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Global Affairs Canada Accessibility Action Plan - 2026 to 2028

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General

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is pleased to present our 2026-2028 Accessibility Action Plan (the Plan or the AAP), developed in alignment with the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA), the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#) (ACR) and the [Transformation Implementation Plan](#). This Plan underscores our continued commitment to fostering an accessible and inclusive environment across our organization. We strive to ensure that our workplace, policies, programs, services, initiatives and practices are fully accessible to all employees and clients. Building on the foundation established in our previous AAP (2023-2025), we will continue to prioritize accessibility in our mission to serve Canadians effectively and equitably.

Background

After the publication of the first AAP in 2023, collaboration between key stakeholders continued to remove barriers and further foster the inclusive participation of persons with disabilities at GAC. Stakeholders, including employees with disabilities and their departmental champion, either took part in consultations or provided input on their activities. Employees with disabilities highlighted the persistent barriers that have negative impacts on their inclusion and participation at GAC.

Activities include improvements to hiring practices and to the accommodation process, and in 2025, GAC launched the Government of Canada (GC) Workplace Accessibility Passport. Improvements are also being made to facilities management and accessible communications, and employees are taking training to address inclusion, accessibility, better procurement processes and the use of plain language. Additionally, GAC is developing a performance measurement framework to track progress on improvements. Also, extensive renovations are ongoing at GAC headquarters, which provide an opportunity to improve accessibility although the renovations may contribute to short- and medium-term accessibility challenges.

How to provide feedback

Please send your feedback to the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility advisor at accessibilite-accessibility@international.gc.ca

You may send your feedback by email, phone, mail or through the feedback form using the contact information listed below.

You may also ask us for a copy of our accessibility plan, progress reports and feedback process description in these alternate formats:

- Print
- Large print
- Braille
- Audio or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology that is intended to assist persons with disabilities.

GAC will provide the format you requested as soon as possible. Braille and audio formats may take up to 45 days. Print, large print and electronic formats may take up to 15 days.

Contact us

Email: accessibilite-accessibility@international.gc.ca

- **Online form:** [GAC online accessibility feedback form](#)
- **Phone:** Toll-free: 1-800-267-8376
- **Video relay service (VRS):** Canadians who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired can obtain access via their own interpreter or via Canada VRS, which provides an interpreter: [Canada VRS page](#).
- **Mail:** Global Affairs Canada – Accessibility Feedback
c/o The advisor responsible for accessibility
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility team (HMAE)
200 Promenade du Portage
8th floor
Gatineau, Québec
J8X 4B7
- **Social media:**
 - [Official corporate X account for Global Affairs Canada: @GAC_Corporate](#)
 - [LinkedIn: Global Affairs Canada](#)

Consultations

Participants were contacted through email and departmental broadcast messages. Consultations were held through discussion groups, one-on-one meetings on Teams and through email feedback.

Dates of consultations:

- Consultations on barriers with employees, managers and union representatives took place from April 7 to April 30, 2025.
- Consultations on Plan activities with Branch Networks and OPIs took place from May to July 2025.

What we asked employees:

We asked 65 questions on barriers and recommendations.

- **Employment:** Experiences in requesting accommodations during staffing processes and career advancement, as well as suggestions for improving inclusive recruitment practices.

- Workplace Accommodations: Receiving accommodations outside staffing processes, the Duty to Accommodate process, and the implementation of the Government of Canada (GC) Workplace Accessibility Passport.
- Built Environment: Physical accessibility at headquarters and missions, awareness of consultations regarding accessibility, and emergency preparedness for employees requiring assistance.
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT): Access to adaptive tools, training, support, and barriers in digital systems and platforms.
- Communications (Non-ICT): Accessibility of internal communications.
- Programs and Services: Accessibility of services delivered or received by employees.
- Procurement: Accessibility considerations in procurement processes.
- Transportation: Accessible transportation options at headquarters and missions.
- Workplace Culture: Perceptions of inclusion, respect, and lived experiences.

