



# 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

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## General

For the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (the Office of the Commissioner), the person responsible for receiving feedback on the accessibility plan is Roxanne Comeau. All requests for accessible formats or about accessibility and barriers can be sent by email to [accessibilite-accessibility@clo-ocol.gc.ca](mailto:accessibilite-accessibility@clo-ocol.gc.ca), by telephone to 1-873-355-5626 or by mail to 30 Victoria Street, 6th Floor, Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0T8.

## Organization

The Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada (the Commissioner) is an agent of Parliament. The Commissioner reports directly to Parliament and is supported by the Office of the Commissioner.

The Commissioner has a mandate to take all measures within his power to ensure that the main objectives of the *Official Languages Act* are met:

- Ensure the equality of English and French in federal institutions
- Support the preservation and development of official language minority communities in Canada
- Advance the equality of English and French in Canadian society, taking into account the diversity of provincial and territorial language policies
- Promote the future of French in Quebec
- Clarify the official languages obligations of federal institutions

The Commissioner also has a mission to ensure that the rights and obligations set out in the *Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act* are recognized when it comes into force.

To fulfill its mandate, the Office of the Commissioner has 172 employees across Canada. Its head office is in Gatineau, Quebec, and it has five regional offices in Moncton, New Brunswick; Montréal, Quebec; Toronto, Ontario; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Edmonton, Alberta. It also has three satellite offices in Vancouver, British Columbia; Regina, Saskatchewan; and Sudbury, Ontario.

## ***Accessible Canada Act***

Since ratifying the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2010, the Government of Canada has implemented a series of measures to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, including the adoption of the *Accessible Canada Act*, which came into force in July 2019.

The purpose of the *Accessible Canada Act* is to make Canada barrier-free by 2040 in order “to benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities,” by focusing on the seven areas covered in this accessibility plan.

For the purposes of the Act, the concept of disability is applied broadly and inclusively, and is defined as any physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent or temporary.

The *Accessible Canada Act* sets out a series of obligations for federal institutions and other regulated entities, including the requirement to prepare and publish an accessibility plan. The plan must be updated every three years, and annual progress reports must be prepared and published. In December 2022, the Office of the Commissioner published its first accessibility plan, which covered the period from 2023 to 2025. This plan covers the period from 2026 to 2028.

## **The Office of the Commissioner's organizational environment**

The accessibility plan is a central component of the Office of the Commissioner's commitment to create a diverse and inclusive work environment. Other components that support this organizational vision include the following:

- An Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for 2025–2028
- A process to integrate Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) within the Office of the Commissioner
- The appointment of an Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion champion and co-champion
- The appointment of an Accessibility and GBA Plus champion and co-champion

Building an accessible work environment is an ongoing process of continuous improvement. The results of the most recent Public Service Employee Survey (2024) show that barriers still remain, despite all the efforts made so far. The responses of the Office of the Commissioner employees who answered the accessibility questions in the Survey revealed the following:

- Only 9% of respondents without disabilities felt that accessibility issues had adversely affected their career progress in the federal public service over the past 12 months.

- 42% of respondents with disabilities felt that accessibility issues had adversely affected their career progress in the federal public service over the past 12 months.
- 62% of respondents with disabilities stated that difficulty accessing their work tools or network (e.g., work email, work device, ergonomic equipment) caused them (low or moderate) work-related stress. This response rate is twice as high as that of respondents without disabilities who faced the same challenges.
- 16% of respondents reported having requested workplace accommodation measures over the past two years. About half were related to a disability. At the time of the Survey, 21% of respondents who had requested workplace accommodation measures were still waiting. For respondents whose accommodation measures had been implemented, a large majority (88%) said that they were satisfied with the measures.

As it addresses the remaining challenges, the Office of the Commissioner can build on the progress it has achieved to date, which is reflected in the fact that 92% of Survey respondents reported feeling accepted as an equal member of their team. Work is therefore ongoing to support the goal of a barrier-free Canada by 2040, as set out in the *Accessible Canada Act*.

## Methodology

The methodology used to develop the Office of the Commissioner’s 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan aligns with the parameters set out in the *Accessible Canada Act*, the *Accessible Canada Regulations* and the *Guidance on the Accessible Canada Regulations*.

