations on accessibility-related initiatives.

## Priority actions for 2025

- Consult directly with employees with disabilities.
- Conduct the horizontal audit engagement using a risk-based approach in support of the objectives.

## Guidance to support departmental audits of duty to accommodate

The Office of the Comptroller General is developing guidance for internal audit functions across the federal public service when assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of their duty to accommodate processes, which include accessibility.

### **Completed activities in 2024**

- Consulted with OPSA to better understand the challenges faced by employees with disabilities.
- Presented draft guidance to chief audit executives.

### **Priority actions for 2025**

- Obtain final approval.
- Distribute the guidance to internal audit functions across government.

## **7. Transportation**

TBS does not provide transportation services or direction to departments on such services, but it does recognize its responsibility as a department to ensure safe access to its building at 90 Elgin Street, as well as safe transportation drop-off points at the building.

Employees with disabilities report frustration with obstacles blocking the accessible entrances at both the Slater Street and Albert Street entrances. The issue tends to be worse in the winter months.

Employees also report feeling unsafe when being dropped off at 90 Elgin. Several factors contribute to this, including

- the building is situated between two busy one-way streets, and if an employee is arriving by Para Transpo or accessible taxi, the accessible vehicle's ramp must exit onto the busy street
- there is no curb cut directly in front of the building's entrances, forcing employees to make their way down the street before accessing the sidewalk
- piles of snow, signage and other obstacles are often left in front of the accessible doors, making it impossible for those using mobility aids to access the door
- for those being picked up at 90 Elgin, employees often miss their ride home because of confusion around which door to use for pick-up

### **Completed activities in 2024**

- A quarterly meeting involving the Human Resources Division, the Corporate Services Sector and the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network was established to discuss these issues and to find solutions.

- The property management company was contacted with a request to avoid blocking entrances and to vigilantly remove the snow and ice from the accessible doors during winter months.
- Security Services is able to monitor and track the situation through existing video surveillance.
- Options to help provide a safer drop and pick-up point were proposed, including:
  - adding a curb cut to the sidewalks directly in front of the entrances of 90 Elgin
  - allowing access to the parking garage to complete pick-ups and drop-offs
  - creating space or an area for vehicles to pull over for pick-ups and drop-offs on Albert Street

## Priority actions for 2025

- Investigate the feasibility and cost of options proposed to make drop-offs and pick-ups safer at 90 Elgin by fall 2025.
- Work with Para Transpo and accessible taxi companies to identify either the Albert Street entrance or the Slater Street entrance as the main pick-up point for their clients. Implement a solution by summer 2025.

## 8. Workplace culture

Transforming workplace culture is vital for establishing lasting change in any organization. Attitudinal barriers and unconscious biases are difficult to identify and even harder to address.

In the past year, TBS worked to shine a light on not only the barriers faced by employees with disabilities, but also the employees' successes. TBS believes that by creating greater understanding of the challenges faced by colleagues with disabilities, we will all take a collaborative role in creating a more accessible and inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and empowered to thrive.

### Completed activities in 2024

- TBS appointed a new Deputy Minister Sponsor to help guide and support the advocacy efforts of the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network. Senior management respects the lived experience and knowledge of its employees with disabilities and looks to consider their input in the decision-making process. They want to help the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network drive change from within.
- TBS recognizes its employee networks as valuable sources of internal expertise and essential allies in driving change. In 2024, TBS allocated \$300,000 to support employee-led equity-seeking networks at TBS, including the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network.

- The DM Sponsor and the Assistant Deputy Minister Champion for Accessibility at TBS established a monthly meeting with the co-chairs of the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network to ensure advancement of the network's priorities and identify opportunities for collaboration. These meetings help build trust and ensure that the concerns of employees reach key senior executives.
- **The TBS Accessibility Awards of Excellence:** These awards are now integrated into a larger event that features all TBS awards. This change increases exposure and awareness of the awards while fulfilling the Human Resource Division's and the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network's goal of recognizing excellence and promoting best practices in accessibility and inclusion.
- **The TBS-FIN Accessibility Network:** The TBS-FIN Accessibility Network achieved many of its goals for the past year, including:
  - established a presence on GCXchange where information can be shared with its members for collaboration and commenting and to grow a sense of community
  - launched targeted interest-based subgroups of the network to collaborate on priorities such as the departmental Accessibility Plan and the annual progress reports; advocate for clearer emergency procedures; and explore ways to improve career progression from employees with disabilities at TBS
  - continued to grow its membership by merging with the accessibility network from the Department of Finance Canada; both departments share the building at 90 Elgin, so their priorities align and there is power in numbers
  - organized events throughout the year, in collaboration with the Human Resources Division and the Internal Communications group, to mark important dates, heighten awareness and share best practices, which include:
    - several events during National Accessibility Week in May, which included a kick-off event, daily accessibility trivia and an accessibility-themed movie day
    - a keynote address from TD Bank's Jennifer Popkey during National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October
    - a kiosk fair to celebrate the kick-off to Public Service Neurodiversity Week, in collaboration with the Infinity network in October
    - a meeting with the Clerk of the Privy Council co-hosted with the Interdepartmental Network of Disability and Accessibility Chairs and Co-Chairs in December

## Priority actions for 2025

### The TBS-FIN Accessibility Network

The TBS-FIN Accessibility Network will develop its action plan for 2025, which will identify the network's priorities for the year with a requested operating budget.

