Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Pêches et Océans Canada

Accessibility Action Plan
2026 to 2028
From Insight to Impact

Canada

This publication describes the Accessibility Action Plan of DFO for 2026-2028. Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Plan d'action sur l'accessibilité 2026-2028 - Créer notre avenir accessible.

For more information, contact

Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2026 to 2028: From Insight to Impact
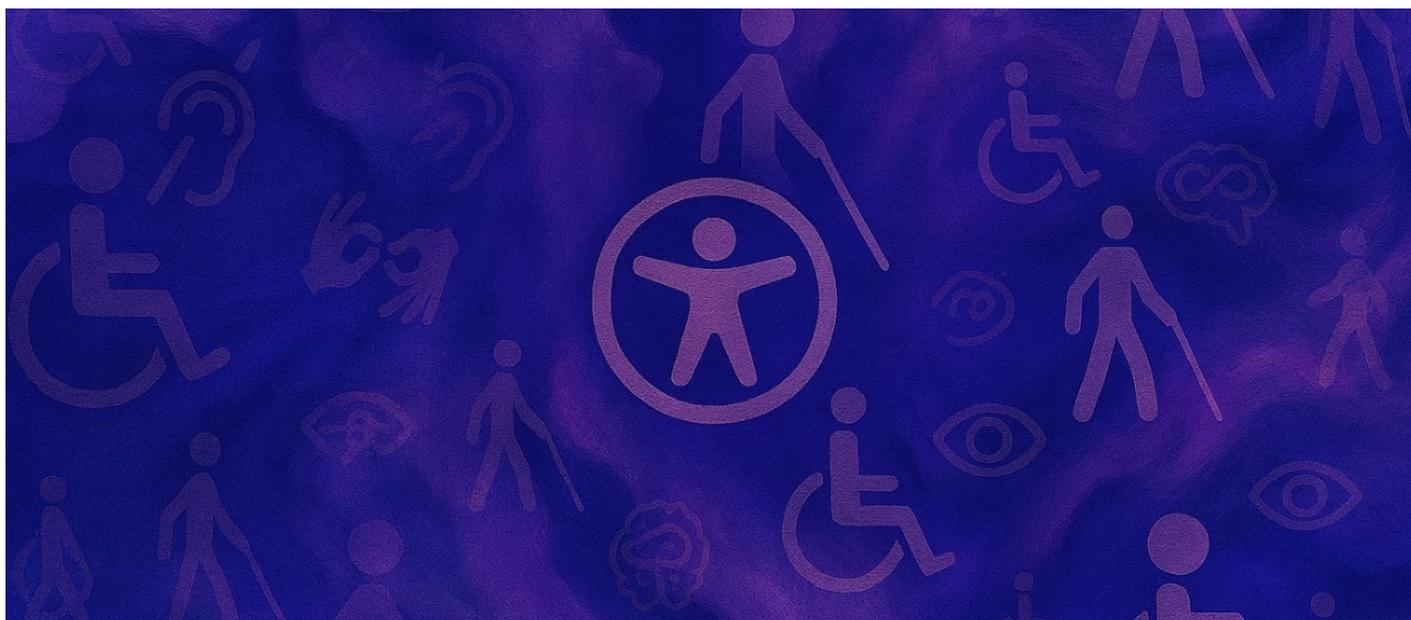
On this page

Executive summary

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is committed to making our workplaces, programs, and services more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

This *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2026 to 2028 – From Insight to Impact* builds on the work we started in our first plan (2022 to 2025). Over the past three years, we listened to employees, reviewed our practices in a variety of priority areas, and identified many barriers for persons with disabilities (PwD). We've learned a lot and this new plan reflects that learning.

What's new in this plan

This second plan focuses on removing the barriers identified in the first action plan and making real improvements in how we hire, support, work with, and serve people with disabilities. It aims to make our buildings, technology, communications, and services easier for everyone to use.

We've added a new focus area: Workplace accommodations. This is because we heard clearly that getting the right support at work—like tools, technology, or changes to how work is done—is one of the most important issues for employees with disabilities.

Our main goals

Over the next three years, we will work to:

- make accessibility part of everything we do, from planning and budgeting to hiring and service delivery
- support employees and managers with better tools, training, and clearer processes

- improve our buildings and digital tools so they are easier to use for everyone
- listen to people with disabilities and involve them in decisions that affect them
- track our progress and report on what's working and what needs to improve

A shared responsibility

Accessibility is not just a checklist—it's a way of thinking and working that benefits everyone. This plan is a step forward in our journey to become a more inclusive organization, and we know we can't do it alone. We're grateful to all the employees, partners, and stakeholders who shared their experiences and ideas to help shape this plan.

Together, we're working toward a future where everyone can thrive at work and fully participate in the services we provide to Canadians.

General

Designated person to receive feedback

The Director General, Workforce Development and Inclusion, is designated to receive feedback on behalf of DFO.

How to provide feedback

By mail:

Accessibility Secretariat

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

200 Kent St

6th Floor

Ottawa ON

K1A 0E6

By phone: 1-866-266-6603

By email: DFO.AccessibilitySecretariat-SecretariatdelAccessibilite.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Video Relay Service (American Sign Language [ASL] or langue des signes québécoise [LSQ])

Teletypewriter (TTY): 1-800-465-7735

Accessibility feedback form

Feedback can be submitted either with an identified contact or anonymously.

We will acknowledge the receipt of all accessibility feedback in the same means by which it is received, unless the feedback is received anonymously.

Alternate formats

If you need the *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2026 to 2028* or the Feedback Process in an alternate format, please contact DFO.Publications.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca via email or call us at 1-833-212-1438.

The following formats are available on demand:

- large print (larger, clearer font)
- braille (a system of raised dots that blind or visually impaired people can read with their fingers)
- audio format (recording of someone reading the text aloud)
- electronic formats compatible with adapted technology

Introduction

Messages from our leadership

Message from our Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister

Annette Gibbons, Deputy Minister, and Kaili Levesque, Associate Deputy Minister

Accessibility is a fundamental responsibility that requires sustained commitment, accountability, and a readiness to adapt. Through the *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2026 to 2028*, we are reaffirming our dedication to identifying and removing systemic barriers, advancing inclusion, and ensuring accessibility is fully integrated into our policies, programs, and workplace culture.

Since the introduction of the *Accessible Canada Act*, the public service has been working to eliminate barriers and build a more inclusive workplace. Guided by the _Nothing Without Us: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada_, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has taken meaningful steps over the past 4 years to transform how we work, design programs, and deliver services.

Through consultations with employees with disabilities, regional and sectoral partners, employee networks, managers, and stakeholders, we have deepened our understanding of the many challenges that remain. This new action plan reflects what we have learned and sets out the next phase of our efforts to create an environment where all employees can fully participate and thrive.

Over the coming years, DFO will continue to address barriers in hiring, career development, communications, workplace accommodations, and service delivery. We will strengthen our approach to meaningful consultation, ensuring that persons with disabilities are actively involved in shaping policies and initiatives that affect them. We will also focus on accountability, tracking our progress, and making necessary adjustments to ensure we are moving forward with real impact.

Real change happens when accessibility is not an afterthought, but a fundamental principle guiding how we work. This requires ongoing collaboration, openness to change, and a collective commitment to fostering an inclusive culture. Each of us has a role to play in challenging barriers, supporting one another, and ensuring that accessibility is part of our everyday decisions and actions.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed their time, expertise, and lived experiences to shaping this plan. Your voices are instrumental in driving progress, and your efforts are creating lasting change. Together,

let's continue working towards a barrier-free workplace where accessibility, inclusion, and equity are at the heart of everything we do.

Kaili Levesque
Associate Deputy Minister
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Annette Gibbons
Deputy Minister
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Message from our Accessibility Co-champions

Adam Burns and Darcy Demarsico, Accessibility Co-champions

The release of our second accessibility action plan is a milestone that reflects our continued journey toward creating a truly inclusive and barrier-free workplace for everyone.

Over the past few years, we have made significant improvements in addressing barriers, rethinking how we work, and ensuring that everyone feels supported. The shift to a hybrid work model following the COVID-19 pandemic has brought both challenges and opportunities, highlighting the critical need to make offices and remote workspaces alike accessible to all. The work includes implementing a new accommodation pillar to better support employees with disabilities and meet their diverse needs.

This action plan is a testament to our progress and a call to action for the work ahead. It builds on the lessons learned and focuses on removing barriers with intention, advancing universal design, and ensuring that

accessibility remains at the core of how we ensure employees with disabilities can best serve Canadians.

By creating a culture of accessibility and inclusion, we foster an environment where individuals feel safe sharing the barriers they face and confident in self-identifying, leading to feeling valued and empowered to thrive. Prioritizing employee well-being sets a strong example and drives meaningful, lasting change.

Through accommodations, accessible practices, and open dialogue, every step we take brings us closer to a barrier-free public service by 2040.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in advancing this work. Together, we are making accessibility a cornerstone of our department and our service to Canadians. Let's continue to lead with purpose, care, and commitment.

Adam Burns
Co-champion for Accessibility
ADM, Fisheries and Harbour Management

Darcy Demarsico
Co-champion for Accessibility
DG, Fisheries and International Policy

Message from the Co-chairs of our Accessibility Network

Annette Anthony and Sarah Gray, Co-chairs

As we reflect on our progress under the department's first _Accessibility Action Plan 2022 to 2025 - Shaping our Accessible Future_, it's inspiring to see how far we've come. The Accessibility Network continues to be a key part of our efforts to create a barrier-free workplace where everyone at Fisheries and Oceans Canada has the opportunity to succeed.

