



2026–2028 Accessibility Action Plan

People, Culture and Workplace Branch

2026–2028 Accessibility Action Plan

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Should you wish to obtain information on this website in a different format, or if you want to provide feedback or have questions regarding barriers or the Accessibility Action Plan, please contact us by mail, email or phone:

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General

Requesting an alternate format

If you wish to obtain the Accessibility Action Plan or the description of the feedback process in an alternate format, if you would like to submit feedback, or if you have any questions regarding barriers or the Accessibility Action Plan, please contact us by mail, email or telephone:

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Online: Submit your feedback using our [online form](#).

Alternate formats:

- Print
- Large print (larger, clearer font)
- Braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers)
- Audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud)
- Electronic format compatible with adaptive technologies

Accessibility statement

Canadians expect the Government of Canada to lead by example when it comes to accessibility.

The *Accessible Canada Act*, the goal of which is the realization of a Canada without barriers, came into force on July 11, 2019. The Act aims to change the way we ensure accessibility in all areas of federal jurisdiction.

Further to extensive consultations with persons with disabilities, the Prime Minister appointed a Deputy Minister of Public Service Accessibility and established the Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) tasked with developing an accessibility strategy for the federal public service. Integrating accessibility into the way we work means improving our systems and processes and supporting our evolving culture and practices.

One of the guiding principles of the strategy is “*Nothing Without Us*,” which refers to the fact that persons with disabilities must be involved in the design and delivery of actions that affect them. To build a public service and an organization that is a truly barrier-free, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED) must listen to these individuals and take their experiences into account. This exercise is an opportunity for us to rethink the accessibility of our systems and processes and prevent discrimination before it occurs. To this end, CED will need to pursue and strengthen its efforts to maintain a culture of inclusion, diversity, equity and empowerment.

Consultations

For the purposes of this Action Plan, CED held consultations with the individuals concerned to gather their comments and suggestions.

We consulted with a wide range of stakeholders with diverse roles and experience, including CED employees, external clients and people who work in the area of accessibility, as well as members of the Human Resources team and the various departments in charge of CED facilities, the client experience, program development, systems development, IT solutions, procurement and communications. The results of the *2024 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES)* were also analyzed.

Details of the consultations can be found in the [appendix](#).

Areas covered

Employment

Accessible employment means that persons with disabilities are supported throughout their careers, particularly when they encounter barriers. The goal is that at each step along the way—recruitment, hiring, onboarding, advancement and retention—they are provided with a fair environment that allows them to realize their full potential.

Barriers

Representation

Although the representation of persons with disabilities among CED employees has increased significantly since the publication of the previous Accessibility Action Plan (8.8% in December 2024, compared with 4.5% in December 2020), it is still lower than the workforce availability (12%) for this group.

Job Satisfaction

During the consultations, a number of inclusion-related issues were raised by persons with disabilities and their allies. The employees consulted said they would like to see a greater awareness of the issues surrounding disability stigma, support for neurodiversity, invisible disabilities and the understanding of colleagues' accommodation needs. It was also noted that certain social practices or expectations, such as expected participation in organizational activities, may not always reflect the diversity of realities experienced by employees—and neurodivergent individuals in particular—and could limit their ability to fully take part.

The results of the 2024 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) also highlighted perceptions and experiences indicating that there is still room for improvement in terms of inclusion and a sense of belonging. For example, 25% of persons with disabilities said they had experienced situations in the workplace that could be construed as discriminatory, compared with 6% of persons without a disability. Furthermore, 24% of them said they did not always feel fully valued in their workplace (compared with 9% of those without a disability), and 19% said that they sometimes felt like they received less support for their career aspirations (compared with 4%); 44% said they had less confidence in senior management, compared with 15% among persons without disabilities; and 47% of persons with disabilities perceived professional development opportunities at CED as being limited, compared with 8% of other employees.

