



# Library and Archives Canada

ATIP action plan progress report

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## Introduction

Since the launch of Library and Archives Canada’s (LAC) ATIP Action Plan, the institution has made steady progress in modernizing its access to information and privacy (ATIP) operations. Temporary resources and targeted initiatives have allowed LAC to stabilize operations and deliver on key priorities in the short and medium terms. Yet, without a more predictable and permanent funding framework, the long-term effectiveness of these reforms remains at risk. Sustainable investment is essential for LAC to fully address its backlog, modernize its digital infrastructure, and meet the expectations of Canadians seeking timely access to government information.

Over the past two years, LAC has implemented significant policy and procedural changes that will have a lasting impact on how the institution manages and delivers ATIP services. These long-term improvements—alongside increased transparency and strengthened collaboration with internal and external partners—represent important steps toward sustainable transformation.

Notwithstanding these achievements, the demand for access to information continues to grow annually. The expanding volume and complexity of requests—combined with the unique archival nature of LAC’s holdings—persistently strain the institution’s ATIP capacity.

As LAC approaches 2026, the focus will shift from recovery to stabilization, with an emphasis on solidifying recent structural changes and securing the stable resources necessary for its ATIP function to sustain openness, accountability, and trust in the management and accessibility of government information.

## Part 1: Getting back on track

### Reducing the backlog of requests

As demonstrated in the following table, LAC has made significant progress toward eliminating its backlog of requests, with a 15% reduction in the first half of fiscal year 2025–2026. During the same period last year, LAC had 8,645 requests in its backlog, compared to 4,806 currently. This reflects an overall reduction of 44%.

**Table 1-Requests related to other government department records**

Type of records	Late as of April 1, 2025	Received between April 1, 2025, and September 30, 2025	Completed as of September 30, 2025	Late as of September 30, 2025
<b>Records of former Canadian Armed Forces members and former public servants</b>	3,435	3,467	4,599	2,488

<b>Government of Canada archival records</b>	2,224	1,243	1,144	2,315
<b>LAC operational records</b>	0	33	39	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	5,659	4,743	5,782	4,806

LAC also maintained its efforts to answer new incoming requests in a timely manner. While the target is to respond to 80% of requests within legislated timelines, LAC has achieved a rate of 79% so far this fiscal year.

<b>New incoming request responses from April 1, 2025, to September 30, 2025</b>	<b>Number of requests</b>
<b>Responded within legislated timeframes</b>	1,544
<b>Not responded to within legislated timeframes</b>	412

### Reducing the backlog of complaints

LAC continues to actively address complaints received from the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC), responding to the Commissioner’s investigations in a timely and transparent manner. The institution remains focused on processing outstanding complaints efficiently while ensuring compliance with legislative obligations and the fair exercise of discretion. Ongoing efforts also include continued collaboration with other Government of Canada institutions to improve the coordination and prioritization of consultations. Since April 1, 2025, LAC has received 54 new complaints and has closed 49 complaints.

<b>Active complaints as of April 1, 2025</b>	122
<b>Active complaints as of September 30, 2025</b>	127

## Part 2: Internal review and improvements

### Renew our policies and processes

#### Reducing consultations with other departments

LAC continues to strengthen and modernize its consultation practices with other federal institutions. Recent efforts have focused on five key areas: conducting detailed contextual analysis before initiating consultations; providing relevant reference material and targeted questions; setting clear and reasonable timelines for responses; actively monitoring those timelines; and taking appropriate action when deadlines lapse. Together, these measures form the backbone of LAC's strategy to reduce consultation delays and improve the quality and timeliness of ATIP responses.

A central driver of this progress is the Archival Research Team (ART). The ART plays a pivotal role in analyzing archival records within their historical context before any consultation is considered. During the first half of fiscal year 2025–2026, the ART produced 247 research reports, compared to 221 reports produced during the whole 2024–2025 fiscal year. This work has substantially reduced the volume of consultations required and, just as importantly, transformed their nature. When consultation with another department remains necessary, the request is now focused on specific, well-defined portions of a file that fall within the consulted institution's expertise, rather than the full record. This targeted approach has been well received by partner departments, reduces the workload on their end, and accelerates the overall consultation process.

These developments have also shifted LAC's role within the government-wide ATIP system. With the ART's support, LAC can now provide a level of archival and historical expertise that was not previously available internally. This strengthens LAC's ability to make well-informed decisions independently and reduces the need to seek external input.

Consultation activity continues to be monitored carefully. In the first two quarters of 2025–2026, LAC initiated 26 consultations, with typical response time allowed averaging 125 days. With the implementation of ATIPXpress and the integration of analytics tools, such as Microsoft Power BI, LAC now benefits from a clearer overview of consultation timelines, enabling earlier follow-ups and timely escalation when expected response dates are exceeded.

Throughout the introduction of LAC's updated consultation procedures, the institution has maintained ongoing discussions with departments with which it frequently exchanges consultations. These long-standing relationships have supported a smooth transition to LAC's more targeted, research-informed approach. Departments have responded positively, recognizing that LAC's enhanced internal research capacity reduces unnecessary consultations while improving the quality and precision of those that remain.