Over the past years, we've witnessed the impact of collaboration through consultations, feedback sessions, and the active involvement of employees. Your voices and experiences have shaped our priorities and guided important steps forward, whether improving physical spaces, enhancing digital tools, or increasing awareness and access to workplace accommodations. Nothing about us without us!

As co-chairs of the Accessibility Network, we encourage you to stay involved as we move into the next phase of our journey with the second plan, the _Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2026 to 2028_. Your feedback and ideas help ensure our department continues to grow as a leader in accessibility and inclusion.

Together, we can break down barriers, embrace diversity, and build a workplace and public-facing spaces where everyone feels valued and supported.

Annette Anthony
Co-chair
Accessibility Network

Sarah Gray
Co-chair
Accessibility Network

Background on the *Accessible Canada Act*

The Government of Canada passed the *Accessible Canada Act* (the act) in 2019, aiming to create a barrier-free Canada by January 1, 2040. The act benefits all Canadians, especially persons with disabilities, by proactively identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility in seven priority areas:

- employment
- built environment
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- communication (other than ICT)
- procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- design and delivery of programs and services
- transportation

Our first *Accessibility Action Plan 2022 to 2025* also included the priority areas of culture and governance. Building on the insights gained from implementing our initial plan, we have incorporated accommodation as an additional priority area in our second plan, demonstrating the department's commitment to continuous improvement and adaptive accessibility planning to ensure that we remain responsive to evolving needs.

Accessibility commitment

DFO is committed to becoming a leader in accessibility within the public service. We aim to eliminate barriers within our control, ensuring all Canadians have equal opportunities to participate fully in an inclusive, barrier-free workforce and organization.

Our vision extends to creating accessible environments, operations, programs, services, and products for everyone, including persons with disabilities. We uphold the principle of "Nothing Without Us," involving persons with disabilities in every step of our accessibility planning, ensuring that those affected by our policies contribute their lived experiences to shape a more inclusive future.

By prioritizing accessibility, we not only reflect the diversity of Canadians we serve but also empower persons with disabilities to play an essential role in our department's success. Our goal is to create an environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and able to contribute their full potential to the organization and the public we serve.

Reporting and updates

In compliance with the *Accessible Canada Act* and regulations, we are committed to publishing an updated accessibility plan every three years. Additionally, we will continue to release annual progress reports each year in between. These progress reports will provide an overview of the feedback we have received from stakeholders and detail how we have incorporated this input into our accessibility initiatives. We will continuously monitor and refine our action plan to ensure it effectively meets the evolving needs of the department.

How we developed this plan

This plan, in accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act,* covers the period from January 2026 to December 2028.

Over the course of the past three years, the Accessibility Secretariat has gathered the views of persons with disabilities (PwD) through:

- engagement with:

- the Accessibility Network
        - the Accessibility Champion
        - the Accessibility Advocates Network
- an annual departmental Accessibility Questionnaire
- our formal feedback mechanism
- direct consultation with employees who self-identify as PwD

Our first accessibility action plan focused on undertaking proactive accessibility assessments in a variety of areas:

- employment
- communications
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- the built environment
- transportation (focussed on parking)
- procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- design and delivery of programs and services

These assessments revealed many potential barriers across these areas.

Between February and April 2025, the Accessibility Secretariat held consultations with departmental leads for the priority areas, or "pillar leads", to:

- review progress towards accessibility
- review the potential barriers identified via the proactive accessibility assessments
- present the concerns and barriers identified by PwD
- gather their input for the current accessibility action plan (2026 to 2028)

A total of eleven meetings were held with pillar representatives to identify suitable goals, objectives, and actions for the next three-year accessibility action plan.

A focus group was held with representatives of select services and programs to inform proposed objectives and activities regarding the design and delivery of programs and services pillar.

Culture and governance goals and objectives were proposed and discussed with key stakeholders during meetings with the Accessibility Advocates Network, Accessibility Network, and Accessibility Champion.

Once proposed goals, objectives, and activities were identified, consultations were held with employees who self-identify as PwD as described below and modifications to the proposed objectives and activities were made.

The current accessibility action plan could not have been achieved without the dedication and commitment of pillar leads and the active engagement of PwD and allies for which we are very grateful.

Regarding the Canadian Coast Guard

During the preparation of this plan, the decision was made by the Government of Canada that the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) should leave DFO and become part of the Department of National Defence (DND). The Order in Council was made September 2, 2025, after the drafting of this accessibility action plan was complete.

DND has committed to adopt all actions committed to by CCG in the development of this plan into their own accessibility action plan and will be responsible for reporting on items that are CCG-led. They have, therefore, been removed from this plan. However, statistics regarding past performance in this plan include CCG.

Consultations

Our consultation processes

In May 2025, the Accessibility Secretariat hosted four virtual consultation sessions—two in English (May 8 and May 23) and two in French (May 9 and May 22). 138 participants attended the sessions.

These sessions were advertised to members of the Accessibility Network, to employees who self-identify as PwD and indicate that they are willing to have their self-identification used for the purpose of consultation, and to all employees of DFO via our internal newsletter.

PwD and allies were presented with a summary of progress towards accessibility over the past three years, the barriers that have been identified, and proposals for objectives and activities. They were then given the opportunity to share their views and shape the current accessibility action plan. In addition to the live discussions, participants were also invited to share their feedback in writing, ensuring a more inclusive and flexible consultation process.

In addition to the consultations specifically regarding the content of this plan, described below, we also continue to collaborate with the Accessibility Network through biweekly meetings and hold bi-monthly meetings with the members of the Accessibility Advocates Network (AAN) and Accessibility Pillar Leads Committee (APLC), as well as monthly meetings with departmental executive co-champions for accessibility.

These discussions and consultations provide consistent opportunities to discuss potential accessibility concerns and maintain an open discussion on accessibility. The preparation of this plan also takes into account feedback received through our formal accessibility feedback process and results obtained from our annual departmental Accessibility Questionnaire.

What we heard

Governance

- Strong leadership and clear accountability from decision-makers are foundational to advancing accessibility

Culture

- Stigma remains a significant cultural barrier, particularly for non-apparent disabilities
- Employees self-disclosing disability still fear discrimination or negative career impacts

Accommodations

- Education and proper implementation of accommodations are essential for inclusion
- There is a need for increased awareness and training to promote the social model of disability, along with clearer accommodation processes and practical tools such as a directory of possible accommodations and centralized intranet resources
- Awareness must extend beyond managers to include all employees
- Episodic accommodation needs are often under-recognized. Budget limitations and lack of awareness are seen as impediments to timely and appropriate accommodations
- Employees often feel pressured to disclose medical information when requesting accommodations, especially those with non-apparent disabilities
- Clearer processes, stronger oversight, and better understanding of managerial responsibilities are needed

- The privacy of personal information during the accommodations process is a concern for employees

Information and communications technologies

- Unified standards for developing digital solutions are lacking. Some participants expressed interest in using artificial intelligence to streamline the creation of accessible documents, while others recommended pre-installing a baseline suite of accessible applications on employee computers
- Bilingual captioning in MS Teams was also suggested as a valuable tool for inclusive meetings. Greater awareness of available software is needed

Communications

- Despite progress, a significant amount of content remains inaccessible
- More resources and enhanced quality control are required to ensure accessible communications

Employment

- Hiring and retention policies must be adjusted to better support PwD
- Additionally, information about accommodations should be provided during onboarding

Design and delivery of programs and services

- Ongoing collaboration with PwD is vital to improving the work environment and advancing accessibility initiatives
- Input from PwD is especially valuable in areas such as toolkit feedback, process evaluation, and adaptive technology development

Transportation

- Accessible parking is costly and not always available
- There is also a need for greater awareness of policies related to adapted transportation

Built environment

- Accessibility in the built environment is inconsistently implemented across regions and between custodial (DFO-owned and managed) and leased buildings
- In leased spaces, limited control restricts improvements
- Workspaces must be adapted to meet the needs of employees with visual and neurological sensitivities, and there is a need for better design and access to quiet rooms and universal washrooms

Areas described under section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*

In addition to the 7 priority areas described under section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act (*Employment, Built environment, Information and communication technologies (ICT), Communication (other than ICT), Procurement of goods, services, and facilities, Design and delivery of programs and services, and Transportation), the department has chosen to include and report on 3 other priorities: Governance, Culture, and Workplace accommodations.

Governance

During the course of the first *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2022 to 2025*, an Accessibility Pillar Leads Committee was formed with representatives from all of the sectors with specific responsibilities for objectives and activities in the plan. The purpose of the committee was to ensure accountability and provide subject matter expertise related to the priority areas identified in the *Accessible Canada Act*. Additionally, an Accessibility Advocates Network was created to support accessibility in sectors and regions.

The department also identified a new departmental executive champion of accessibility, with lived experience, to promote and advocate for accessibility at DFO.

To provide evidence for decision making, an annual accessibility questionnaire was established to assess accessibility awareness and confidence among employees and managers.

Barriers identified

- Processes for ensuring that accessibility is taken into account in budget planning and governance are needed

Where we want to be

The work to achieve a barrier-free Canada by 2040 is integrated into governance at all levels of the organization. We track and report on accessibility progress and plans, and ensure that projects and budgets consider accessibility from the start.

