



Canadian Northern Economic
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement économique du Nord

Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

Accessibility Plan (2025-2028)

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Accessibility statement for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)

CanNor is committed to fostering and preserving an inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible workplace where every employee is able to contribute to their fullest and to feel safe in bringing their authentic selves to work. Our vision is an organization that is representative of the population we serve, where the principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) are seamlessly embodied in everything we say and do, and where everyone feels responsible for upholding those principles. We know that accessibility is a journey and we are always looking for ways to enhance accessibility for our staff and the clients we serve.

CanNor adheres to an “inclusion by design” philosophy, creating an accessible work environment for staff and clients so that accommodations are rarely needed..

General

The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency’s (CanNor) Accessibility Plan (2025–2028) aligns with the [Accessible Canada Act](#) and the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#) and is consistent with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#). This Plan strives for consistency with the Employment Equity Plan and the Inuit Employment Plan (IEP).

To submit feedback on this Plan, or to report barriers within CanNor or in accessing its programs, please contact us. To obtain a copy in an alternate format, please contact:

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Employment

CanNor is committed to a workforce representative of the population we serve. We strive to ensure that HR systems and processes that impact recruitment, development and promotion are barrier-free.

Goals:

- All job seekers, including those with disabilities, view CanNor as an employer of choice.
- Employees are confident that they will be supported to achieve their full potential while working at CanNor.
- We will bridge the gap in representation of employees with disabilities by 2028. According to Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) data, persons with disabilities are under-represented at CanNor by approximately 2.5% at March 31, 2024.

Accomplishments since December 31, 2022:

- We created a new Duty to Accommodate Process that incorporates the Workplace Accessibility Passport and emphasizes timely responses, quick implementation of agreed-upon accommodations, need-to-know information sharing and minimal documentation regarding an illness or disability.
- We implemented the Workplace Accessibility Passport for employees facing barriers that impact their ability to perform at their best. The Passport focuses on barriers and solutions, not disabilities.
- We introduced new wording for job postings that highlights CanNor's commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.
- We are in the process of updating CanNor's Learning Roadmaps to ensure mandatory and recommended training include courses such as [Making Documents Accessible \(INC-1-V46\)](#) and [Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility \(INC115\)](#).

Ongoing practices:

- At all stages of the recruitment process, candidates are encouraged to request any accommodation needed to support their performance. As a best practice, hiring managers are encouraged to provide interview questions in advance to help candidates perform at their best.
- We encourage employees and managers to consult with the Ombuds for Small Departments and Agencies (OSDA) to allow confidential conversation regarding concerns in the workplace.
- CanNor's Learning Roadmaps detail mandatory learning for all employees. Most courses are offered on-line through the [Canada School of Public Service \(CSPS\)](#). Most courses are virtual with accompanying print documentation that is accessible. Many of the courses are self-directed so the participants can engage when convenient and at their own pace. Employees are invited by the CSPS to send requests for accessibility accommodation requirements.
- Information about the [Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology \(AAACT\)](#) services is included in every letter of offer to ensure that employees are aware of accessibility supports available to them from the start of their employment.

Barriers and actions:

Barrier 1: Employees with invisible disabilities report that they could benefit from accommodations such as modifications to lighting, quiet work space and flexible work hours and are unaware of how to discuss or seek accommodation.

Actions to address barrier 1:

- Implement the newly created Duty to Accommodate Process, including its roll-out to managers, staff and individuals involved in the implementation of an accommodation, as well as information about the Workplace Disability Passport.

Barrier 2: Second-language training is not fully accessible to individuals with some types of disabilities.

Actions to address barrier 2:

- When procuring services for French language training, ensure that options are available to accommodate staff with disabilities. This may include instructors experienced in teaching individuals with learning disabilities and providing in-person support if needed.

Built environment

Some CanNor employees in the Iqaluit office occupy Crown Housing through lease agreements with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). According to the [National Joint Council Isolated Posts and Government Housing Directive](#):

Under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and the Treasury Board Policy on the Duty to Accommodate Persons with Disabilities in the Federal Public Service, as amended from time to time, it is the employer's duty to ensure that the employee with a disability(ies) is fully accommodated to the point of undue hardship. Decisions and practices flowing from this directive shall be inclusive and barrier free.