LAC is currently drafting updated guidelines for the management of consultations. These guidelines will establish response timelines for other government departments, establish LAC's method of monitoring progress, and outline appropriate actions when consultations are not returned in a timely fashion. Notably, the implementation of the Archival Research Team—and the resulting reduction in the number and volume of pages sent out for consultation—has already improved the administering of the consultation process by significantly lowering the overall consultation burden.

## Proactive review and declassification

Efforts on proactive review and the declassification of archival records are continuing. These initiatives make more records available without requiring an ATIP request, reducing the overall burden on the ATIP system, including potential consultation processes. At mid-year of 2025–2026, the Block Review Team had opened more than 12 million pages of archival documents. The team has also begun reviewing specialized media through pilot projects. To date, 360 photographs from the Canadian Penitentiary Service collection have been opened, and two audio-visual projects are nearing completion, representing 1,400 hours of open content (the equivalent of approximately 84,000 pages).

At the same time, the Declassification Team analyzed 414,535 pages of classified documents and proactively declassified 111,953 pages—more than double last year’s volume. This increase was driven by key process improvements, including the integration of sunset clause analyses and enhanced collaboration with Government of Canada departments through time-framed engagements.

The dedicated webpage, [Proactive opening of government records under block review](#), is currently being redesigned to provide more information, including details on the themes of the records being opened, declassified, and made discoverable. Progress will be reported there regularly once the redesign is completed in the coming months.

## Reviewing procedure on incoming ATIP requests

Effective December 15, 2025, LAC is waiving all fees associated with requests for information made under the Access to Information Act. This decision supports LAC’s mandate to facilitate access to Canada’s documentary heritage and to serve as the continuing memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions. This new measure allows LAC to simplify the request process while reducing the administrative burden related to the collection of payments for both clients and staff.

Since April 1, 2025, ATIP requests for archival records with incomplete or missing archival references are placed on “stop-the-clock” status while LAC’s Research Support Team verifies the records and clarifies the request with the client. This ensures that requests are ready for processing when they are assigned to ATIP. Analysts have seen benefits from this process for a great number of requests. Moreover, since implementation, approximately 30% of incoming requests analyzed by Research Support have been determined not to require an ATIP review, allowing clients to obtain the records directly through other means—a better outcome for clients and LAC. To further streamline this process, LAC’s ATIP Triage Team has recently begun conducting preliminary research before seeking support from reference archivists. ATIP has also initiated discussions with the Government Archives Division, along with Research Support, to enhance collaboration among all teams involved in the processing of ATIP requests.

## Implementation of the new ATIP delegation instrument

As mentioned in previous reports, LAC successfully implemented a new ATIP delegation instrument designed to streamline the processing of ATIP requests. This instrument allows for the delegation of actions to appropriate lower levels within the organization using a risk-based approach, which

should allow for better efficiency and speed of LAC's responses. For example, certain types of requests that previously required a full review and sign-off at the level of a PM-03 analyst may now be completed and signed off by a PM-01 junior ATIP officer.

To ensure the effective use of this new delegation instrument, comprehensive training is provided to all staff involved in the ATIP process. This training equips employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle delegated tasks proficiently, thereby reducing bottlenecks and expediting the overall response time. By empowering lower-level staff to take on appropriate responsibilities, LAC anticipates further improvements with timeliness of responses to clients.

## Implementation of new procedures

Since the last progress report, LAC has continued to implement new and refined procedures to strengthen the efficiency and sustainability of its ATIP operations. The new procedures focus on streamlining internal workflows, clarifying responsibilities, and leveraging existing tools to enhance coordination across teams. LAC is also closely monitoring the impact of these procedural changes to ensure they deliver measurable results, both in terms of response times and overall client experience. These improvements are part of LAC's ongoing effort to reduce the administrative burden of access to information requests by making its collections and services more easily accessible to Canadians.

As part of its ongoing efforts to improve access to high-demand archival holdings, LAC has implemented a new procedure for handling requests related to Second World War military service files. These records represent one of the most frequently requested collections at LAC, with a steady and growing interest from researchers, family members, and the general public. Under the new procedure, when a request concerns an individual born more than 110 years ago, the service file is disclosed without a formal review. This change aligns with privacy legislation and reflects LAC's assessment that the privacy risk in such cases is minimal when weighed against the significant benefits of faster, more direct access.

By eliminating unnecessary review steps for these historical records, LAC is accelerating access to a collection of high public value while freeing resources to focus on more complex or sensitive requests. This procedural change reflects a balanced approach—carefully managing privacy considerations while proactively facilitating access to Canada's military heritage. LAC continues to monitor the impact of this measure and explore opportunities to apply similar approaches to other archival collections where privacy considerations permit.

In September 2025, all ATIP staff completed training on the identification of solicitor-client privileged information in archival records. This training ensures that employees are equipped to accurately identify and handle privileged information, ensuring better consistency. Further training is in development to support LAC ATIP archival staff in the review and analysis of the various sections of the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*.