## Accessibility training at TBS

Training and expertise are critical when transforming workplace culture to be more accessible and inclusive because they provide the necessary knowledge, skills and best practices to address diverse needs effectively.

Well-designed training helps raise awareness about unconscious biases, accessibility challenges and the value of inclusivity while equipping employees and leaders with practical tools to create an environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

The Human Resources Division’s Learning and Community Development Services team delivered the following accessibility training sessions since January 2024:

Date	Subject	Number of participants
January 30, 2024	Making Accessible Products: Word Documents and Emails	94
February 8, 2024	Making Accessible Products: PowerPoint	75
February 13, 2024	Making Accessible Products: MS Teams	45
February 14, 2024	Plain Language	46
February 20, 2024	Making Accessible Products: Plain Language	55
May 30, 2024	Making Accessible Documents: Word and Emails	45
June 4, 2024	Making Accessible Documents: PowerPoint	61

The table above indicates that seven training sessions were given to 421 participants on creating accessible products using Microsoft 365 products. We believe these sessions indicate that interest in improving knowledge and skills about accessibility remains very high and, despite this training being voluntary, TBS employees are committed to building an accessible and inclusive workplace. This speaks to a workplace willing and looking to embrace change.

## Conclusion

The TBS Accessibility Plan published in 2022 included a closing section entitled “What Success Looks Like.” The Accessibility Plan was published only three years after the *Accessible Canada Act* came into force in 2019, which was landmark federal legislation that aims to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040. Now, five years later, we must take stock and mark where we are in terms of success.

The 2022 Accessibility Plan stated TBS’s broad goals in leading disability inclusion across the public service and exemplifying inclusion in our own organization. We knew that our policies and programs must support effective people management, inclusive procurement, and

empowering technology and clear communication. And we stated the measures that would help us judge our success, including the following:

- percentage of people with disabilities being hired and choosing to stay at TBS and in the broader public service
- percentage of employees with disabilities who are progressing in their career
- number of successful workplace accommodations within TBS
- employee survey results in the areas of inclusion, mental health, respect and engagement
- progress in making improvements to the built environment of Government of Canada departments and agencies
- feedback from the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network and the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Engagement and Advisory Committee

The 2024 progress report responds to that 2022 call for measuring success, though some answers are only partial:

- We know there are 241 employees who self-identified as persons with disabilities at TBS, representing 10.9% of our workforce, and we have gathered some initial data on retention to show how many persons with disabilities are leaving TBS compared to how many are staying.
- We know how many persons with disabilities are participating in at least two key career development programs, but we cannot report some data due to privacy considerations. We also have some data on promotions to give us an idea of how employees with disabilities are progressing in their careers.
- We know there were 60 duty to accommodate requests in 2023–24, and 30 so far in 2024–25 (as of September), but further tracking and feedback is needed to say for certain whether those accommodations were successful.
- We know that other feedback mechanisms, such as the PSES 2025 or the Mentorship Plus Pulse Check, will give us better data on inclusion, mental health, respect and engagement, and help us compare results from 2023 to measure change over time.
- We have made some progress in the built environment at TBS, but workplace barriers continue to create challenges that we are beginning to understand, measure and adapt to.
- We continue to work with the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network and the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Engagement and Advisory Committee to gather their input, and we realize that while employees with disabilities acknowledge and value TBS's efforts to make meaningful change, there is also dissatisfaction with the pace of change.

A key element in meeting the commitments in the Accessibility Plan is consequential accountability, for instance, through performance agreements of TBS executives. These agreements are built upon TBS mandatory commitments and include a commitment by

executives and managers to incorporate reconciliation, anti-racism, equity, inclusion and accessibility into their daily work, in accordance with the department's plans for employment equity, diversity and inclusion (including the Accessibility Plan).

This commitment forms part of the evaluation of all EXs at TBS. Each year, the commitments are updated and there are opportunities to add an increased level of accountability, for example, by linking senior executives' performance evaluations to specific accessibility targets.

Along with ensuring consequential accountability, TBS understands that to meet the commitments in the Accessibility Plan, despite gaps in staffing resources and other challenges, we must also strengthen efforts to advance inclusion for employees with disabilities by:

- using and monitoring employment equity and non-employment equity pools to improve the hiring and promotion of persons with disabilities
- developing tailored career development opportunities for persons with disabilities
- providing more accessible physical spaces and improving emergency procedures and the use of accessible technology
- continuing to support and collaborate with the TBS-FIN Accessibility Network in raising awareness of accessibility and the contributions of persons with disabilities at TBS

As we look toward advancing inclusion for people with disabilities in 2025, we must take stock of not only our accomplishments, but also of where we know we can do better. We must reflect on the shared accountability across TBS for each sector to contribute to making meaningful change.

In practical terms, this may mean better efforts in the shared responsibility across our organization in implementing, supporting, monitoring, measuring and reporting on actions to advance inclusion. TBS must be exemplary in demonstrating leadership for the public service.

And as much as we may face challenges such as growing workloads, hiring freezes and budget constraints, we are bound by legislation, if not moral imperative, to ensure that all employees are treated with dignity, have equal opportunities, and have their needs accommodated without discrimination on the basis of disability.

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