CanNor recognizes the challenges with availability of housing in Iqaluit and continues to work with staff and PSPC to identify appropriate housing and solutions to accessibility issues.

Goals:

- All office buildings occupied by CanNor are accessible to people with disabilities, ensuring barrier-free and safe circulation throughout, as well as safe entrance, exit and evacuation routes.
- Crown Housing is accessible and shortfalls are addressed in a timely manner.
- Staff are aware of, and are able to, receive immediate assistance with urgent common area accessibility issues, such as blocked ramp or malfunctioning door or elevator.
- Staff know who to contact to report an accessibility issue in the built environment.

Accomplishments since December 31, 2022:

- In the Iqaluit office, accessible doors have been installed:
 - at the front and rear entrances
 - 1st floor washroom
 - 2nd floor into the office space and washroom
 - 3rd floor into the office space and washroom
- Desk lamps were made available to staff in all offices where lighting was problematic or where accommodations were required. A process was established to request a desk lamp, redistribute existing lamps where possible, and purchase new ones when necessary to support accessibility.
- Given the long dark winters and the effect on people's mood, energy levels and potentially productivity, SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) lamps were purchased and are available in the five offices for staff to borrow. A process is in place to access shared SAD lamps when and as needed. This initiative supports mental health and reflects our commitment to accessibility in the workplace.

Ongoing practices:

- Crown Housing in Iqaluit is provided by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). There are currently no fully accessible units. When applying to rent a unit, staff have the opportunity to identify accessibility. CanNor will pay the cost for modifications to existing housing units if required.
- We work with building management and PSPC to resolve accessibility issues in our five offices and Crown Housing in Iqaluit.

Barriers and actions:

Barrier 1: Safety of employees with mobility challenges was identified during a fire drill in CanNor's Ottawa office.

Actions to address barrier 1:

- CanNor will work with building management to address specific safety issues for staff with mobility challenges.

Barrier 2: The door to the workspace in the Whitehorse office is not accessible.

Actions to address barrier 2:

- CanNor will work with building management to ensure that an accessible door is installed into the workspace in the Whitehorse office.

Barrier 3: Staff are not aware of the process for requesting accommodation or are hesitant to raise concerns. Specific concerns identified include noise levels in the office and accessible parking at CanNor offices.

Actions to address barrier 3:

- An article will be written for the internal Northern Lights newsletter reminding employees of the process for raising workplace concerns.
- The Duty to Accommodate Process will be fully implemented and will be posted on the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (IDEA) page on the intranet.
- Managers will initiate discussions with staff regarding the work environment, any barriers faced and accommodation that may be required.

Other actions:

- Reminders will be put in the Northern Lights newsletter semi-annually about:
 - CanNor's Scent-Free Policy
 - How to request a desk lamp if required
 - How to borrow a SAD lamp
 - Who to advise about concerns in the built environment

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility is the digital equivalent of accessibility in the physical environment. CanNor believes that it is essential that all staff and clients can access information, perform tasks and receive the same service using information technology.

CanNor receives its Information Technology (IT) services from other government department through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Goals:

- All new systems, software, websites and equipment are accessible by all staff and clients/public (as applicable).
- CanNor staff have the required hardware and software to carry out their responsibilities and know who to contact when issues arise.

Accomplishments since December 31, 2022:

- Information has been provided to employees via the newsletter and all-staff emails about the [Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology \(AACT\)](#) team and the [Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport](#).

Ongoing practices:

- We continue to provide ad hoc training on an individual basis about the accessibility of interactive tools and software.
- New content on the internet and intranet is fully accessible and modification to existing content is made as issues are noted.

Barriers and actions:

- No specific barriers were identified during consultations.

Actions:

- Provide semi-annual reminders and updated information about the [Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Technology \(AAACT\)](#) team through the Northern Lights newsletter.
- Include information on CanNor's IDEA intranet page about the accessibility features of Microsoft products.