What we asked managers:

We asked 14 questions on the following:

- Hiring persons with disabilities.
- Implementing accommodations.
- Navigating the built environment.
- Fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

What we asked union representatives

We asked questions on employees' experiences with accessibility in the eight priority areas of our plan.

Accessibility

We made our consultations accessible by:

- Providing virtual sessions in either French or English with a particular attention to how we spoke to allow lip reading and speech to text software.
- Providing documents in advance and in accessible, downloadable formats.
- Providing closed captioning.

Who we consulted

- Employees and managers with disabilities, as well as allies, union representatives and executive members of the employee network.
- OPIs across GAC on the activities they will implement to address accessibility barriers.

Total number of participants in barrier consultations:

- 51 signed up for the consultations*. 42 of those participated, 9 did not.

- Breakdown of participants by group: 13 managers, 2 Locally Engaged Staff (LES), 19 non-rotational (traditional) employees, 9 rotational employees, and 6 union representatives.

** Some managers with disabilities participated in two sessions to share their experiences in each role. Others provided written feedback in addition to joining a virtual session. Duplicate participants were only counted once in the total.*

Number of participants with disabilities:

- 26 of the 42 participants identified as persons with disabilities. Others may also have disabilities but did not disclose.

Types of disabilities disclosed:

- Physical: temporary and prolonged mobility and dexterity impairments, chronic pain and respiratory conditions.
- Sensory: vision and auditory impairments.
- Mental health: depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, burnout, emotional exhaustion.
- Neuro-developmental and cognitive: attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, autism, executive function challenges, memory issues, dyslexia.
- Environmental sensitivities: light, noise, chemicals.

Total number of participants in activity consultations with OPIs:

- 16 OPIs and 2 Branch champions were consulted either through meetings or email. At least one OPI was consulted for each item in section 5, and 5 OPIs were consulted on programs and services.

The following outlines new activities GAC will undertake between 2026 and 2028. GAC will also report annually on progress towards a barrier-free GAC.

Areas in section 5 of the Accessible Canada Act

Employment

Barrier: A limited awareness of the duty to accommodate during staffing processes may limit employment opportunities for applicants with disabilities.

Goal: To provide greater support for employees during staffing processes.

Actions

Between 2026 and 2028, the following activities will be put in place at GAC:

- Create a centralized support process to ensure a common approach to providing accommodation services to persons with disabilities within staffing and hiring processes.
- Develop and deliver accommodations training to staffing advisors, which will include the key information on accommodations and practical scenarios.
 - Staffing advisors must complete mandatory training on establishing accommodations in the staffing process in order to be promoted within the Personnel Administration Developmental Program.

Barrier: Employees believe that there is stigma in self-declaring or self-identifying as a person with a disability.

Goal: To increase awareness of accessibility inclusion among GAC managers and employees.

Actions

- Between 2026 and 2028, hiring managers will be required to complete *Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce* training for staffing sub-delegation. They will also be required to complete training on neurodiversity.
- GAC will periodically engage with employee champions and networks on the purpose and importance of self-identification, how the data is used and ensuring that the information is strictly confidential.

Barrier: Assessment tools may lack accessibility and may not be inclusive.

Goal: To ensure that staffing processes are accessible, inclusive and responsive to diverse needs.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028 GAC will:

- Expand the scope of the Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion selection board member project to invite members to review proposed assessment tools (e.g. written exam, interview, reference check) and further minimize barriers in the assessment process.
- Review and update language on job posters and communications with candidates to ensure accurate diversity and inclusion terminology is used.

Barrier: Employees believe that the full participation of persons with disabilities in employment opportunities at GAC is not always encouraged.

Goal: To provide equitable access to career opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028 GAC will:

- Become an active participant in the Public Service Commission's Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities.
- Publish the results of the Mission Accessibility Project, a questionnaire to assist employees applying for postings abroad by making information available about accessibility in Canada's offices abroad. An accessible version will also be published.

Barrier: Employees may face delays or inconsistent workplace accommodations due to confusion about procedures and a lack of awareness.

Goal: To improve the accommodations process for persons with disabilities so that employees may continue to access the workplace accommodations they need to succeed.