Strategies to help us get there

Objective GOV-1

Senior managers and executives in sectors and regions within DFO are providing leadership and accountability with respect to implementation of initiatives and progress on accessibility and are collecting data such that meaningful annual reporting on progress can occur.

Activity GOV-1a

The Accessibility Pillar Leads Committee, comprised of representatives of sectors with responsibility for priority areas under the accessibility action plans, will continue to provide leadership and accountability on accessibility initiatives at DFO and monitor progress on the implementation of the accessibility action plan. The Accessibility Advocates Network, consisting of representatives of all sectors and regions, will continue to mobilize resources and provide guidance within their sectors or regions in support of accessibility at DFO.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Support:
  - all sectors and regions
- Performance indicator:
  - bimonthly meetings of the APLC and AAN occur; annual progress reports provide updates on the activities outlined in the plan
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Activity GOV-1b

A DFO Accessibility Questionnaire is conducted annually to assess accessibility awareness and confidence among employees and managers.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat

- Support:
    - Accessibility Pillar Leads
- Performance indicator:
    - data is available for reporting on accessibility progress
- Timeline:
    - ongoing

Activity GOV-1c

Options for including accountability related to accessibility in executive performance agreements are developed and implemented where approved.

- Office of primary interest:
    - People and Culture, Executive Services
- Support:
    - Accessibility Secretariat
- Performance indicator:
    - accessibility figures in executive performance agreements
- Timeline:
    - March 2027

Objective GOV-2

Departmental and project budgets include consideration of the work required to achieve accessibility by 2040.

Activity GOV-2a

Investigate and develop governance options for ensuring accessibility is considered, if applicable, in the development of departmental and project budgets.

- Office of primary interest:

- - Chief Financial Officer Sector; Centres of Expertise
- Performance indicator:
  - governance options are developed and proposed, and, where approved, implemented
- Timeline:
  - June 2028

Culture

Significant progress has been made in our efforts to improve accessibility awareness within the department and there has been an increase in self-identification rates among employees with disabilities.

The department has implemented several initiatives which have impacted the culture of the department including:

- a communications campaign to promote self-identification which resulted in an increase in self-identification rates among PwD
- mandatory training on disability inclusion which has been completed by about 70% of employees
- the creation of a new category for excellence in accessibility in the *Prix d'Excellence*
- publication of a guide to neurodiversity to support managers in understanding and assisting neurodivergent employees
- hosting a successful public-service-wide event marking International Day of Persons with Disabilities that attracted over 5300 registrants

Despite these positive steps, challenges remain, such as stigma associated with disabilities and hesitancy among some employees to disclose their conditions due to fear of discrimination. According to Accessibility Questionnaire (2025):

- both employees with disabilities (53%) and without disability (24%) felt that there is stigma associated with disability
- 38% of employees with disabilities who said they did not self-identify reported they were concerned it would harm their career

Cultural change is a gradual journey, yet there is a growing momentum throughout the organization.

> *"Culture can't be mandated; it must be nurtured"* - James L. Heskett

Barriers identified

- Reluctance of PwD to disclose their disability due to concern about negative consequences
- Limited awareness and understanding on the part of managers and colleagues about disability and accessibility needs
- Lack of understanding and awareness, and bias regarding non-apparent disabilities

Where we want to be

We envision a department where accessibility is deeply embedded in our organizational culture; it is recognized not just as a legal obligation, but as a shared value and a driver of inclusion, innovation, and excellence. All employees, from senior leadership to frontline staff, actively champion accessibility in their daily work. Accessibility considerations are integrated into decision-making, planning, and service delivery. Our workplace fosters a sense of belonging, where persons with disabilities feel respected, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Key indicators of progress:

- % of employees with disabilities who feel that there is stigma associated with disability at DFO decreases. (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
- % of employees with disabilities reporting harassment and discrimination decreases (Source: Public Service Employment Survey (PSES) questions 58, 65, and 73q)
- % of employees with disabilities who report feeling respected, valued, and who would recommend DFO as a great place to work increases (Source: PSES, questions 53, 12, and 54)

Strategies to help us get there

Objective CUL-1

The Accessibility Co-champions are engaged and equipped to promote accessibility at DFO.

Activity CUL-1a

A communications strategy and plan will be developed and implemented in support of the co-champions for accessibility.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Support:
  - Internal Communications
- Performance indicator:
  - communication strategy and plan are developed and implemented; messages on behalf of co-champions are published to mark days of recognition
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Objective CUL-2

DFO employees are engaged and equipped to advance accessibility in their roles, and managers are prepared to support employees with disabilities, so they feel safe to self-disclose their limitations and needs.

Activity CUL-2a

Mandatory training and recommended learning activities on accessibility are promoted and completion is monitored.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Support:
  - Internal Communications
- Performance indicator:
  - completion rates for accessibility-related mandatory training and recommended learning
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Activity CUL-2b

Learning opportunities are offered to raise awareness about accessibility and disability issues, including guest speakers and events across the department, sectors, and regions.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Support:
  - Accessibility Advocates; Your Professional Network
- Performance indicator:
  - number of events; number of participants; level of awareness of accessibility issues and accessibility confidence as revealed by the

annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire

- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Activity CUL-2c

Accessibility intranet pages are maintained and improved, and tools and resources available to employees and managers are promoted.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Support:
  - Accessibility Advocates
- Performance indicator:
  - page visit metrics
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Objective CUL-3

Employees feel safe to self-identify and understand how self-identification data is used and protected.

Activity CUL-3a

Continue to promote self-identification with the aim of improving the completion rate of part B of the self-identification form and raising awareness of the importance of self-identification in closing gaps and building a representative workforce.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Centre of Expertise
- Support:
  - Accessibility Secretariat

- Performance indicator:
    - completion rate of part B of the Employment Equity Self-identification form; responses to annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire questions about self-identification
- Timeline:
    - ongoing

Employment

Various initiatives have been implemented to create a more inclusive hiring process and improve accessibility and inclusivity in employment practices. These included the completion of mandatory training on inclusive hiring practices for supervisors, managers, executives, and staffing advisors.

The department has introduced a bias and barriers checklist and attestation to identify and lessen potential barriers in the staffing process. We also undertook a systematic analysis of employment practices at DFO in comparison with the Accessibility Standards Canada Standard on Employment to identify potential barriers to employment, which has helped to inform the activities described below.

Through a variety of measures to identify and prioritize employment equity candidates, including PwD, in hiring processes, significant progress was made in the representation of PwD, with an increase in 58% in the number of PwD counted among the DFO and CCG workforce since our first accessibility action plan – an increase of 540 individuals. [*]

However, with the release of new workforce availability statistics based on the most recent census, the baseline for representation has increased from 8.3% to 11.6%. Consequently, where we reported being representative in 2024, we are no longer representative based on the new benchmark. As of

June 2025, the representation of PwD at DFO-CCG was 10.3%. There is more work to do to achieve a workforce that is representative of the public we serve.

We have also made strides to prioritize employment equity candidates for developmental opportunities, and, in the last year, PwD were promoted at a rate which exceeded the rate of promotion for the general DFO and CCG population (9.6% for PwD compared to 7.1% for those without disabilities).

Yet, even though 71% of managers reported in the 2025 DFO and CCG Accessibility Questionnaire that they are aware of accessibility considerations in employment, the most common theme in consultations with PwD at DFO and CCG is that managers need more awareness and training with respect to supporting employees with disabilities.

Moreover, in the _2023 Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey: Thematic Report on the Results for Employment Equity Groups and Equity-Seeking Groups_ PwD at DFO and CCG report encountering barriers at most stages of the hiring process and that the main challenge is the screening stage followed by interviews. 25% of PwD at DFO and CCG responding to the survey reported bias and barriers in the staffing process that disadvantaged them, in comparison to 14.3% of those without disabilities.

To tackle more complex issues regarding employment, we have also identified a need to be able to collect more data, both quantitative and qualitative, to understand the impact of our policies and practices on PwD.

Barriers identified

A number of barriers were identified through the formal feedback process and consultations:

- lack of information about the nature and format of interviews in advance to allow PwD to know whether they will require

accommodations

- interview formats (such as virtual interviews with the interviewers' cameras off that deny visual cues to participants and create issues especially for neurodivergent candidates)
- anxiety related to written tests
- lack of plain language in posters and communications about processes
- issues with the use of VidCruiter:
  - navigating and recording using the VidCruiter application was difficult
  - lack of support for using and preparing for interviews using the application
- lack of knowledge and training for hiring managers in accessible employment assessments
- lack of understanding about the needs of neurodivergent candidates and the diverse ways neurodivergence can appear in everyday behaviours
- lack of adaptive technology in assessment processes
- concern about facing discrimination when requesting accommodation measures
- access of PwD to learning and development opportunities for career growth, including second language learning
- lack of mentorship opportunities for PwD

Additionally, the systematic barriers assessment that was conducted identified various potential barriers across all aspects of the employee experience.