## Invest in IT

In June 2025, LAC implemented significant improvements to the online navigation experience for clients seeking access to records. The redesigned interface guides users through a clearer, step-by-

step path that highlights self-serve options before directing them to the formal ATIP request process. This change has already had a measurable impact on user behaviour. Only 30% of requesters advance directly to ATIP's "Request a record" page, indicating that most users are exploring alternative routes to find the documents they need. Importantly, the average time spent on pages has been cut in half, demonstrating that users are finding relevant information much faster. These early results confirm that the redesigned navigation flow is helping Canadians access information more efficiently—reducing unnecessary ATIP requests and supporting LAC's broader goal of simplifying access to its vast collections.

LAC continues to expand and enhance its database of [previously released access to information \(ATI\) requests for archival records](#). Since the launch of the online viewing tool, the database has become a key access point for Canadians seeking historical documents. Over the past year, usage has continued to grow steadily, with more than 25,000 downloads and 45,000 views recorded since September 2024. This increasing uptake demonstrates that users are actively turning to self-serve options to access information directly, without requiring intermediary support from the ATIP Team. By providing a more intuitive and efficient way to consult previously released records, LAC is reducing repetitive requests and alleviating pressure on ATIP operations. Quick and easy access to previously released ATI packages also provides analysts with this valuable resource to support the review of new incoming requests.

In early 2025, LAC began implementing the new ATIP management tool ATIPXpress. After six months of use, the system has brought some efficiencies in request tracking and workflow standardization. However, several challenges remain, particularly due to the unique nature of ATIP processing in an archival environment. Unlike other federal institutions, LAC's work involves complex historical holdings, varying record formats, and large volumes of legacy material—all of which present integration and operational challenges not typically encountered elsewhere. LAC continues to collaborate closely with the service provider to identify and implement solutions that better align the tool with its archival context. In parallel, efforts are underway to complete deployment on secure networks to ensure full compliance with information security and privacy requirements.

## Ensure business stability and continuity

Building on the functional evaluation underway, LAC is developing the future permanent structure of its ATIP function, which will succeed the current model supported by temporary funding. This forward-looking exercise aims to define a sustainable organizational design that aligns with operational realities and long-term service expectations. Through this analysis, it has become increasingly clear that the permanent operations of the ATIP function will require enhanced and stable funding to maintain service levels, continue modernization efforts, and ensure compliance with legislative obligations. Without such a foundation, the progress achieved through recent initiatives will be impossible to sustain over time.

## Training and development initiatives

LAC's ATIP Branch is committed to the continuous professional development of its staff. Since the last progress update, the Training and Development Team has developed more than 15 internal

training modules specifically designed for LAC ATIP staff. These modules cover a wide range of topics, including ordering material; determining releasable documents per request type; returning payments; closing requests on hold; transferring requests; and receiving transfers from other institutions. Together, they ensure that employees have access to comprehensive and up-to-date training resources.

In addition to these modules, in the months following the implementation of ATIPXpress, the ATIP Systems Team developed nearly 100 sets of detailed instructions to help staff carry out their day-to-day responsibilities in the new software environment. Tailored to the operational needs of each team, these materials provide step-by-step guidance for all workflows involved in registering, managing, and processing an ATIP request, ensuring consistent and accurate work. The team also delivered customized training sessions to each group as they onboarded to the system, and continues to offer ongoing support and troubleshooting to ensure a smooth transition and full integration of ATIPXpress into daily operations.

## Part 3: Engage with external partners on broader issues affecting ATIP

### Engage with Government of Canada partners

In 2025, LAC strengthened its engagement with key partners across the Government of Canada and the broader information and archival community by providing an update on its ATIP activities to the LAC's Stakeholders' Forum. This forum serves as a platform to exchange perspectives, share best practices, and discuss ongoing developments in the field of ATIP. Recent discussions have focused on the time-based release of government information, proposed updates to the Access to Information Act, and the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty. By fostering these dialogues, LAC continues to play an active role in advancing a coordinated, government-wide approach to transparency and access. These partnerships not only help ensure that LAC's practices align with evolving national standards and expectations, but also reinforce its leadership role in promoting open, respectful, and inclusive information management across jurisdictions.

### Engage with international organizations

LAC has continued to strengthen its international engagement by initiating preliminary discussions with counterparts in Australia regarding their Freedom of Information legislation and operational practices. In this context, LAC met with the National Archives of Australia in December to discuss a number of recordkeeping and access to information-related questions. These exchanges aim to share insights and identify potential lessons applicable to the Canadian context, particularly in areas such as proactive disclosure, digital request management, and balancing access with privacy in archival settings.

### Engage with clients and the public

In alignment with Measure 6 of its ATIP Action Plan, LAC has enhanced transparency with clients by regularly communicating the volume of [requests it receives and completes](#) on its website. This new practice helps clients better understand LAC's operational realities and workload pressures,

enabling them to make more informed decisions when submitting requests. By proactively sharing this information, LAC aims to foster greater openness and trust with the public, while managing expectations in a fair and transparent manner. This initiative also reflects LAC's commitment to continuous communication and client engagement as key components of service excellence within its ATIP program.