Actions

In 2026 to 2027, review its practices and procedures related to the Duty to Accommodate (DTA) and workplace accommodations. GAC will:

- Review internal practices and procedures, assess understanding, identify gaps, and improve support, including the development of new tools to strengthen the overall workplace accommodation process. These may include training and awareness activities or recordings, quick-reference guides on available resources, guidance on roles and responsibilities, and Q&A documents to support both employees and managers.
- Promote and support the use of the Digital GC Workplace Accessibility Passport (the Passport), implemented in December 2025, including ongoing training, targeted awareness activities, and the development of Passport-specific resources based on materials from the Office of Public Service Accessibility at the Treasury Board Secretariat and tailored to GAC's context.

- Leverage the Passport’s digital capabilities to analyze aggregated trends related to workplace accommodations, such as types of barriers or commonly requested accommodations, while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

The built environment

Barrier: Persons with disabilities face challenges during evacuation procedures due to infrastructure gaps and limited awareness.

Goal: To enhance accessibility in emergency preparedness procedures by improving infrastructure, increasing awareness and fostering collaboration.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028 GAC will:

- Collaborate with GAC’s Persons with Disabilities and Allies Network to advance accessibility initiatives.
- Where Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) is the building owner, GAC will continue to work with them to improve compliance by identifying gaps and exploring alternatives to make reasonable accommodations.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to identify solutions, obtain funding, resolve identified barriers and bring changes to GAC spaces.
- Ensure that persons requiring assistance (PRA) and visitors who need to limit their walking have access to the closest elevators and emergency exits.
- Add mandatory training for PRA and managers into the corporate training list.
- Promote and increase self-identification through a campaign on the definition of persons with disabilities with support from floor emergency wardens and managers.
- Investigate the implementation of a formal tracking system aligned with existing reporting capabilities.
- Improve the communication and visibility of the Accommodation and building services online form, which is required when an employee requests a change in the built environment for accessibility reasons.
- Promote emergency procedures and updated resources in a variety of work environments during Emergency Preparedness Week.

Barrier: Employees with disabilities and clients at headquarters and missions may experience obstacles in accessing and navigating physical spaces.

Goal: To understand where physical barriers are located in mission buildings so that employees with disabilities may make informed decisions before applying for assignments abroad.

Action

- In 2026 GAC will finalize the implementation of the Mission Accessibility Project which is a questionnaire on accessibility features and barriers sent to all missions. Results will be made available to all employees and an accessible version will be published.

Goal: To work with departmental stakeholders to support legal obligations under the *ACA* and advance the accessibility-related strategic priorities of the *Global Portfolio Strategy* (GPS).

Actions

By the end of 2026, GAC will accomplish the following, which will contribute to understanding specific needs and challenges at headquarters and mission and make efforts to integrate the policies and standards of host countries to ensure that Canadian values of accessibility and inclusion are upheld for employees and visitors:

- Develop a directive on accessibility for the built environment abroad that will apply to GAC's custodial real property portfolio. It will focus on requirements related to accessibility of physical workspaces across the GAC international portfolio of real property assets and align retrofit and new construction projects with these requirements.
 - Engage stakeholders (branch subject matter experts and inter- and intra-departmental EDI and accessibility leads) in directive development to ensure it reflects diverse perspectives and operational realities.
 - Promote awareness of the final approved directive and its implementation by real property practitioners through incorporation in their projects and processes. This will be accomplished via development and implementation of a communications strategy which will include broadcast announcements, stakeholder newsletters, direct messaging to stakeholders and development of guidance documentation. Key performance indicators will also be developed and incorporated into project and portfolio planning and approval processes and integrated into *the Global Portfolio Plan* (GPP), currently in development.
- Develop the multi-year GPP, which will include the current state of the portfolio of real property assets abroad, as well as proposed actions and investments to address gaps and meet the objectives of the GPS, including accessibility.
- Use the results from the Mission Accessibility questionnaire to draft the GPP which will include:
 - Planned immediate minor and major projects addressing accessibility gaps.
 - Plans for future in-depth studies that will identify further accessibility-related project needs and priorities.
- Continue integrating accessibility considerations into all new projects in the interim until the GPP is completed.
- Continue to support individual duty-to-accommodate requirements, on an as-needed basis.