Accommodation Request Process

During the consultations, the persons with disabilities who had submitted at least one accommodation request to CED shared their concerns about the perceived complexity of the process and the associated delays. The feedback received suggests that the multiple levels of approval and certain variations in the way requests are processed can give the impression of a lack of harmonization, which raises questions of fairness.

Those consulted also noted that there was room for improvement when it came to managers' knowledge of their responsibilities with regard to accommodation measures. They believed that a better understanding would help reduce successive file referrals and improve the fluidity and efficiency of the process. The experiences shared suggest that some of the current request processing steps are still based on more traditional approaches that tend to be closely rooted in the medical model of disability, which sees disability as an individual issue that needs to be "fixed." In contrast, modern practices tend to be based more on the social model of disability, which recognizes that it is the physical, organizational and attitudinal barriers present in the environment that create disability. The goal therefore is to adjust the environment rather than focusing the analysis on the

- Adopt accessible and inclusive staffing practices.
 - Include the Accessibility Passport with job postings and letters of offer.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026–2028 and ongoing

- Ensure transparency in people management.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026–2028 and ongoing

Lead: People, Culture and Workplace Branch

3

Foster an inclusive organizational culture

- Recognize and foster inclusive leadership.

Progress metric: Creation of a new recognition award category and inclusion of accessibility and accommodation in the award definition.

Timeline: 2026

- Support and collaborate with the Persons with Disabilities Network.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: Ongoing

- Include accessibility in surveys on satisfaction with the services provided for CED employees.

Progress metric: Feedback questionnaires developed

Timeline: 2027

- Promote diversity and inclusion learning activities.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026–2028 and ongoing

Leads: People, Culture and Workplace Branch; employees in charge of internal service satisfaction surveys at CED; the Accessibility Co-Champions; and the Accessibility Ambassadors Group.

4

Enhance the accommodation request process to ensure easier access and greater efficiency

- Create a simplified accommodation request process.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2028

- Improve accommodation request tools and mechanisms.
 - Review accommodation request practices and procedures.
 - Analyze data related to the adoption and use of the Workplace Accessibility Passport to improve, as needed, the management of accommodation requests.

Progress metric: PSES results related to accommodation; analysis of the 13 psychosocial factors in the workplace and number of grievances received

Timeline: 2028 and ongoing

- Encourage the use of the Workplace Accessibility Passport and its directory of barriers and solutions.

Progress metrics: Measures, communications and tools developed; tracking of the number of passports completed

Timeline: 2026 and ongoing

- Increase managers' capacity to support accommodation measures, aiming to foster greater autonomy.
 - Develop and distribute a guide aimed at supporting managers with regard to accommodation measures.
 - Promote the development of managers' skills in accommodation measures.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2028

Lead: People, Culture and Workplace Branch

Built environment

An accessible built environment is a workplace where workstations and work spaces are designed to be accessible to all. Any environment used by employees—whether it be teleworking spaces or premises owned or leased by CED—is designed to be accessible.

The team responsible for facilities and ergonomics at CED ensures that the designing of facilities takes the diversity of realities and physical abilities into account.

Barriers

Some people with disabilities pointed out that some of the venues chosen for social activities may not be fully accessible to persons with reduced mobility, which could limit their participation.

In addition, it was noted that it might be nice to have reminders be sent out on a more regular basis about the rules of etiquette, such as using collaborative spaces and individual rooms for prolonged discussions to maintain an acceptable noise level in CED offices. Some people with disabilities may, on occasion, experience concentration challenges.

Actions

1

Ensure the accessibility and safety of workplaces and meeting spaces

- Design accessible facilities right from the planning stage.
 - Develop internal accessibility and ergonomic standards tailored to diverse realities and physical abilities.