- Recruitment
  - Job qualifications, as currently worded, may create barriers
  - Information in job advertisements is not sufficient, or sufficiently plain, about the process, the assessment format, the offer of

accommodation, and where to obtain help or information
- Assessment
    - Gaps in how managers provide appropriate and timely accommodations
    - Lack of managers' knowledge with regards to available adaptive technology
    - Lack of information about the nature and format of the assessment in advance to allow candidates to know whether they need accommodations
    - Gaps in managers' and assessment boards' knowledge of how to ensure that the interview and selection process is fully accessible
- Onboarding
    - Lack of managers' awareness of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport

Where we want to be

We strive to be a department where persons with disabilities (PwD) are equitably represented and feel welcomed, valued, and supported throughout their careers. We want to be able to monitor and report on the experiences of PwD across the full employment journey, using this insight to inform meaningful action and accountability.

Our goal is to have recruitment processes which are inclusive and barrier-free, enabling equitable access to opportunities, and strengthening the hiring of PwD. We want PwD to have the tools, opportunities, and support needed to grow and succeed within DFO and the federal public service.

Key indicators of progress:

- representation of PwD among the DFO population is equal to or higher than the workforce availability

- PwD are promoted at an equal or higher rate than the general DFO population
- PwD are leaving DFO at a rate equal to or lower than the general DFO population
- PwD at DFO report that accessibility or accommodations issues have adversely affected their careers at a rate equal to or lower than the general DFO population (Source: PSES, questions 44d and e, To what extent have the following adversely affected your career progress in the federal public service over the last 12 months? Accessibility or accommodation issues?)

Strategies to help us get there

Objective EMP-1

Improve data collection, monitoring, and reporting relating to employment of PwD.

Activity EMP-1a

Establish a Candidate Experience Survey for candidates who receive screened-in/screened-out notifications.

Activity EMP-1b

Monitor, analyze, and report on data to determine if overall efforts to recruit and hire PwD are effective and to identify trends and opportunities to improve recruitment and hiring of PwD at DFO.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); Corporate Staffing; regional HR Operations
- Support:
  - Workforce Planning Analytics and Reporting (WPAR)

- Performance indicators:
  - Candidate Experience Survey data is available and shared within People and Culture (HR) for use in improving processes, including:
    - % of candidates with disabilities who report positive experiences in the recruitment process
  - barriers identified related to various stages of the process, for example, screening, evaluation and testing, selection from pool, or interviews
- Timeline:
  - June 2028 and ongoing

Activity EMP-1c

Continue to promote the self-Identification process and monitor rates of completion.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); Employment Equity Diversity and Inclusion Centre of Expertise (EEDICoE); Accessibility Secretariat, WPAR
- Performance indicator:
  - departmental completion rates of part A and part B of self-identification form are maintained or increased
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Activity EMP-1d

Implement departmental Onboarding Survey to monitor onboarding experience and include questions related to accommodations, GC Workplace Accessibility Passport, and self-identification.

Activity EMP-1e

Monitor, analyze, and report on data to determine if overall efforts to onboard PwD are effective and to identify trends and opportunities to improve onboarding experience for PwD at DFO.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); Employee Experience, WPAR
- Performance indicators:
  - Onboarding Survey data is available and shared within People and Culture (HR) for use in improving onboarding processes, related to barriers in the onboarding experience, whether employees receive information about the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport, and whether employees received appropriate accommodations in a timely fashion
  - % of new hires completing Onboarding Survey
  - % of employees who identify as a person with a disability who gave the most positive or least negative answers to the statement: "I get the training I need to do my job" (PSES 2024, question 5)
- Timeline:
  - March 2026

Activity EMP-1f

Develop data regarding length of employment for a variety of employment types (indeterminate, term, and contract) before being promoted or leaving department to determine if differences exist for staff who self-identify as PwD.

Activity EMP-1g

Promote and track participation in Exit Survey for PwD and collect information regarding PwD hiring and retention.

Activity EMP-1h

Implement tracking and monitoring of performance and talent management ratings for PwD.

Activity EMP-1i

Implement tracking and monitoring of Labour Relations cases and grievances for PwD.

Activity EMP-1j

Monitor, analyze, and report on data to determine if overall efforts to develop and retain PwD are effective and to identify trends and opportunities to improve retention, promotion, and career development of PwD at DFO.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); WPAR, Employee Development, Labour Relations
- Performance indicators:
  - key findings from Exit Survey results (if there is enough data to report on) and information about retention and promotion, analyzed by employment equity status, classification, etc., are available for People and Culture (HR) and senior management use including whether retention rates, promotion rates, and average length of time in tenure is the same for PwD as for employees without disabilities
  - the rate of participation in the employee Exit Survey for PwD is proportional to their representation in the department
  - % of employees who identify as a person with a disability who gave the most positive or least negative answers to the statement: "I believe I have opportunities for promotion within my department

or agency, given my education, skills, and experience" as compared to the employees without disabilities (Source: PSES 2024, question 45)
  - % of employees who identify as a person with a disability who gave the most positive or least negative answers to the statement: "My department or agency does a good job of supporting employee career development" as compared to the employees without disabilities (Source: PSES 2024, question 43)
    - once data is available, performance ratings distribution for employees with disabilities is similar to that of employees without disabilities
    - once data is available, number of Labour Relations cases regarding employees with disabilities is similar to that of employees without; number of cases related to accommodations is identified to determine whether Labour Relations cases may be arising out of problems with accommodations
- Timeline:
  - March 2028

Objective EMP-2

Hiring processes do not cause barriers otherwise avoidable for PwD.

Activity EMP-2a

Ensure clarity with respect to all aspects of the hiring process.

EMP-2a-i: Develop consistent language for use in appointment processes (advertised/non-advertised) in order to include information such as making an active offer of accommodations, providing explanations of staffing terms in plain language, and providing contact information to facilitate candidate feedback on the accessibility of employment at DFO.

EMP-2a-ii: Ensure that, when using VidCruiter or other video recruitment platforms/MS Teams, the advertisement includes comprehensive instructions for using the platform, an offer of assistance for candidates who need support using the platform, or an offer of alternative formats for candidates who are not comfortable using the platform.

EMP-2a-iii: Develop guidance or tools for managers to ensure they are providing candidates comprehensive information about the assessments/interviews so that candidates can determine whether they will require accommodations during the process.

Activity EMP-2b

Undertake a quarterly review of a selection of process advertisements (hiring posters), in consultation with PwD, to identify unanticipated barriers in communications and processes.

Activity EMP-2c

Continue education of staffing advisors, assessment boards, and hiring managers regarding accessible and inclusive hiring processes.

EMP-2c-i: Promote Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce (Canada School of the Public Service (CSPS) course COR 120 for hiring managers (with or without staffing sub-delegation).

EMP-2c-ii: Encourage Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce (CSPS course COR 120) for assessment boards.

EMP-2c-iii: Develop hiring manager/assessment board package to promote accessibility in assessments including Government of Canada advice on assessing PwD and departmental advice.

EMP-2c-iv: Maintain Accessibility Toolbox for HR practitioners and "Practical Information Regarding the Appointment Process" intranet page.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); Corporate Staffing
- Performance indicators:
  - guides or tools are available to ensure clarity with respect to all aspects of the hiring process and are promoted/disseminated to staffing advisors and hiring managers
  - once available, from the Candidate Experience Survey described above, candidates with disabilities report having a similar experience as those without
  - all hiring posters selected for review include:
    - active offer of accommodation
    - definitions of terms
    - appropriate support for using recruiting platforms
    - inclusive language
    - contact info to provide feedback
  - once available, from the Candidate Experience Survey described above, % of candidates with disabilities who report a positive experience regarding hiring posters is the same or better than those without disabilities
  - completion rate of identified training among hiring managers
  - number of communications that encourages inclusive hiring practices for assessment boards annually
  - number of communications, annually, that promote the package for hiring managers/ assessment boards
  - Accessibility Toolbox for HR practitioners is maintained and expanded
- Timeline:
  - March 2028

Activity EMP-2d

Monitor measures in place to identify and mitigate bias and barriers in the hiring process.

EMP-2d-i: Ensure hiring managers at DFO have access to and are using resources to support bias- and barrier-free processes and assessments.

EMP-2d-ii: Undertake quarterly sampling and review of non-advertised appointments for managers' effective consideration of bias and barriers in their processes.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); Corporate Staffing
- Performance indicators:
  - level of awareness of managers of resources to support bias- and barrier-free processes and assessments is increasing over time (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
  - % of appointments sampled which uncover potential unmitigated bias and barriers is decreasing over time
  - issues uncovered through this analysis are addressed
- Timeline:
  - March 2028

Activity EMP-2e

Promote guidance to mitigate bias in any use of AI in hiring process.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); Corporate Staffing
- Performance indicators:
  - guidance is available to staffing advisors and hiring managers
  - number of communications or activities in which the policy guidance was promoted
- Timeline:
  - March 2028

Objective EMP-3

Hiring managers are supported to increase the relative rate of hiring of PwD.

Activity EMP-3a

Leverage staffing flexibilities for EE groups including PwD where gaps exist in representation forecasts.

Activity EMP-3b

Develop one-stop internal and/or external talent inventory with voluntary self-declaration information and provide to hiring managers.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); HR Operations, National Talent Acquisition team
- Support:
  - EEDICoE, Accessibility Secretariat, WPAR
- Performance indicators:
  - representation data is available and promoted to senior leadership and hiring managers
  - % of new hires who are PwD is equal to or greater than the workforce availability
  - % of candidates with disabilities selected from talent inventory equals or exceeds representation in workforce
- Timeline:
  - March 2028 and ongoing

Objective EMP-4

As part of their onboarding, new employees receive information about accommodations, employment equity and self-identification, and are encouraged to self-identify.