Goal: To increase engagement as well as wellbeing and accessibility elements in GAC-occupied workspaces at headquarters.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028 actions will be undertaken at GAC headquarters in several areas.

- Renovations of offices at 200 Promenade du Portage (8th and 9th floors): Progressively modernize these floors to address GAC operational and functional needs with a forward-thinking approach to accessibility and well-being factors. Planning will include consultations with related departmental networks on planning and design. Construction is estimated to be completed by March 31, 2027.
- Providing flexible workstations and access: Continue to procure and install electronic sit-stand desks initiated in 2022.
- Access to inclusive spaces: Continue to add and maintain quiet rooms, accessible co-working spaces and reflection spaces in headquarters buildings (200 Promenade du Portage, 111 Sussex Drive and 125 Sussex Drive).
- Improve accessibility functionality in project planning and design: Ensure that when clients identify accessibility requirements, they are incorporated.
- Improved accessibility functionality: All newly designed and renovated spaces include vertical pushbars instead of push buttons to facilitate access for those with reduced mobility.
- Events to increase awareness and facilitate engagement: Workplace expositions will be proposed between 2026 and 2028, and at least one each year will be focussed on accessibility, diversity and inclusion. They will provide opportunities to learn about barriers, share information and receive feedback from internal and external stakeholders in the Built Environment. The Procurement and Asset Management Division will remain engaged and provide a platform for awareness of latest efforts and code requirements.
- Merge GAC-occupied workspaces into a collectively managed corporate space entity: In 2026, submit a proposal to senior management to transform all GAC-occupied workspaces at headquarters into a corporately managed model, to deliver more uniform solutions and flexible alternatives for all employees regardless of any mobility considerations or accessibility issues.

Barrier: Accessibility requirements are not always consistently considered in workspace planning.

Goal: To integrate accessibility requirements into all investment planning for GAC-occupied workspaces at headquarters.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028 GAC will undertake actions in the following areas:

- A new project charter will be introduced for all domestic accommodations projects that will integrate accessibility and well-being factors at the planning and development stages, before project approval. It will be implemented in 2026.
- Resume third-party accessibility audits, previously conducted from 2018-2020, to ensure awareness of most recent issues and code requirements.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Barrier: Employees may face barriers accessing adaptive technologies due to limited awareness, security restrictions and delays.

Goal: To reduce barriers to accessible technology and close support and training gaps by ensuring timely access to security-approved adaptive technologies (e.g. specialized software such as JAWS and Antidote, and specialized hardware that can provide interpretation from braille text to audio), provide consistent support and improve awareness and training for all employees and managers.

Actions

GAC will improve access to adaptive technologies and streamline related processes. It will:

- Develop and implement a centralized, accessible catalogue of approved ICT and adaptive technologies in the appropriate tool (AppStore, Company Portal, or other).
- ICT security teams will work to identify alternative solutions when restrictions prevent access to necessary technologies.

Barrier: ICT employees may lack training and awareness regarding ICT adaptive technologies and options, and there are delays in acquiring them.

Goal: To raise awareness about accessibility needs in ICT tools for the organization.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028, GAC will enhance training and awareness of accessibility tools for its ICT employees and managers. It will:

- Require that ICT employees take Canada School for Public Service courses addressing disability inclusion.
- Provide specialized training for ICT employees to support adaptive technologies and accessibility best practices.

- Create and maintain a one-stop, online accessibility resource hub in collaboration with Human Resources and Persons with Disabilities and Allies Network. This hub will include information for employees with disabilities and ICT staff, and be available to all employees.

Barrier: ICT support may be inconsistent across headquarters and missions, and adaptive technologies often lack portability, especially for rotational staff.

Goal: To provide consistent support domestically and internationally, for GAC employees in need of adaptive technology to meet accessibility needs.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028, GAC will improve the consistency of ICT support at headquarters. It will:

- Establish a centralized point of contact with expertise in accessibility and adaptive technologies.
- Develop and share training materials on accessibility features within Microsoft 365 tools, especially for Microsoft Teams.
- Monitor and evaluate support effectiveness through feedback from employees with disabilities.

