

2025 FedNor Accessibility Progress Report

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Federal Economic Development
Agency for Northern Ontario

Agence fédérale de développement
économique pour le Nord de l'Ontario

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Reporting period: January 1, 2025 to December 1, 2025

Introduction

Since becoming a standalone agency in August 2021, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) has worked to embrace an open, diverse, inclusive, accommodating and barrier-free workplace. In March 2023, FedNor introduced its first accessibility action plan. The three-year plan detailed the department's accessibility practices and programs for identifying, removing and preventing barriers as part of its ongoing efforts to become more accessible and barrier-free. The plan identified a series of goals related to seven themes to be achieved by the end of 2025, each addressing a guiding principle set out under the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA). In December 2023, FedNor released its first annual accessibility update report which highlighted the progress it had made within that year.

The 2024 Annual Report on Accessibility at the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario represented FedNor's second progress report. The report built on the previous Progress Report and highlighted advancements and progress made for each objective including several objectives which were successfully completed or implemented. On December 13, 2024, staff shared valuable feedback during the employee consultation session regarding current and future goals. The staff's honest and invaluable input assisted greatly in the preparation of the 2024 Annual Report on Accessibility.

The 2025 Annual Report on Accessibility at the FedNor Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario represents the third and final progress report in the three-year plan. This report not only highlights the progress and advancements made by the agency but may also set the background for the next FedNor Accessibility Action Plan. The plan is based on the calendar year (not fiscal), so the statistics and achievements listed in the report correspond accordingly. Given the 2023 -2025 FedNor Accessibility Action Plan is an evergreen document, there have been slight changes in the wording of some goals to help better define them, add context, or reduce redundancy where goals were repeated in different sections of the report.

Should you have any questions or feedback pertaining to this report, please contact fednoraccessibilityfeedback-retroactionaccessibilitefednor@fednor.gc.ca

Accessibility – Borealis (FedNor intranet – internal to FedNor staff) page hits:

This table indicates the number of visits to FedNor accessibility-related pages on Borealis from January 1, 2025 to November 17, 2025.

Intranet (Borealis) pages	Number of visits to this site
1. Accessibility feedback form (Bilingual page - English and French)	17
2a. Accessibility feedback process (English)	12
2b. Processus de rétroaction sur l'accessibilité (French)	4



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3a. GC Workplace Accessibility Passport info article (English)	2
3b. Information sur le Passeport pour l'accessibilité en milieu du travail du GC (French)	2

Information pertaining to National Accessibility Week 2025 is presented in the body of the report in the [Communication Section Goal #3](#) as it pertains to the promotion of the events for the week including a banner on the main page of Borealis promoting the event for the week, a feature presentation in The Source (an internal e-newsletter), on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion MS Teams channel and on the digital display screen in the Sudbury office.

Accessibility – FedNor website page hits:

This table indicates the number of visits to FedNor accessibility-related pages on the FedNor website during 2025.

External website	January to November 17 (English)	January to November 17 (French)	Total number of visits
Accessibility at FedNor	338	32	370
2023 to 2025 FedNor Accessibility Action Plan	48	12	60
PDF version	7	0	7
Accessibility feedback process	13	3	16
Accessibility feedback form	3	3	6

Regarding the Accessibility Feedback Form, it should be clarified three submissions were received over the past year. The first was a reliability test conducted by FedNor to confirm the form was being properly routed and monitored. The other two submissions appeared suspicious and, upon investigation, were determined to be unreliable or not credible.



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FedNor at a glance: who we are:

Please note: The data presented below may not accurately reflect the staff population at FedNor, as it captures only binary gender categories (female and male) and does not account for gender inclusivity. This limitation is due to the application used to collect the information and does not reflect the views or practices of the staff at FedNor or of FedNor as a government agency, both of which fully support gender inclusivity.

Total # of employees	Female %	Male %
125	80.1%	19.9%

Total % of respondents who completed the employment equity questionnaire	% identified as a visible minority	% identified as Indigenous	% identified as having a disability
78%	10%	11%	19%

Status of objectives:

Employment:

Goals for 2023 - 2025	Updates to achieving the goal	Status (Update)
Goal 1 Adopting an Accessibility Passport that enables persons with disabilities to enter their accommodation needs and not have to make another request when they change positions within FedNor or the federal public service.	FedNor is an official adopter of the TBS Accessibility Passport. FedNor actively participates in meetings with the Accessibility Passport working group to ensure its full implementation.	Completed
	Employees are informed of the Accessibility Passport during the onboarding process. Additional information on the Accessibility Passport is available on FedNor's Intranet site – "Borealis".	Completed
	Computer equipment and furniture resulting from an accommodation request will follow employees from one job to the other in FedNor, so they don't have to repeat the process.	Completed