Activity EMP-4a

Promote conversations between managers and new employees about workplace accommodations at the first possible opportunity and awareness of the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport and self-identification.

EMP-4a-i: Maintain the "Pre-Arrival" intranet page, which provides pre-arrival checklists and resources for supervisors/managers.

EMP-4a-ii: Maintain the "Information for New Employees" intranet pages with information about accommodation conversations and the passport, and with clear information regarding employment equity and self-identification.

EMP-4a-iii: Utilize Employee Messaging Centre to incorporate information regarding the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport and to promote self-identification.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); Employee Experience team
- Support:
  - EEDICoE, Accessibility Secretariat
- Performance indicators:
  - rate of uptake of GC Workplace Accessibility Passport (Source: *myAccessibleWorkplace* application on the TBS Applications Portal) increases over time
  - departmental completion rates of part A and part B of self-identification form are maintained or increased

- awareness of GC Workplace Accessibility Passport among employees and managers increases over time (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
- Timeline:
  - March 2027 and ongoing

Objective EMP-5

PwD benefit from the organization's career development initiatives and included in talent management.

Activity EMP-5a

Monitor and prioritize EE group participation in departmental talent development initiatives.

Activity EMP-5b

Monitor and prioritize expenditure for second language learning for employees self-identifying as belonging to employment equity groups.

Activity EMP-5c

Initiate talent management pilot for executive pipeline so that talent placement for EE groups, including PwD, can be monitored and promoted and employment equity employees, including PwD, with talent management plans continue to be prioritized in annual DM talent conversation.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Employment Pillar Lead (People and Culture); Employee Development; EX Services, Official Languages
- Support:
  - EEDICoE, Accessibility Secretariat, WPAR
- Performance indicators:

- % of participation of PwD in talent development initiatives equals or exceeds representation in the DFO workforce
- % second language training expenditure allocated for employees with disabilities is equal to or exceeds PwD representation in the DFO workforce
- % of talent management plans for PwD is equal to or exceeds PwD representation in the DFO workforce
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Built environment

DFO has proactively conducted accessibility evaluations of 327 DFO- and CCG-owned, staffed facilities and 1042 unstaffed facilities to identify accessibility gaps.

A feedback survey on accessibility barriers in the built environment was undertaken to prioritize issues in staffed facilities. While retrofits to address issues are costly and take time, the prioritization exercise includes the voices of PwD in informing plans to improve accessibility over time through the activities described below.

Additionally, DFO continues to accommodate employees on a case-by-case basis with respect to their physical surroundings with measures such as assigned seating, braille signage, strobe light alarm systems, designated low-light work points, and enclosed workspaces. As of June 2025, 83% of barriers related to the built environment reported to the Accessibility Secretariat have been resolved.

However, the built environment still continues to present challenges for PwD.

- 31% of barriers reported though the feedback process were physical barriers
- In the 2025 DFO Accessibility Questionnaire, 47% of PwD who encountered barriers in the past year identified them as physical barriers in the built environment
- In the 2024 Public Service Employment Survey, 31% of PwD expressed that their physical environment was not suitable for their job requirements, as compared to 21% of those without disabilities

Barriers identified

- Lack of universal washrooms
- Inaccessible signage (especially lack of braille signage)
- Lack of automatic door openers or automatic door openers out of commission
- Lack of operating elevators; usability of elevators
- Lack of panic buttons in washrooms
- Wheelchair access to some facilities (turning radius, lack of ramps)
- Lack of accessible alarm systems
- Lack of quiet/separate office space/storage close to office space
- Lack of meeting rooms with accessibility features for hybrid meetings
- Well-lit stairs with high-contrast strips and suitable hand-rails

Where we want to be

We want a built environment that is increasingly accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. Accessibility is integrated into planning and decision-making processes for new construction, major renovations, and maintenance projects, in alignment with broader departmental infrastructure priorities. Barriers are identified and addressed over time, guided by universal design principles and informed by the lived experiences of persons with disabilities.

Key indicators of progress:

- % of employees with disabilities who rate the physical work environment as a source of stress to a large or very large extent decreases (Source: PSES, question 73m)
- % of employees with disabilities who report that their physical environment (e.g. office, workspace) is suitable for their job requirements increases (Source: PSES, question 4)

Strategies to help us get there

Objective BE-1

Awareness of accessibility considerations and features in the built environment is increased.

Activity BE-1a

Produce fact sheets, Frequently Asked Questions documents, flow charts and other types of documents to inform employees on accessibility in the built environment.

Activity BE-1b

Communicate with employees to inform them and raise awareness about:

- accessibility measures that are being implemented
- accessibility considerations in minor fit-ups, facility retrofits, and large projects
- differentiating between leased and custodial facilities
- how to submit built environment related questions regarding a leased or custodial facility

Activity BE-1c

Develop communications/templates that can be used to share information relating to accessibility projects/upgrades in progress or completed in specific DFO-owned buildings as well as requests for modifications to leased facilities.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Built environment Pillar Lead (Chief Financial Officer sector, National Real Property and Environmental Management)
- Performance indicators:
  - awareness of accessibility in the built environment increases (annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
  - % of employees who report a high degree of satisfaction with the upgrades made to the built environment (Source: Targeted employee satisfaction survey following upgrades to specific buildings)
  - number of publications made on the intranet on accessibility topics
- Timeline:
  - June 2028 and ongoing

Activity BE-1d

Advertise (for example, through signage) accessibility features of small craft harbours.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Small Craft Harbours program
- Performance indicator:
  - percentage of small craft harbours having accessibility features which receive promotional signage or other advertisement of accessibility features
- Timeline:
  - June 2028

Objective BE-2

The department's built environment is enhanced to address barriers where feasible for clients and staff to have barrier-free access and use of DFO-owned workplaces.

Activity BE-2a

Identify buildings requiring a formal accessibility audit.

Activity BE-2b

Assess the cost required to commission audits in buildings identified through the priority process.

Activity BE-2c

Prioritize areas for intervention in the built environment based on the preliminary assessments conducted and results of consultation with PwD.

Activity BE-2d

Create regional plans to address prioritized accessibility issues considering available resources and financial limitations.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Built environment Pillar Lead (Chief Financial Officer sector; National Real Property and Environmental Management)
- Support:
  - Regional Real Property and Environmental Management teams
- Performance indicators:
  - number of DFO staffed, custodial facilities with accessibility audits increases over time
  - number of DFO staffed, custodial facilities that have had an audit within the past 5 years increases over time

- Timeline:
    - June 2028 and beyond

Activity BE-2e

Conduct GBA+ through the lens of disability, application of Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) draft standard on outdoor spaces and any other pertinent guidance to identify potential modifications for accessible harbours, including engaging Rick Hansen Foundation.

Activity BE-2f

Assess cost of implementing modification for harbours and pilot modifications.

Activity BE-2g

Review signage in small craft harbours for accessibility.

- Office of primary interest:
    - Small Craft Harbours program
- Performance indicators:
    - number and percentage of sites where standards were applied to identify potential modifications increases over time
    - number and percentage of modifications with cost estimates increases over time
- Timeline:
    - June 2028 and beyond

Objective BE-3

Built environment policies, procedures, guidelines, programs and services are updated with respect to accessibility.

Activity BE-3a

Update policies and guidelines such that, where and when possible, any new construction and/or renovation project will be designed with accessibility considerations and will conform to existing accessibility standards, at the time of design.

Activity BE-3b

Establish yearly updates to the high-level accessibility assessment of the built environment conducted in 2024 and 2025.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Built environment Pillar Lead (Chief Financial Officer sector; National Real Property and Environmental Management)
- Support:
  - Regional Real Property and Environmental Management teams
- Performance indicator:
  - percentage of employees who identify as a person with a disability and who gave the most positive or least negative answers to the statement: "My physical environment (e.g. office, workspace) is suitable for my job requirements" increases over time (Source: PSES 2024, question 4)
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Information and communication technologies

In order to address accessibility in Information and communication technologies (ICT), DFO established a Digital Accessibility Centre of Excellence to focus on the needs of PwD and build more inclusive digital products and services.

An approach to improving the accessibility of ICT was taken that goes beyond compliance with technical standards established by Government of Canada (such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, WCAG) by involving persons with disabilities in usability testing of applications. So, in addition to audits against standards, PwD were invited to test a variety of applications, both internal and external facing. In addition, PwD demonstrated interactions with our applications using various assistive devices to teach programs and designers about the needs of PwD.

The Government of Canada Design System was introduced to help ensure that new applications are designed with accessibility from the start.

Nevertheless, challenges persist. The capacity to review existing applications is small compared to the large number of applications. Also, there are a variety of applications that have been in use for a long time and are not accessible, and for which investment to make them accessible is not desirable or even possible at this stage of their lifecycle.

The information provided in the _Canada Gazette, Part 1_ on proposed amendments to the Accessible Canada Regulations (ACR) to include the CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services recognizes the challenge of bringing existing applications and systems up to the standard. Therefore, at least in the first phase, it focuses on new technologies, applications, and systems in the following areas:

- training– providing training on ICT accessibility to all employees involved in the development, maintenance, and procurement of ICT
- webcontent – setting standards for new public-facing and employee-facing web pages(will be addressed in the Communications section)
- mobile applications– setting standards for new public-facing mobile applications
- digital documents– setting standards for new digital documents published on public-facing websites (will be addressed in the

Communications section)
- procurement– ensuring ICT procured is assessed against the ICT standard
- alternative compliance– providing barrier-free alternatives for inaccessible applications or content
- accessibility statements– communicating about accessibility of ICT and identifying barrier-free alternative for inaccessible applications or content

Although the regulations are not yet in force, the objectives and activities described below seek to address these goals.