Progress metric: Internal standards developed

Timeline: Ongoing

- Ensure the accessibility and safety of venues where external events and social activities are held.
 - Develop an accessibility assessment grid when organizing events held outside CED offices.
 - Propose a directory of accessible rooms and restaurants.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026

- Make available a standardized template for invitations to activities and events that includes a section where all employees can indicate their accommodation needs.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026

Lead: Administration, Security and Facilities Management

2

Promote a respectful, inclusive and collaborative workplace

- Update and issue reminders about workplace etiquette guidelines, particularly those related to noise levels.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026 and ongoing

Lead: Administration, Security and Facilities Management

Information and communications technologies

Accessible information and communication technologies (ICT) means ICT products that can be used by everyone. Everything needs to be accessible: software development, infrastructure support, platform operations, responses to service requests, ICT asset management, cloud environments and employees support.

Barriers

Consultations with employees with disabilities, as well as an analysis of existing systems, have led to the identification of some potential difficulties linked to technology platforms and tools, as well as to the level of accessibility expertise among employees involved in the design, development and maintenance of digital products and services.

Some individuals with adapted ICT needs suggested that a better knowledge of the options and solutions available could facilitate the process for requesting adapted tools. Given the rapid evolution of digital technologies and solutions in the area of accessibility, it is essential that the employees involved receive ongoing training to stay up to date and ensure that accommodation requests are handled efficiently.

Strengthening accessibility expertise will also ensure that technological tools designed and developed in-house, such as CORTEX and the Client Portal, incorporate accessibility considerations from the outset, and are regularly evaluated to identify potential issues.

Actions

1

Ensure the accessibility of technology platforms and tools

- Analyse accessibility issues in technology platforms and tools, particularly the Client Portal and CORTEX, and implement corrective measures.

Progress metric: Analysis results and follow-up on corrective measures

Timeline: 2028

- Provide alternate solutions when accessibility issues are identified and permanent fixes have not yet been put in place.

Progress metric: Documentation or information about the alternate solutions available

Timeline: 2028

Leads: Customer Experience and Business Intelligence Directorate; Information and Technological Solutions Branch

2

Incorporate accessibility from the design stage by supporting the ongoing development of employees skills

- Promote the development of digital accessibility and adaptive technology skills among employees involved in the design, development and maintenance of digital products and services.

Progress metric: Updated training courses and digital accessibility training provided

Timeline: Ongoing

Leads: Information and Technological Solutions Branch; People, Culture and Workplace Branch

Communication, other than information and communication technologies

Accessible communications means that information provided, sent or received is clear, direct and easy to understand, and meets the needs of employees and the public.

Barriers

CED employees noted that some communications, such as instructions, procedures or documents, can be difficult to understand at times. The use of technical language or specific jargon can limit the accessibility of their content. It is therefore important to prevent and reduce these barriers by promoting clear writing and providing accessible formats.

It was also noted that accountability for the accessibility of communications could be strengthened. Some people involved in content development still perceive these practices as not benefiting all employees or as potentially lengthening deadlines or adding extra steps. Greater awareness of accessibility as a shared responsibility, together with training on the principles of accessibility and plain language, seems therefore to be essential in supporting the inclusiveness and effectiveness of communications.

Action

1

Promote clear and accessible communications

- Identify and simplify instructions, procedures and documents to make them easier to understand.

Progress metric: Analysis results and follow-up on corrective measures

Timeline: Ongoing

- Provide training and raise awareness about the use of clear and inclusive language.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026–2028

- Provide training and awareness on accessibility principles related to content development.
 - Make an accessibility compliance statement available in the context of developing presentation materials.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2027

Leads: Communications Branch; Information and Technological Solutions Branch; People, Culture and Workplace Branch; and content developers at CED.

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

The accessible procurement of goods, services and facilities involves centralizing purchases of software, hardware or external professional services while ensuring that accessibility is a priority criterion at every stage of the process.

Barriers

The team responsible for procuring goods, services and facilities pointed to a lack of awareness among procurement officers and functional owners regarding the principles of accessible procurement.

Action

1

Build the knowledge and capacity needed to incorporate accessibility requirements into procurement processes

- Provide training and raise awareness among procurement officers and functional owners in order to build their capacity to systematically apply accessible procurement principles.