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	Basic ergonomic principles are applied to a healthy population as an injury prevention measure. Information pertaining to proper office set up and posture are included in Borealis.	Ongoing
Goal 2	Mandatory training for managers also includes the following training: <i>Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce</i> (COR 120). The organization is at 100% compliance.	Ongoing
Implementing mandatory training on diversity, equity and inclusion including, but not limited to bias, exclusion and how to accommodate individuals within their teams.	FedNor has incorporated the Canada School of Public Service online course, <i>Addressing Disability, Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility</i> (INC115), a two-hour online course, as part of FedNor's mandatory training for all staff and added it to the onboarding process. The organization is at 100% compliance.	Completed
Goal 3	Achieved – reflected in 2024 Annual Progress Report on Accessibility at the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario.	
Soliciting feedback about staffing processes at FedNor, including the identification of any barriers.	Additionally, a tool for mitigating biases and barriers in assessment is completed for all staffing files, whether internal or external processes. It helps managers identify potential biases and barriers in assessment methods as well as mitigation strategies.	
Goal 4	Prior to the onset of the selection process, board members are reminded of the importance of inclusivity and accessibility as a means of expanding the current staffing model.	Ongoing
Implementing targeted hiring processes for persons with disabilities.	All staff participating as a board member for a staffing process are required to complete the <i>Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce</i>	Ongoing



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(COR120) offered by the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS).

Built environment:

Goals for 2023 to 2025	Updates to achieving the goal	Status (Update)
Goal 1 Develop and put into practice a disabilities considerations checklist of 5 to 10 items to make the physical workspace more accessible for all: signage (including pictograms); office space, noise cancelling headsets are available to all staff to help mitigate noise and distractions.	The Corporate Facilities Directorate continues to monitor updates from the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) regarding the new Federal Identify Program (FIP) signage standards. TBS's last update in spring 2023 noted the updated signage standard will include the new accessibility requirements and will be developed by Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) over the next year or so. The ASC Technical Committee tasked with the development has begun its work. At this time, the status quo remains for signage. As this goal is a priority for the Corporate Facilities Directorate, this goal will remain a part of the action plan and be transferred to a later year for completion once the updated standards are issued for the Government of Canada.	Deferred until standard is updated. Currently, the Federal Identity Program Manual is being replaced by the Design Standard for the Federal Identity Program.
Goal 2 Have clear and visible evacuation plans that indicate how to safely evacuate an employee or visitor with a disability. Regular practice should be conducted with persons with disabilities in various locations to		Completed in 2024



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ensure safety during emergencies.		
Goal 3	As of November 18, 2024, all accessibility projects for Sudbury and North Bay have been completed. The Timmins office was initially assessed as not requiring any accessibility upgrades however a recent site inspection noted the requirement for a push-button door opener for the main entrance into the FedNor office space. A request has been submitted and contractor has been selected with this project slated for completion by December 31, 2025.	Completed
FedNor has completed an accessibility audit in all its workspaces and has identified numerous areas requiring improvements to make the space completely accessible. Areas identified include adding accessible push buttons to common entry points and meetings rooms and enlarging hall space between workspace cubicles to ensure proper accessibility to people with disabilities.	All Thunder Bay accessibility issues have been resolved.	Completed
	Accessibility project upgrades for the Kenora office are currently at a stand still as the owner of the building has refused to contact and provide permission for the building upgrades. As such, given the difficulties with the building ownership, FedNor will be looking at relocating this office space and completing any accessibility upgrades once relocated.	Postponed until new office space secured

Technology:

Goals for 2023 to 2025	Updates to achieving the goal	Status (Update)
Goal 1 Provide tools to employees who need them to do their best work possible. Ensure FedNor is agile with accessibility requests	FedNor Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) has communicated with the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Network to ensure FedNor is in a position to support staff when needed.	Completed



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and ready to support staff.	• Approved software and hardware, designed to address individuals' specific needs, are readily available through partner organizations.	Completed (SSC provides specific needs equipment);
Goal 2		Completed in 2024
Select a dedicated person in the agency who is familiar with Accessibility, Accommodations and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) to make managers and employees aware of the services and availability of AAACCT from Shared Services Canada.		
Goal 3	• Create an accessibility verification tool for employees when creating content to ensure all new content is accessible.	In progress
	• Guides for information management (IM) content revised for accessibility considerations.	Completed
	• The onboarding process is currently under review with accessibility being a focal point.	Ongoing
Goal 4		Completed in 2024
Enable accessibility features on all devices/software.		



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Goal 5	All new FedNor applications are being created in an accessible format.	Ongoing
Convert all FedNor-led applications into accessible formats by late 2023.		

Communications:

Goals for 2023 to 2025	Updates to achieving the goal	Status (Update)
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Goal 1		Completed in 2024
FedNor will provide training and guidelines to staff on how to ensure presentations and documents are fully accessible.		

Goal 2	The Communications team produced two lockscreens that went out to all users for National AccessAbility Week 2025. The National AccessAbility Week events were promoted in a May 15th issue of The Source, an internal newsletter. It reflected the approach adopted by Internal Communications, Human Resources and Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity to avoid highlighting every commemorative day in the newsletter, preventing information overload and reducing the risk of overlooking dates that may be important to some employees.	Completed/Ongoing as this is an annual event.
FedNor will promote National AccessAbility Week each fiscal year to further champion and promote accessibility awareness.		