Communication (other than ICT)

CanNor is committed to delivering communication products and activities that are accessible by default. Clear, straightforward communication helps to remove barriers, enabling everyone to fully access information and services, participate in consultations and discussions, and attend events.

Through CanNor's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), ISC provides technical support and guidance to help CanNor meet the Government of Canada Web Publishing and Accessibility Standards. ISC supports CanNor's commitment to accessible content by assisting with content management, webpage design, coding, toolset access, and compliance with accessibility guidelines. This collaboration ensures that all digital content adheres to best practices for readability, usability, and accessibility, enabling Canadians to easily access and engage with CanNor's resources and services. CanNor Communications and ISC continue to monitor the intranet and internet sites for accessibility, making updates as needed. As part of an ongoing intranet site refresh, we are ensuring that all sections are fully accessible and that new content is designed with accessibility and inclusive writing in mind.

Goals:

- Accessibility is prioritized when developing presentations, documents and products for internal clients.
- Information is provided to the public and clients in alternate formats, such as print, large print or braille upon request.
- CanNor staff is equipped with the knowledge, tools and training needed to recognize accessibility issues and meet established standards.
- Accessibility Standards are applied to all CanNor web content, both internal and

external.

Accomplishments since December 31, 2022:

- We have provided information to staff on the use of plain language through multiple channels such as all-staff emails, newsletter articles and team meetings.
- Since January 2025, the Communications team has been distributing a weekly internal newsletter that includes a 'Learning Section', which features information on accessibility in communication and written products to help keep the topic top-of-mind.
- Since January 2025, ongoing updates have been made to our intranet content to improve accessibility and readability.
- In August 2025, CanNor introduced accessible communications product templates to promote consistent application of accessibility requirements across the Agency.

Ongoing practices:

- All-staff messages shared through InfoNorth and the internal Northern Lights newsletter follow the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) accessibility guidelines, use inclusive language and descriptive web links, are written in plain language, and are available in both official languages.
- ALT text accompanies photos and graphics in key documents, including CanNor's Departmental Plan, the Departmental Results Report, evaluation reports, annual reports to Parliament, and ministerial transition binders. All corporate documents are available on the Agency's website in an accessible format.
- Managers encourage the use of plain language and accessible documents within their teams to enhance clarity and accessibility in all communications.

Barriers and actions:

Barrier 1: Emails and CanNor-produced documents are not always accessible to staff who use screen readers or who have a print disability.

Actions to address barrier 1:

- Promote the Government of Canada's [Make Accessible E-Mails](#) and [Create an Accessible Document](#) webpage to CanNor employees through the Northern Lights newsletter.
- Include the [Make Accessible E-Mails](#) and [Create an Accessible Document](#) resources on CanNor's IDEA intranet.

Other actions:

- Promote the use of the [Digital Accessibility Toolkit](#):
 - Include an article in the Northern Lights newsletter twice a year.
 - Include information about the Toolkit on the Inclusion, Diversity Equity, Accessibility (IDEA) intranet page.
- Increase staff's knowledge and understanding of plain language, inclusive writing and accessibility:
 - Develop an article in the Northern Lights newsletter four times a year on plain language/inclusive writing/accessibility, including Canada School of Public Service courses, links to resources and champion messages.
- Through the Northern Lights newsletter, promote accessibility within CanNor by featuring articles about National AccessAbility Week, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and training events to raise awareness and create an inclusive work environment.

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

Accessible procurement is about identifying accessibility barriers and how requirements can be defined to meet the needs of a broad range of end-users. We are continuing to follow direction and guidance from Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) while relying on our service provider, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

Barriers and actions:

- No barriers were identified during the consultation process.

Design and delivery of programs and services

CanNor is committed to ensuring that clients (and potential clients) with disabilities have barrier-free access to programs and services. CanNor will continue working to ensure that programs, application processes and reporting requirements are free from cultural, attitudinal, physical and systemic barriers.