Progress metric: Participation rate of targeted employees

Timeline: 2027

- Develop tools and issue reminders about the principles of accessible procurement.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Departmental Finance Branch

Design and delivery of programs and services

The design and delivery of accessible programs and services means that surveys, programs and services are inclusive and accessible by default to meet the needs of Canadians.

Barriers

CED's client feedback processes do not include questions about the accessibility barriers associated with the Agency's program delivery tools.

The team responsible for designing CED programs and initiatives noted a lack of knowledge about the issues, challenges and opportunities that members of under-represented groups, including persons with disabilities, face.

The accessibility of CED's services for the hearing impaired will also be assessed.

Actions

1

Examine the level of client satisfaction with accessibility

- Include specific questions aimed at identifying barriers to accessing CED programs and gather possible suggestions as to how the situation could be improved.

Progress metric: Client satisfaction rate and corrective measures put in place

Timeline: 2027

Leads: Customer Experience and Business Intelligence Directorate; Information and Technological Solutions Branch

2

Design initiatives and programs that take into account the issues, challenges and opportunities faced by persons with disabilities

- Conduct Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) when designing new programs or initiatives.

Progress metric: GBA Plus results

Timeline: Ongoing

Lead: Policy General Branch

3

Ensure accessible services for the persons with hearing loss

- Ensure the availability, smooth operation and visibility of the teletypewriter (TTY) service on CED's website and in its promotional tools.

Progress metric: Results of tests and analyses; training for front-line officers.

Timeline: 2027

Leads: Business Information Services Branch; Customer Experience and Business Intelligence Directorate; Information and Technological Solutions Branch; Communications Branch

Transportation

The modes of transportation provided or managed by the organization are accessible; this includes the accessibility of vehicles, routes and associated services (e.g., paratransit or shuttles).

Barriers

It was noted that barriers were encountered when it came to getting to the building that houses CED's offices. Among other things, employees pointed to the fact that it often took a long time for the snow to be cleared; that escalators were frequently out of order, which affected the accessibility of the premises, especially for persons with a mobility impairment, heart or joint issues or temporary injuries.

In the case of travel planning, travel policies require that the most cost-efficient means of transportation be chosen. The overly restrictive application of these policies does not take into account the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities.

Actions

1

Promote accessible, smooth and safe travel to and from the workplace

- Proactively communicate with building management officials to quickly remedy any problems encountered (escalators out of order, blocked-off areas, etc.)
 - Communicate alternative routes in case of temporary obstacles within buildings.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026 and ongoing

- Establish a procedure for inviting and assisting visitors with disabilities.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026

Lead: Administration, Security and Facilities Management

2

Improve the accessibility of transportation options for employees with disabilities

- Clarify the requirements of the travel directive for persons with disabilities.
 - Raise awareness among managers about accessibility requirements when planning and booking travel.

Progress metric: Measures, communications and tools developed

Timeline: 2026 and ongoing

Leads: Departmental Finance Branch

Appendices

Appendix A: Accessibility consultations

The “Nothing Without Us” principle recognizes that persons with disabilities must be able to participate fully and on an equal basis in all aspects of life. Programs, policies, services or practices should not be developed without their direct input. For the purposes of this Action Plan, CED held consultations with the individuals concerned to gather their comments and suggestions.

Internal consultations on accessibility

To ensure privacy and confidentiality for participants, and to reduce sensitivities linked to the fear of repercussions, we proposed more than one way of being consulted and put the following measures in place:

- Written consultations were conducted on a voluntary and anonymous basis via online Microsoft Forms questionnaires.
- Written consultations sent by email were followed up on by the People, Culture and Workplace Branch (PCWB) unit responsible for accessibility, and anyone interested were given the opportunity to participate in future consultations.
- The PCWB coordinated and held two hybrid group discussion sessions.

To ensure the participation of all employees, the consultations were promoted through various channels.

- The Deputy Minister extended an invitation at a staff forum.
- An official invitation was sent out in a *G@zette* message.
- An invitation was sent directly to the Accessibility Ambassadors Group.