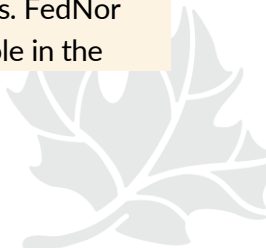
- Commemorative Days honouring the rich tapestry of our workforce was promoted in Borealis with a listing of all of the important days (and months) for various events.
- National AccessAbility Week 2025 was also promoted on the FedNor Equity, Diversity and Inclusion MS Teams Channel.

Program and service design and delivery:

Goals for 2023 to 2025	Updates to achieving the goal	Status (Update)
Goal 1 FedNor will solicit feedback from its clients and stakeholders on possible barriers they may be encountering when dealing with FedNor and its services.	To increase outreach to Indigenous recipients through project monitoring and administration activities, FedNor developed and posed a set of questions targeted at Indigenous stakeholders to solicit feedback on their client experiences related to the Northern Ontario Development Program (NODP). Data was collected over a period of several months and shared with management. The feedback received from Indigenous clients is being reviewed by the Indigenous Working Group tasked with recommending process modifications and enhanced program delivery tools to improve service delivery to Indigenous clients.	Completed. Recommendations have been made by the working group and provided to management.
	As part of its client-centric approach, FedNor also invited feedback on the various stages of the NODP application process through focus group discussions with both Indigenous and visible	Completed

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	minority groups. This effort also included a session with Northern Ontario's three Indigenous-led Community Futures Development Corporations. Feedback was shared with management and has informed prioritized improvements of the application process, including the development and implementation of new digital and streamlined program management tools - Indigenous cultural awareness training is mandatory for all FedNor staff. - The Indigenous Working Group continues to move forward on items that will streamline and simplify the application and project management approach for Indigenous clients.	Completed. Indigenous Learning Journey was officially implemented and two staff awareness sessions were held with over 70 people in attendance. Completed. The Indigenous Working Group is working on implementing recommendations based on the input it received.
Goal 2 In the development of new initiatives and programs, FedNor will consider barriers to accessibility utilizing key metrics through Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+).	- A GBA+ approach was applied throughout the aforementioned engagement processes in Goal 1 to help ensure that barriers to participation for Indigenous and visible minority groups were considered and better addressed. - During 2024, FedNor co-developed the Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative (RAII) and the Regional Homebuilding Innovation Initiative with the other regional development agencies and departments, including Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada. FedNor played a significant role in the design of the programs by reviewing drafts and providing input and recommended revisions, ensuring that GBA+ principles were given due consideration throughout the design and development processes.	Completed Ongoing. FedNor continues to integrate GBA+ considerations in program development. This year, FedNor co-developed the Regional Tariff Relief Initiative (RTRI), the Regional Defense Investment Initiative (RDII) and the renewal of the RDA component of the Black Entrepreneurship Program (BEP) with the other regional development agencies. FedNor played a significant role in the



design of the programs by reviewing drafts and providing input, ensuring that GBA+ principles were given due consideration throughout the design and development processes.		
Goal 3	A user interaction and user experience technical expert was engaged at the onset of the project to ensure accessibility measures and guidelines were incorporated into the solution’s design. Any future improvements to the solution will ensure compliance with digital accessibility standards.	Completed
A user interaction and user experience technical expert will help guide the new GCPM portal team to ensure it is fully accessible and barrier-free to persons with disabilities.		

Procurement of goods, services and facilities:

Goals for 2023 to 2025	Updates to achieving the goal	Status (Update)
Goal 1	- To support the integration of accessibility considerations in procurement, FedNor’s procurement team works with the Business Owner during the planning phase. As part of this process, the Business Owner identifies whether the good or service being procured has any accessibility requirements. These requirements are documented in the Statement of Work (SOW) or Statement of Requirement (SOR). - If no accessibility requirements are identified, the Business Owner completes the Justification	Completed
Upon the hiring of procurement staff anticipated by mid-2023, FedNor will ensure it takes into consideration any barriers to accessibility while procuring goods and services.		



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	for the Inclusion of Accessibility Criteria in Procurement (Goods or Services) form, providing a rationale for their exclusion. This ensures accessibility is consistently considered and documented in all procurement activities.	
Goal 2	In all signed and executed contracts, the section titled <i>Statement of Work</i> specifies: “The Contractor must perform the Work in accordance with the Statement of Work in Annex A.” Annex A, prepared by the Business Owner, outlines the scope of work and any applicable accessibility requirements. Suppliers are therefore obligated to deliver the work in accordance with Annex A. Upon delivery of goods or completion of services, the Business Owner inspects and confirms that accessibility requirements have been met before approving payment under Section 34.	Completed
Ensure that contracts with suppliers meet accessibility requirements.		

Transportation:

Goals for 2023 to 2025	Updates to achieving the goal	Status
Goal 1	N/A	N/A
No obstacles identified.		