Goals:

- New policies and programs are developed using accessibility as the default. CanNor staff have the skills to address accessibility at the design stage.
- Funding program information and tools are available in multiple formats when requested by clients.

Accomplishments since December 31, 2022:

- CanNor conducted a client survey in late 2024 to determine if there were any barriers to accessing programs or services at CanNor. Clients reported no barriers in the following areas:
 - Physical or architectural
 - Technological
 - Attitudinal
 - Systemic
- There were some comments regarding information and communication barriers which are detailed below (barriers and actions).
- There is a “Contact us” link on the front page of CanNor’s internet which links to contact information for each of our offices.

Ongoing practices:

- Applications for funding are available in fillable PDF and Word. We accept online and hard copy applications, including handwritten submissions.
- We have a general phone number to receive telephone enquiries and can hold one-on-one in-person or virtual meetings to support the application process.
- We are able to provide documents in an alternate format when requested.

Barriers and actions

Barrier 1: Print and font size on application forms is often too small. Wording (instructions and/or questions) on PDF application, Word document application and fillable application are different.

Actions to address barrier 1:

- Review funding application forms (Word, fillable PDF) to ensure consistency in the wording of instructions and questions. Review font size and increase it where possible for better accessibility.
- When updating existing forms or creating new ones, ensure alignment between the Word version, fillable PDF and any other format, while maintaining appropriate font size throughout.

Barrier 2: Reporting requirements are too complex.

Actions to address barrier 2:

- Review reporting requirement to ensure that instructions are in plain language and that only essential information is requested.

Transportation

CanNor does not have responsibility for transportation of clients or the public, but is committed to ensuring that staff who are required to travel can carry out employment-related responsibilities safely.

Each CanNor office in Iqaluit, Yellowknife and Whitehorse has a corporate vehicle available for staff to use for work-related responsibilities. The current vehicles are not accessible. When new vehicles are purchased within the next two to three years, accessibility will be a consideration in purchasing decisions. CanNor will make these vehicles available to other Federal Departments should an accessible vehicle be required. Accessible taxi services are available in Whitehorse.

There are unique challenges with travel in the North and in the past, some employees experienced challenges with accessible travel (difficulty getting on/off small aircraft due to limited accessibility options). Where a staff member is unable to be accommodated by public transport safely, in a way that preserves their dignity, we will work with them to explore alternatives.

Goals:

- Staff who are required to travel are accommodated in a way that is safe and respects their dignity.

Barriers and actions

- No specific barriers were identified during consultations.

Actions

- CanNor will consult with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) and with other federal departments in Iqaluit, Yellowknife and Whitehorse to explore the availability of an accessible vehicle for staff.
- If a CanNor staff member cannot be safely accommodated by public transportation safely in a way that respects their dignity, CanNor will work with them to identify alternatives that allow them to fulfill their responsibilities.

Consultations

- **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (IDEA) Committee (formerly Accessibility Committee):** CanNor's IDEA Committee includes staff with and without disabilities from our offices in Iqaluit, Yellowknife, Whitehorse, and Ottawa, as well as subject-matter experts from the seven key areas. The Committee received updates throughout the development of the plan and had the opportunity to provide comments and input prior to publication.
- **Staff with disabilities:** A focus group of staff members with disabilities was convened to discuss the Accessibility Plan, identify workplace barriers in the seven key areas and to suggest actions to mitigate those barriers.
- **Employee survey:** As part of a recently completed Employment Systems Review, CanNor conducted a staff survey to gather insights on various aspects of the employment experience. Some of the information gathered was relevant to and informed the development of this Accessibility Plan.
- **Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee was provided with updates on accessibility throughout the year. Committee members provided input into this report and renewed their commitment to accessibility at CanNor.

Feedback

CanNor's [Accessibility Plan \(2022\)](#) and [Progress Reports](#) can be found on CanNor's website. The [Accessibility Feedback Process](#) encourages feedback on the experience of accessibility at CanNor. Options for feedback are provided.

No feedback has been received since the publication of CanNor's Accessibility Plan in December 2022.