Attendance at the hybrid discussion sessions

- Employees present included members of CED’s network of employees with disabilities; the Accessibility Ambassadors Group; and the Accessibility Co-Champions.
- The sessions were attended by 13 employees from Operations (4), Policy and Communications (6) and Corporate Services (3).
- The main findings highlighted a lack of awareness about accessibility; a lack of understanding of the realities experienced by persons with disabilities; and ongoing stigma.

Participation in consultations via an anonymous survey

- A total of 9 people completed the anonymous survey.
 - 78% of the respondents had a disability (hearing loss, mobility impairment, mental health disability, sensory or environmental disability, chronic health disability, cognitive impairment, memory issues or neurodiversity);

- 33% of the respondents belonged to one or more of the other designated groups in the *Employment Equity Act* (women and visible minorities); 11% belonged to one or more equity-deserving groups; and
- 56% of the respondents reported having encountered barriers in their job.

External consultations on accessibility

CED sent out a message informing its active clients that a new Accessibility Action Plan was being drawn up. Clients were invited to complete an anonymous [feedback questionnaire](#) aimed at gathering feedback on accessibility barriers they may have encountered when interacting with CED. To ensure accessible communications, the Government of Canada's GC Forms and GC Notify tools were used.

Clients who completed the form

- A total of 34 people completed CED's accessibility feedback questionnaire, including one person who self-identified as a person with a disability. Since the participation of this group was limited, the results may give a biased perception of actual accessibility. CED has included measures in its Action Plan to further assess client satisfaction with accessibility.
- Most respondents were not required to physically go into a CED office; however, those who were generally found the sites to be fully accessible. The majority of the respondents also found that human interaction (whether virtual or in-person) and the services provided were fully accessible.
- When it came to using CED's digital platforms, the majority of respondents said that their experience was fully accessible. One person did, however, point out that the language used in some of the forms may not be very accessible.

Appendix B: 2024 Public Service Employee Survey

The *Public Service Employee Survey (PSES)* is a tool used to gather essential information for improving people management practices in the federal public service. It gives employees an opportunity to share their experiences and thus help improve the quality of the workplace. The results make it possible to track progress over time and contribute to the development of action plans such as the Accessibility Action Plan.

Breakdown of employees who completed the PSES

- A total of 290 CED employees completed the PSES; of these, 35 were persons with disabilities. The respondents generally appreciated CED’s work environment; however, there were significant gaps when it came to the experience for employees with disabilities, notably with respect to feeling valued at work, career development and access to accommodation.

2024 Public Service Employee Survey Results

Have you been the victim of discrimination on the job?

Department	All employees		Person with a disability		Person without a disability	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Answers (%)						
CED	9	91	25	75	6	94
Public Service	9	92	21	79	7	93

Overall, I feel valued at work.

Department	All employees		Person with a disability		Person without a disability	
	Positive Answers	Negative Answers	Positive Answers	Negative Answers	Positive Answers	Negative Answers
Answers (%)						
CED	75	12	59	24	79	9
Public Service	67	20	59	28	70	17

I feel that my immediate supervisor supports my career goals.

Department	All employees		Person with a disability		Person without a disability	
	Positive Answers	Negative Answers	Positive Answers	Negative Answers	Positive Answers	Negative Answers
Answers (%)						
CED	82	6	72	19	85	4
Public Service	78	11	73	15	80	9

I have confidence in the senior management of my department or agency.

Department	All employees		Person with a disability		Person without a disability	
	Positive Answers	Negative Answers	Positive Answers	Negative Answers	Positive Answers	Negative Answers
Answers (%)						
CED	58	19	33	44	64	15
Public Service	55	28	47	37	58	25

My department or agency does a good job of supporting employee career development.

Department	All employees		Person with a disability		Person without a disability	
	Positive Answers	Negative Answers	Positive Answers	Negative Answers	Positive Answers	Negative Answers
Answers (%)						
CED	65	13	42	47	71	8
Public Service	55	27	47	36	58	24