Barriers identified

- Limited awareness among employees and managers regarding adaptive technology, including what is available
- Limited expertise among IT staff regarding adaptive technology
- Long wait times and unclear processes to obtain technological accommodation measures, in particular, some software
- Lack of accessible ICT options to work efficiently
- Some websites and tools are not compatible with nor optimized for portable devices such as smartphones and tablets
- Lack of opportunity for PwD to test assistive technologies for accommodation before the department buys at scale
- Lack of capability to identify and track accessibility training for staff involved in ICT accessibility

Where we want to be

Our goal is to create a barrier-free digital workplace where all employees, including those with disabilities, can thrive. We envision a digital environment where:

- accessibility is embedded by default in all information and communication technologies (ICT) developed or procured by the department
- public-facing applications and services, such as those provided to harvesters, are accessible and inclusive
- technologies support accessible workplaces
- assistive technologies enable accommodation

Furthermore, the department is committed to meeting the emerging standards identified in expected ICT regulations under the *Accessible Canada Act* so that no one is excluded from participating fully in the digital workplace.

Key indicators of progress:

- % of employees with disabilities who state that they have the tools, technology, and equipment to do their job in comparison to DFO employees without disabilities increases (Source: PSES, question 1)
- % of employees with disabilities who state that difficulty accessing their work tools or network (for example, work email, work device, ergonomic equipment) cause them work-related stress in comparison to DFO employees without disabilities decreases (Source: PSES, question 73n)
- uptake of Shared Services Canada's Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) program increases
- % of the reported workplace barriers per year related to ICT decreases
- measures of progress related to accessibility of products, for example, number of products reviewed with users with disabilities, number of products reviewed for compliance with accessibility standards, and number of products designed using Government of Canada Design System and built with accessibility principles by default

Strategies to help us get there

Objective ICT-1

Shift culture so that digital applications (for example, mobile, web, software) are designed to be accessible from the start for both internal and external audiences.

Activity ICT-1a

Promote ICT accessibility training to all employees with the aim of raising awareness and building organizational capacity.

Activity ICT-1b

Promote the existing Digital Accessibility Toolkit and other resources available to increase awareness of digital accessibility among all employees.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Pillar Lead for ICT (Chief Digital Officer sector)
- Support:
  - Canada School of Public Service, and Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (SSC), Accessibility Secretariat
- Performance indicators:
  - number of training sessions promoted per year
  - department-wide communication promoting the Digital Accessibility Toolkit distributed quarterly
- Timeline:
  - June 2026 and ongoing

Objective ICT-2

Shift processes so that digital applications for internal and external audiences (for example, mobile, web, software) are designed to be accessible from the start.

Activity ICT-2a

Conduct accessibility assessment of digital applications (web and mobile built in-house and third party) funded by the Digital Investment Fund (DIF) involving PwD to identify potential accessibility barriers.

Activity ICT-2b

Expand pilot to standardize the use of the Government of Canada Design System (GCDS) in the design and development of digital applications funded by DIF to improve usability and accessibility.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Pillar Lead for ICT (Chief Digital Officer sector)
- Performance indicators:
  - number of digital applications funded by DIF tested with feedback from PwD per year is maintained or increased yearly
  - percentage of digital products built and maintained by CDOS that adopted the GCDS increases yearly
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Objective ICT-3

Work with Procurement to ensure that ICT procurement conforms with Accessibility regulations.

Activity ICT-3a

Integrate accessibility evaluation into all non-SSC IT purchasing processes based on Digital Accessibility Toolkit Guidelines (see more in: <u>Guide for Including Accessibility in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Related Procurement - Digital Accessibility Toolkit</u>).

Activity ICT-3b

Consult with PwD when planning and buying ICT technologies for employee and client use.

Activity ICT-3c

Advertise opportunities to test ICT technologies and applications with PwD before purchase or release.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Pillar Lead for ICT (Chief Digital Officer sector)
- Performance indicators:
  - number of non-SSC led IT contracts where the Digital Accessibility standards were assessed per year
  - number of consultations with PwD per year
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Objective ICT-4

Employees requiring IT applications or hardware as accommodation receive them in a timely fashion and are empowered to use them.

Activity ICT-4a

Provide support to users of assistive software technologies to make full use of assistive technologies.

Activity ICT-4b

Develop and publish a list of assistive software technologies available to employees.

Activity ICT-4c

Modify process to prioritize software and hardware requests as accommodations and establish standards for employees to obtain the ICT they need to do their work.

Activity ICT-4d

Promote Shared Services Canada's Lending Library, managed by AAACT, which offers personalized supports for employees with disabilities, including adaptive technology, services, and tools.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Pillar Lead for ICT (Chief Digital Officer sector); Disability Management Centre of Expertise
- Performance indicators:
  - number of requests for support completed per year increases over time
  - a list of approved assistive technologies that are available to employees is available from Disability Management
  - a clearer process is available and advertised for requesting both hardware and software assistive technologies
  - communication promoting ICT available as accommodations distributed quarterly
- Timeline:
  - 2026 to 2027 and ongoing

Objective ICT-5

Employees with disabilities at DFO have barrier-free access to tools and technologies to help them succeed in their work. IT supports employees to ensure ICTs available are accessible.

Activity ICT-5a

Assess standard equipment for in-person meetings and events which is not provided by Shared Services Canada (SSC) for accessibility and ease of use.

Activity ICT-5b

Assess standard ICT technologies for online meetings and events which is not provided by SSC for accessibility.

Activity ICT-5c

Assess standard platforms for IT support which are not provided by SSC for accessibility.

Activity ICT-5d

Investigate use of automation tools to support employees in converting documents and materials to accessible formats, for example leveraging artificial intelligence.

Activity ICT-5e

Create and communicate information about accessibility features of standard applications and available assistive software.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Pillar Lead for ICT (Chief Digital Officer sector)
- Performance indicators:
  - information about the percentage of equipment for in-person meetings and events that is accessible is available to the Chief

Digital Officer Sector for use in planning to mitigate any gaps uncovered
      - information about the percentage of equipment for online meetings and events that is accessible is available to the Chief Digital Officer Sector for use in planning to mitigate any gaps uncovered
  - Timeline:
    - March 2028

Communication (other than ICT)

Over the past three years, awareness of accessible communication has increased by 26% among employees and managers, likely due to mandatory training, targeted messaging, and the work of communications advisors to encourage programs to ensure their communications are accessible. Accessibility checklists have been developed to guide employees in producing accessible documents, web pages, and events. Departmental templates have been updated to support accessibility standards.

Progress has been made in ensuring that external communications are accessible, with a further 25% of public-facing web pages audited by communications specialists and communications for external audiences are assessed for plain language and ICT standards.

Nevertheless, communications are a shared responsibility in which most communications within the department are not overseen by communications specialists. Employees have also expressed a need for support in what is seen as a time-consuming process of creating accessible documents. A particular gap was identified over the course of the first accessibility action plan, which was that there is no oversight of the internal-facing network, or "intranet", meaning that the responsibility for individual intranet pages, and the accessibility of these pages, is entirely

the responsibility of the program, which results in inconsistent accessibility of the intranet. Therefore, awareness and education remain highly important and further work to support employees in creating accessible communications is required.

Barriers identified

- Communication products are not accessible due to lack of plain language, formatting of messages, or compatibility with screen readers
- Employees perceive that creating accessible documents is complicated and takes too much time
- General lack of knowledge on how to create accessible documents and communications
- Employees lack knowledge with respect to offering accessible events
- DFO intranet is not uniformly accessible, and employees lack the knowledge and incentive to make it accessible

Where we want to be

Accessibility is embedded into all aspects of our communications practices so that communications are clear, understandable, inclusive, and barrier-free so that everyone, including PwD, can receive, understand, and engage with the information they need.

Key indicators of progress:

- awareness of accessibility considerations in communications increases (DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
- % of content passing accessibility checks in accessibility audits of social media, digital and creative content, and intranet pages increases
- PwD at DFO perceive that essential information flows effectively from senior management to the same extent as employees without

disabilities (Source: PSES, question 36. Essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff)

Strategies to help us get there

Objective COM-1

The accessibility of social media content is enhanced.

Activity COM-1a

Apply accessibility best practices (for example, alt text, closed captions, clear typography).

Activity COM-1b

Develop and implement templates or content calendars that embed accessibility.

Activity COM-1c

Engage internal users to gather feedback and adjust practices accordingly.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Communications Pillar Lead; DFO Social media teams; DFO Creative Services teams
- Support:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Performance indicators:
  - % of posts with alt text and proper captions increases
  - accessibility audit score improvement
  - positive feedback from users (for example, survey, interviews)
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Objective COM-2

Improve accessibility in digital media and creative content.

Activity COM-2a

Conduct audits of digital media (PDFs, videos, infographics) to identify accessibility gaps.

Activity COM-2b

Implement improvements using GC standards and accessibility best practices.

Activity COM-2c

Train digital media and creative content creators, and test content with assistive technologies.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Communications Pillar Lead; DFO Creative Services teams
- Support:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Performance indicators:
  - increase in the number of audits completed and issues resolved
  - improvement in % of content passing accessibility checks
  - improvement in % of trained Creative Services staff applying accessibility standards
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Objective COM-3

Strengthen internal communication accessibility.