The approach included the following steps:

- A team was set up to coordinate all activities for preparing and publishing the 2026–2028 plan.
- Working sessions and follow-up meetings were held with all directorates whose activities have an impact on accessibility. The goal of these consultations was to develop an overall assessment of the 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan and identify priorities for the 2026–2028 plan.
- In keeping with the “Nothing without us” guiding principle of the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada, a survey with multiple participation options was sent out to all Office of the Commissioner employees to gather their feedback and suggestions on the 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan.

A draft plan was prepared and shared for feedback, which informed the final version of the plan.

## Action plan

This section presents the Office of the Commissioner’s initiatives for the period from 2026 to 2028 for each of the seven areas of focus in the *Accessible Canada Act*. The Office of the Commissioner’s 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan builds on the progress made under its 2023–2025 plan in order to ensure continuity in its vision for accessibility. As the workplace continues to evolve, as new team members arrive, and as the society in which the Office of the Commissioner

carries out its mandate undergoes constant change, accessibility activities remain focused on the goal of creating a barrier-free workplace.

## **Employment**

### **Key considerations**

The Office of the Commissioner's human resources team takes a wide range of accessibility considerations into account, from hiring practices to workplace support:

- The Office of the Commissioner's 2025-2028 Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan includes specific accessibility requirements, and implementation is supported by the Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Co-champion.
- The Office of the Commissioner's intranet provides accessibility resources for employees and managers.

### **Objectives for 2026–2028**

For 2026–2028, the Office of the Commissioner will focus on the following employment objectives:

- Continue to review and update employment documents (such as forms) to ensure that they are available in an accessible format.
- Ensure that onboarding practices for new employees are accessible, including reviewing and updating the Office of the Commissioner's orientation program.
- Implement the Office of the Commissioner's Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, which includes accessibility measures.
- Develop a work tool to help organize accessible meetings (such as a checklist).
- Provide staff with learning opportunities on accessibility and consider adopting an organizational approach as part of the process to review and update the Office of the Commissioner's learning program.

## **Built environment**

### **Key considerations**

Managing the accessibility of the built environment is a shared responsibility between the Office of the Commissioner and other federal institutions, including Public Services and Procurement Canada and Shared Services Canada. The Office of the Commissioner works closely with these partners to ensure complementarity across accessibility activities.

The Office of the Commissioner's built environment team factors accessibility into the management of physical spaces and ensures that its health and safety activities meet the needs of all employees:

- Relevant accessibility standards are taken into account in all office layout activities at the Office of the Commissioner's head office and at its regional and satellite offices.

- A checklist has been developed that reflects the Office of the Commissioner’s organizational reality. This list is kept up to date to support office inspection activities.
- The Office of the Commissioner informs its federal partners of any accessibility concerns or needs that fall under their authority.
- A list of people with reduced mobility is continuously updated and incorporated into safety measures, including fire warden training and evacuation plans.

## **Objectives for 2026–2028**

For 2026–2028, the Office of the Commissioner will focus on the following built environment objectives:

- Continue to inspect all regional and satellite offices using the checklist developed to address accessibility needs.
- Conduct the necessary follow-ups when new accessibility requirements are identified in relation to the physical layout of the Office of the Commissioner’s offices, as well as any accessibility requirements required by federal partners with authority over the Office of the Commissioner’s physical environment.
- Regularly update the list of people with reduced mobility and incorporate this information into all Office of the Commissioner fire safety activities.

## **Information and communication technologies**

### **Key considerations**

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are constantly and rapidly changing, and the Office of the Commissioner must acquire and use software and applications that are made by third parties (mainly Microsoft). It must also balance accessibility considerations and the technology needs identified by its teams. The Office of the Commissioner’s approach is guided by the following principles:

- The ICT tools widely used by Office of the Commissioner employees comply with the usual accessibility standards in the field.
- Accessibility considerations are factored into the integration of Dynamics 365 for managing many of the Office of the Commissioner’s internal processes.
- When required, the Office of the Commissioner uses Shared Services Canada’s Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) program to respond to specific needs.
- A number of specialized applications are used by only a few employees and do not always meet general accessibility standards. Specific strategies are developed as needed for these cases.