Communication, other than information and communication technologies

Barrier: Persons with disabilities may continue to face attitudinal barriers related to accessibility.

Goal: To raise awareness about accessibility within the organization.

Actions

GAC will promote accessibility through internal communications, storytelling, self-identification and awareness campaigns tied to key accessibility dates. From 2026 to 2028 we will:

- Raise awareness about accessibility and promote best practices through internal communication products and activities.
- Publish and promote accessibility-related stories to raise awareness and share successes.
- Initiate a self-identification campaign to raise awareness and improve the self-identification rate among employees with disabilities.
- Launch an awareness campaign for National Accessibility Week, International Day for Persons with Disabilities, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Barrier: Communications sometimes lack plain language, alternative text or captioning.

Goal: To provide barrier-free communications products and services that both the public and employees can readily access and understand.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028, GAC will remind managers, employees, and the communications employees to:

- Support users' needs by providing information in plain language in various accessible formats, such as large print, audio and online forms compatible with adaptive technologies.
- Use plain language and meet accessibility standards in all communications content, products and services.
- Make in-person and virtual events more accessible by leveraging technology and resources to provide subtitling and Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART); providing sign language interpretation (ASL and LSQ) should the need arise; making sure the venue where events take place are wheelchair accessible, especially in the context of renovations in various departmental buildings.
- Consider accessibility needs when exploring new digital and social platforms.
- Consult users of GAC's internal and external communications products and services on usability and accessibility.
- Ensure that corporate templates, like briefing notes and slide decks, are accessible to everyone.

Barrier: Inconsistent use of accessibility and plain language in GAC communications may lead to uneven application of this accessibility standard.

Goal: To address barriers in training related to accessible communications.

Actions

GAC will strengthen accessibility and plain language practices by promoting training, encouraging related performance objectives and promoting learning. From 2026 to 2028, we will:

- Encourage managers and employees to include accessibility and plain language training in their learning plans.
- Promote workshops and training on accessibility and plain language to employees through communications products and services.

The procurement of goods, services and facilities

Barrier: Procurement processes are seen as complicated and seem to exclude accessibility considerations.

Goal: To improve the process for acquiring adaptive technologies.

Action

- From 2026 to 2028, GAC will simplify and document the end-to-end process for the procurement of hardware and software in response to accommodation requests.

Goal: To enhance awareness and integration of accessibility considerations within procurement by continuing to promote and leverage best practices and Shared Services Canada (SSC) and PSPC information sessions.

Actions

From 2026 to 2028 GAC will:

- Regularly maintain and update on GAC's internal Information Management system accessibility information sessions offered by SSC and PSPC. These resources are accessible to both the GAC procurement community and business owners, supporting their roles in integrating accessibility considerations into the procurement of goods and services.
- Regularly promote SSC and PSPC virtual accessibility sessions through broadcast messages to all employees involved in the procurement of goods and services. All employees will be encouraged to attend these sessions to strengthen their understanding of accessibility obligations and responsibilities.
- Regularly update its Information Sheet on Accessibility Considerations in Procurement and related resources, which are published on GAC's internal Information Management system. GAC will continue to monitor updates to policies and procedures from the TBS, SSC and PSPC. All updates will be shared with employees involved in procurement to ensure continued alignment with the ACA.

The design and delivery of programs and services

Barrier: Services provided to Canadians abroad are not always accessible.

Goal: To make consular services more accessible for persons with disabilities.

Actions

Between 2026 and 2028, GAC will:

- Review the results of the Mission Accessibility Project and collaborate with stakeholders to prioritize renovations that will improve physical access to consular services at Canadian missions abroad.
- Add a question to the consular client experience survey from the perspective of accessibility to gather data on where barriers exist within the service.
- Develop an accessible service delivery guide to consular officers and reception staff and train staff on the guide and how to apply its principles.
 - Staff will be surveyed on barriers they have observed (or for any other relevant information) when interacting with clients.