Activity COM-3a

Promote plain language and develop tools (e.g. checklists) to support accessible internal communication (i.e. events, intranet content).

Activity COM-3b

Conduct spot audits of intranet pages to identify accessibility deficiencies across the DFO intranet.

Activity COM-3c

Provide staff with advice on creating and maintaining accessible content on intranet.

- Office of primary interest:
    - Communications Pillar Lead; Internal communications team, Digital Strategy Unit and content owners
- Support:
    - CDOS, Accessibility Secretariat
- Performance indicators:
    - intranet accessibility audit report is produced
    - number of accessibility tools (e.g. checklists) developed
- Timeline:
    - ongoing

Objective COM-4

Enhance the accessibility of external-facing websites.

Activity COM-4a

Remove non-accessible, archived content of low institutional value from external-facing websites.

Activity COM-4b

Develop a plan to address regional and program websites not compliant with accessibility standards.

Activity COM-4c

Ensure new digital documents meet Clauses 4 to 7, and 9 of the ICT Standard before web publication.

Activity COM-4d

Identify opportunities for improvement to website navigation.

Activity COM-4e

Add standardized language to websites directing users on how to report accessibility barriers.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Communications Pillar Lead; Web team and content owners
- Support:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Performance indicators:
  - archived pages report produced and 50% of non-accessible pages are removed in consultation with clients
  - accessibility plan for non-compliant regional and program websites is distributed to relevant sector leads
  - all digital documents posted after June 2027 are compliant with ICT standard
  - review of site navigation and implementation of consistent site navigation standards
  - reporting accessibility barriers language added to websites by 2027
- Timeline:
  - ongoing

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

Progress has been made in incorporating accessibility considerations into our procurement processes. We have created a procurement intake form that must be included in every procurement file, providing a record of accessibility considerations. Additionally, the Contract Planning and Approval Authority (CPAA) document for Contracting Officers was enhanced to incorporate comprehensive accessibility requirements. The department also developed an accessibility toolkit to support staff in obtaining accessible procurement tools and provide information on assessing products and services for accessibility. We also developed and delivered targeted training sessions on accessibility in procurement.

Despite gains in making business owners aware of accessibility considerations in procurement processes and the requirement to integrate accessibility into proposals for goods, services, or construction, work remains to develop more comprehensive guidelines.

Moving forward, the department plans to develop a method/process for auditing procurement files for accessibility including adherence to accessibility norms as one of the indicators of procurement performance.

Barriers identified

- Insufficient knowledge of employees on accessible procurement of goods, services, and construction
- No auditing to ensure that accessibility considerations in the procurement process result in contracts for accessible goods, services, or construction being purchased
- No mechanism for identifying disability-owned companies

Where we want to be

Accessibility is embedded in our procurement environment so that goods and services acquired by the department are inclusive and usable by all. We recognize the value of inclusive economic participation and supplier diversity and are working to increase procurement from disability-owned businesses. The procurement process, including procurement-related documents, forms, and digital platforms is free of barriers and usable by everyone.

Key indicators of progress:

- improvement in % of procurement that include accessibility requirements
- once available, % of final contracts awarded that include accessibility requirements increases

Strategies to help us get there

Objective PRO-1

The procurement process for goods, services, and construction includes accessibility requirements to advance the purchase of goods, services, and construction that are accessible for everyone.

Activity PRO-1a

Ensure all procurement files include a record of consideration for accessibility, along with justification if accessibility is not included.

Activity PRO-1b

As part of the audit and monitoring process, ensure a copy of the accessibility checklist is on file and take corrective actions when files are incomplete.

Activity PRO-1c

Enhance existing toolkits and training materials to provide additional guidance for business owners and procurement officers on best practices on how to operationalize accessibility requirements.

Activity PRO-1d

Existing data, which is currently limited to the pre-contractual phase of procurement, will be expanded to increase measurement at the contract award stage.

Activity PRO-1e

Canvas other departments to gather best practices and share, as appropriate.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Procurement Pillar Lead (Chief Financial Officer sector; Procurement services)
- Performance indicators:
  - all stakeholders have access and are aware of the requirement to include an accessibility consideration checklist in the procurement requisition phase
  - all procurement files include an accessibility consideration checklist and instances of non-compliance receive a corrective action notification
  - percentage of final contracts awarded that include accessibility requirements increases
- Timeline:
  - June 2028 and ongoing

Objective PRO-2

Although we recognize that there is currently no way to identify disability-owned suppliers which makes market research and targeting difficult, we will work to promote the procurement of goods and services with disability-owned businesses.

Activity PRO-2a

Leverage subject matter expertise from procurement stakeholders like Public Services and Procurement Canada and Treasury Board Secretariat to help identify suppliers and develop best practices to be incorporated into departmental procurement processes.

Activity PRO-2b

Develop a more comprehensive guide for business owners to help integrate accessibility into the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.

Activity PRO-2c

Continue to focus on accessibility as an important element of monthly procurement training provided to departmental employees, including collecting feedback from participants on the effectiveness of accessibility considerations component of the training.

Activity PRO-2d

Publish accessibility messages to business owners to remind them of their responsibilities and any new developments.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Procurement Pillar Lead (Chief Financial Officer sector; Procurement services)
- Performance indicators:

- incorporation of best practices into departmental procurement processes improves
- increased level of understanding of procurement policy and accessibility obligations in procurement (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
- comprehensive accessibility guide is developed and disseminated
- deliver training sessions at least four times per year
- messages are published at least twice a year for awareness on procurement and accessibility
- Timeline:
  - June 2028 and ongoing

Objective PRO-3

Ensure that all procurement forms that are used internally and externally meet accessibility standards.

Activity PRO-3a

Develop an inventory of all procurement forms that are required for departmental procurement processes and ensure that accessibility standards are fully applied to existing forms.

Activity PRO-3b

Include contractual language developed by PSPC outlining Government of Canada responsibilities regarding accessibility in the procurement of goods and services.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Procurement Pillar Lead (Chief Financial Officer sector; Procurement services)
- Performance indicators:

- percentage of procurement forms that meet accessibility standards as per regular audit increases
      - progress is made in transitioning internal procurement forms to an accessible online format
  - Timeline:
      - June 2028 and ongoing

Design and delivery of programs and services

Over the course of the last accessibility action plan, 36 different public-facing services, representing the wide variety of services provided by DFO and CCG, were identified to undertake proactive accessibility assessments to identify potential barriers. The programs were given support to consider the stakeholder journey in interacting with the service, and the types of barriers they should look for at each point of interaction.

The results of these assessments were of moderate value in that some of the barriers identified were already known through the work of the leads for the relevant pillars. For example, barriers in the built environment were identified that are part of the assessment that the built environment pillar lead conducted. Therefore, this plan will not continue with this model for barriers assessment.

Nevertheless, the results of these assessments have included the identification of a number of barriers to be addressed and insight into the kind of guidance needed in order to design and deliver accessible programs and services. These aspects of the program will be continued under this plan.

Barriers identified

- Modest knowledge among employees of designing and delivering accessible programs and services

Specific barriers identified through the barriers assessment pilot projects:

- digital content barriers such as websites not complying with accessibility standards, untagged documents, absent alt-text for images, poor color contrast, misleading web links and overly complex language
- accessibility barriers in meetings such as poor image quality, missing captions, fast-paced speech, visual-heavy content, and limited access to assistive technology
- lack of communication options such as braille, audio descriptions, and multilingual options
- technical obstacles such as unreliable internet, overly complex website designs, unlabeled online form fields, and poor support for keyboard-based navigation
- maps that rely on visual design elements or colour contrast to convey information
- inadequate testing of technologies and forms with users with disabilities
- physical barriers such as inaccessible doors, elevators, stairs, lack of universal washrooms, and insufficient room for movement
- lack of braille signage and accessible emergency guidance
- practices that overlook the needs of Indigenous individuals with disabilities—creating barriers through unsuitable language, inaccessible locations, and misaligned timing with vital cultural or economic activities like fishing seasons
- barriers to employment such as misunderstanding of accessibility needs and accommodation

Where we want to be

The programs and services DFO offers, both to Canadians and within our own department, are inclusive, barrier-free, and accessible to all individuals, including PwD. We continuously improve the accessibility of our programs and services by embedding accessibility into the design and delivery of all departmental offerings, ensuring that everyone can access, understand, and benefit from our services equitably.

Key indicators of progress:

- confidence of DFO employees in providing accessible programs and services (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
- satisfaction of PwD with the accessibility of DFO programs and services (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)

Strategies to help us get there

Objective DDPS-1

Employees are aware of accessibility considerations in design and delivery of programs and services.

Activity DDPS-1a

Develop an accessibility toolkit that provides practical resources, including guidelines and best practices, to support the design and delivery of accessible programs and services.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Support:
  - programs selected for accessibility assessment under the *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2022 to 2025*
- Performance indicators:
  - accessibility toolkit is developed and promoted on the intranet

- increased awareness of accessibility in the design and delivery of programs and services among DFO employees and managers (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
- Timeline:
  - June 2027

Objective DDPS-2

Clients and employees have access to programs and services that are barrier-free.