## Objectives for 2026–2028

For 2026–2028, the Office of the Commissioner will implement a series of new activities, including activities related to the Commissioner’s new powers (such as administrative monetary penalties). These changes will have a direct impact on the Office of the Commissioner’s ICT needs. The Office of the Commissioner will therefore focus on the following objectives:

- Systematically factor accessibility considerations into all new ICT acquisitions.
- Work with other federal partners to share ICT best practices and strategies (such as increased use of Dynamics 365).
- Use the AACT program to meet any specific ICT needs that may arise.

## Communication other than information and communication technologies

### Key considerations

The communications team’s mission is to promote, support and raise awareness of the Office of the Commissioner’s mandate and activities through clear, accessible and effective internal and external communications. The communications team acts as a conduit between the Office of the Commissioner and its various audiences and helps to protect its voice and image by ensuring that its messages are always consistent, accurate and impactful.

The team’s activities range from raising public awareness of language rights to maintaining a proactive media and social media presence to supporting internal teams, and require constant vigilance to ensure that every communication is accessible to all Canadians.

The Office of the Commissioner’s approach is guided by the following principles:

- The communications team is the lead expert in plain language, ensuring that information is clear, inclusive and accessible to all audiences.
- The communications team works with other federal partners to stay abreast of the most promising accessibility approaches in communications.
- All relevant accessibility standards are taken into account for all of the Office of the Commissioner’s communication products, including electronic products (website, intranet, social media, videos, graphic designs) and printed products.
- Organization of the Office of the Commissioner’s public events (such as press conferences, presentations, workshops and appearances in roundtables) systematically takes accessibility considerations into account.
- All templates developed by the communications team and used by Office of the Commissioner employees comply with accessibility requirements. The communications team has produced a guide and guidelines to ensure that they are used properly.

## Objectives for 2026–2028

For 2026–2028, the Office of the Commissioner will focus on the following objectives:

- Systematically factor accessibility considerations into all Office of the Commissioner communications activities, both internally and for the general public.
- Promote accessibility to all employees through accessible resources on the intranet, training activities on creating accessible documents and participation in key events such as National AccessAbility Week.
- Continue to work closely with federal partners to share best practices for ensuring accessible communications.

## Procurement of goods, services and facilities

### Key considerations

The Office of the Commissioner regularly procures goods and services to support its mandate. This process systematically includes accessibility considerations:

- Forms used for the procurement of goods and services are available in accessible formats, and personalized assistance can be provided as needed (such as if there are issues with certain PDF documents).
- The goods and services procurement team works with federal partners, including Public Services and Procurement Canada, to stay abreast of the latest developments and best practices, including the development of new standard clauses to be included in contracts.
- The team also supports Office of the Commissioner employees in managing accessibility requirements in their contractual relationships.

## Objectives for 2026–2028

For 2026–2028, the goods and services procurement team will focus on the following objectives:

- Inform and raise awareness of all Office of the Commissioner employees about including accessibility clauses in contracts they sign with third parties.
- Ensure that updates to contractual processes comply with all relevant accessibility requirements.
- Work closely with federal partners to identify and integrate best practices that reflect the Office of the Commissioner’s organizational reality.

## Design and delivery of programs and services

### Key considerations

The programs and services delivered by the Office of the Commissioner include processing complaints filed under the *Official Languages Act* and organizing public information and awareness

activities regarding language rights. The Office of the Commissioner takes the following accessibility considerations into account when conducting these activities:

- The importance of using plain, accessible language, with support from the communications team
- Meeting all accessibility requirements when developing forms and other documents.
- Including accessibility questions in feedback forms.

## **Objectives for 2026–2028**

For 2026–2028, the Office of the Commissioner’s program and service delivery team will focus on the following objectives:

- Ensure that all tools developed to support the Complaint and Request Management Centre’s role use clear, accessible language and comply with accessibility standards.
- Review the feedback results to identify and, where required, eliminate accessibility barriers related to the complaints process.

## **Transportation**

The Office of the Commissioner does not have a transportation mandate. The plan therefore does not include any objectives transportation accessibility objectives.

## **Consultation**

The Office of the Commissioner consulted with its employees with disabilities in the preparation of the 2026–2028 Accessibility Plan and gave them an opportunity to contribute. The Office of the Commissioner also conducts annual consultations when preparing the progress reports on the implementation of the accessibility plan. The Accessibility and GBA Plus Champion and Co-champion continue to raise awareness and engage all employees on accessibility issues.