- GAC is introducing a trauma-informed approach to delivering consular and emergency services. Through a trauma-informed lens, staff will be trained to support more inclusive communications and interactions with clients, recognizing that trauma and distress generate cognitive barriers that are affecting the client's abilities to leverage the consular assistance.

Barrier: Locally Engaged Staff (LES) with disabilities working abroad may face barriers accessing services at missions or from headquarters.

Goal: To help mission management identify and assess which barriers should be prioritized and removed to make programs and services offered by GAC more accessible to LES with disabilities.

Actions

Between 2026 and 2028, GAC will:

- Engage with mission management and LES to consider yearly accommodation measures or solutions needed to make the workplace in Canadian mission offices more accessible, with adapted equipment required by persons with disabilities. As part of this engagement, the LES Bureau will encourage LES Management Consultative Boards to add to their agenda consideration of accommodations and/or accessibility needs and related expenses ahead of GAC's mission priority setting and budget planning cycles.
- Continue to update LES Bureau intranet pages and work with GAC Intranet and Web communications to ensure that revised and new content published on the intranet is compliant with accessibility requirements of the Government of Canada. The review of existing content may take up to a year to complete.

Transportation

Barrier: Employees with disabilities lack information on accessible transportation options in mission cities.

Goal: To increase awareness of accessible transportation options for employees at Canadian missions abroad.

Action

- By the end of 2026, the results of the Mission Accessibility Project will be published on Modus (the GAC Business Processes Application), allowing employees to access up-to-date information on accessible transportation options.

Workplace Culture

Barrier: Learning platforms and training programs may lack built-in accessibility, limiting equitable access to professional development.

Goal: To integrate and promote accessibility in all aspects of employee learning and training.

Actions

GAC will:

- Promote available learning events, courses, and activities offered to employees through broadcast messages.
- Integrate accessibility into mandatory training policy. The GAC Mandatory Training Directive includes a requirement that only courses meeting full accessibility standards are eligible for inclusion in the mandatory training list.
- Maintain a fully accessible learning management system.
- Verify accessibility compliance for hosted learning solutions. All learning solutions hosted on Campus International must comply with Government of Canada accessibility standards or obtain an exemption from TBS.
- Deliver inclusive learning experiences by supporting accessibility by design for learning providers. Resources, training, and coaching are offered to learning providers to ensure that new learning solutions are developed with accessibility integrated from the outset.

Barrier: Limited awareness about accessibility hinders disability inclusion.

Actions

GAC will:

- Raise awareness of accessibility and disability inclusion by leveraging internal communication channels (e.g., broadcast messages, presentations, and network meetings) to share accessibility-related resources, best practices, and encourage self-identification.
 - In 2026, the Transformation Bureau will contribute to this initiative by sharing best practices, such as ensuring closed captioning during their information sessions for employees and managers.
- Continue engaging with branches to support their accessibility awareness activities, especially during Accessibility Awareness Week in 2026, 2027, and 2028.
 - The International Platform Branch Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)+ Council will coordinate several events including for National AccessAbility Week, the International Day for Persons with Disabilities and quarterly outreach to promote IDEA.
- Launch and promote the Anti-Racism, Diversity, Inclusion Assessment Tool (ARDIAT), a set of questions that encourage GAC program and policy leads to consider IDEA in their work.

Performance measurement

A performance measurement framework will be developed and used to monitor the successful implementation of the Plan. In addition to a logic model (and narrative), the framework will include targets and timelines for the implementation of each activity. It will be a useful tool to assess where the department may need to change course if desired results are not achieved.

Conclusion

GAC is committed to implementing this plan to contribute to continuous improvement in accessibility for persons with disabilities. We will monitor our progress to ensure we are meeting our accessibility goals and removing identified barriers. Progress reports will be published in 2026 and 2027, and shared with employees, stakeholders, and management.

We also welcome and encourage feedback through the channels described at the beginning of this document. All feedback will be reviewed and where appropriate, used to inform progress on the plan and refine our actions. Our commitment is ongoing and we are building a workplace where inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility is embedded for all who interact with GAC.