Activity DDPS-2a

Track results and monitor improvements/barrier elimination that are taking place for pre-identified programs and services.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Support:
  - programs selected for accessibility assessment under the *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2022 to 2025*
- Performance indicators:
  - programs and services that undertook barriers assessments under the first accessibility action plan complete 70% of the modifications identified to address and eliminate the barriers they found
  - barriers identified by the predetermined programs and services are mitigated or eliminated
- Timeline:
  - June 2028

Transportation

An inventory of all parking at staffed DFO-custodial facilities has been completed and will allow an assessment to determine where the department complies with building codes with respect to accessible parking.

No feedback has been received about transportation accessibility through the formal feedback process. In consultations, the feedback received related to the cost of parking as a barrier.

Travel policy is covered by the National Joint Council Travel Directive, which does not currently provide any guidance regarding accommodations in travel for PwD.

In general, in order to fulfil our commitment to improving overall accessibility in the area of transportation, more information is required as to the needs of PwD and the barriers faced in areas other than parking.

Barriers identified

- The cost of accessible parking is a barrier

Where we want to be

All federally owned and leased workspaces and public-facing facilities managed by the Crown, will provide accessible parking that meets the diverse needs of employees and clients with disabilities. Through ongoing evaluation, proactive planning, and inclusive design, we will better understand transportation issues for PwD at DFO so that we can remove transportation-related barriers and create environments that support full participation for everyone.

Key indicators of progress:

- % of sites with adequate accessible parking increases
- more feedback is collected about barriers to transportation affecting PwD

Strategies to help us get there

Objective TRAN-1

Employees and clients have barrier-free access to parking available at federally owned and leased workspaces and public-facing spaces.

Activity TRAN-1a

Assess the inventory of parking available to determine if accessible parking is available for employees and clients with disabilities at most DFO-managed parking facilities.

Activity TRAN-1b

Prioritize any need for improvement to parking based on the outcome from the assessment conducted of parking available at departmental and public-facing spaces and workplaces.

Activity TRAN-1c

Identify the feasibility of accessible parking adaptations and the cost implications (if required).

Activity TRAN-1d

Identify accessible parking for employees and clients with visible signage and near office entrances.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Built environment pillar lead (Chief Financial Officer sector; National Real Property and Environmental Management)

- Support:
  - Regional Real Property and Environmental Management teams
- Performance indicators:
  - % of parking spaces at DFO-managed parking facilities that are designated for persons with disabilities meets or exceeds the standard
  - % of parking lots that conform to municipal and Treasury Board standards for accessibility increases
  - number of sites with added signage increases
- Timeline:
  - June 2028

Objective TRAN-2

Employees are aware of accessibility considerations in transportation.

Activity TRAN-2a

Include information about accessible parking at DFO facilities in onboarding materials.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Built environment pillar lead (Chief Financial Officer sector; National Real Property and Environmental Management)
- Support:
  - People and Culture; Onboarding team; Regional Real Property and Environmental Management teams
- Performance indicator:
  - information on parking is included in on-boarding materials
- Timeline:
  - June 2027

Activity TRAN-2b

Investigate transportation barriers experienced by PwD at DFO.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Accessibility Secretariat
- Support:
  - Chief Financial Officer; Materiel Management; Regions
- Performance indicator:
  - information is available about barriers for PwD in obtaining transportation between worksites so that plans can be created to address the barriers
- Timeline:
  - June 2027

Workplace accommodations

In all cases, in this plan, when referring to accommodation measures and the Duty to Accommodate, we are referring to accommodation of workplace barriers that exist related to medical conditions or disability.

From our last accessibility action plan cycle, we learned that workplace accommodation is one of the most critical areas of impact for PwD.

- 24% of all barriers reported through the formal feedback process were related to workplace accommodation
- 28% of PwD responding to the 2025 Accessibility Questionnaire told us that they were uncomfortable requesting a workplace accommodation, and reasons were that the process was overly complex, stressful, and too much medical justification and documentation was required, too often
- In the same questionnaire, 26% of managers reported being unable to provide a requested accommodation, the most common reason for which was departmental policies or resistance from their superiors

As a result, we have implemented a separate "pillar" or priority area under this plan, with a separate pillar lead in the governance structure to provide leadership and accountability in this important area.

We implemented the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport as an early adopter and awareness of the passport has increased to 82% among managers responding to the Questionnaire, however, only 50% of PwD who reported that they requested accommodations reported using the passport and only 54% of them reported that the passport was helpful. PwD report that 69% of accommodations were provided within one month of the request in 2025 and 4% report being denied accommodation.

To create a more inclusive and efficient medical accommodation process, it is crucial to implement streamlined procedures, enhance training for both employees and managers, and improve communication amongst the stakeholders.

Barriers identified

- A lengthy accommodation process, which is challenging to navigate in complex cases that involve many stakeholders
- Wait times for certain types of accommodation measures, such as assistive software
- Lack of awareness of the accommodations process, specifically, of:
  - the benefits, privacy protection, and process when using the Accessibility Passport to request medical accommodation
  - when medical documentation is required, or not required, before providing accommodation
  - accommodation options
  - the social model of disability
- Insufficient advice and support for employees seeking accommodations and their managers due to lack of capacity within the

Disability Management Centre of Expertise

- The perception that departmental policy prevents increased telework as a valid accommodation option when barriers in the workplace cannot be eliminated or mitigated
- The perception that a manager's budget can be a valid obstacle to providing an accommodation measure
- The lack of a centralized accommodation fund which makes access to tools and services inequitable to all DFO employees
- Difficulty finding new roles in the organization for employees who can no longer perform some or all of their substantive duties due to a disability because of a lack of mandatory referral of hiring managers to a Duty to Accommodate Placement list and lack of knowledge by hiring managers regarding the process
- Lack of data to properly identify the gaps and opportunities for improvement related to the accommodation process

Where we want to be

We envision a workplace in which employees feel secure in requesting accommodations they need without fear of stigma, managers are well-informed about their responsibilities under the Duty to Accommodate and are confident in navigating the process to obtain accommodations for their employees, employees who can no longer perform some or all of the duties of their existing roles find new, meaningful roles in the organization, and employees are receiving the accommodations they need in a timely manner.

Key indicators of progress:

- % of PwD who feel that accommodation issues have adversely affected their career progress in the federal public service over the last 12 months decreases (Source: PSES, question 44e)

- % of PwD who feel that accommodation issues have caused them work-related stress decreases (Source: PSES, question 73p)
- % of PwD who requested accommodation related to disability who were satisfied with the workplace accommodation measures implemented increases (Source: PSES, question 87, and annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
- % of PwD who report feeling comfortable requesting workplace accommodation measures from their immediate supervisor increases (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
- % of PwD who report accommodation issues as factors in choosing to leave DFO decreases (Source: DFO Exit Survey)

Strategies to help us get there

Objective ACC-1

Employees have timely access to accommodation measures.

Activity ACC-1a

Develop internal capacity within the Disability Management Centre of Expertise (DMCoE) to provide advice and guidance to managers and employees.

Activity ACC1-1b

Continue to leverage services offered by Accessibility, Accommodations and Adaptive Computer Technologies team (AAACT) to provide access to adaptive technology and tools.

Activity ACC-1c

Create a medical accommodation working group to streamline processes and delivery of accommodations, address awareness issues, and other key issues that are important to improve on accommodation delivery.

Activity ACC-1d

Explore organizational readiness and feasibility of implementing a centralized accommodation fund for all DFO.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Pillar Lead for Accommodations (People and Culture, Disability Management Centre of Expertise)
- Support:
  - People and Culture enablers (Labour Relations, Occupational Health and Safety, Corporate Staffing, Onboarding, Employee Development, WPAR, Accessibility Secretariat); Chief Financial Officer sector (Real Property, Procurement and Finance); Chief Digital Officer Sector; Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT).
- Performance indicator:
  - decision point about whether implementation of a centralized accommodation fund
- Timeline:
  - June 2027

Objective ACC-2

Timelines associated with workplace medical accommodation requested via the Disability Management Centre of Expertise are measurable.

Activity ACC-2a

Define service standards for the medical accommodation process with identification of Offices of Primary Interest (OPIs).

Activity ACC-2b

Review employee experience data to measure delivery standards by the DMCoE.

Activity ACC-2c

Review employee experience data to measure degree of effectiveness of the accommodations measures.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Pillar Lead for Accommodations (People and Culture, Disability Management Centre of Expertise)
- Support:
  - People and Culture enablers (Labour Relations, Occupational Health and Safety, Corporate Staffing, Onboarding, Employee Development, WPAR, Accessibility Secretariat); Chief Financial Officer sector (Real Property and Finance); Chief Digital Officer sector
- Performance indicators:
  - service standards are in place and timeliness of accommodations delivery is measurable
  - accommodations are provided within the developed service standards
- Timeline:
  - June 2028

Objective ACC-3

Employees who can no longer perform some or all of their substantive duties due to a disability are accommodated through temporary reassignment or permanent placement using the Duty to Accommodate (DTA) Placement List.

Activity ACC-3a

Obtain approval and implement internal DFO "Duty to Accommodate Placement List Process" to accommodate employees who are no longer able to perform some or all of the duties of their substantive position.

Activity ACC-3b

Establish a governance structure and process for case resolution related to the DTA Placement List.

Activity ACC-3c

Best practices are documented and shared with key stakeholders to increase resolution rate.

- Office of primary interest:
  - Pillar Lead for Accommodations (People and Culture, Disability Management Centre of Expertise)
- Support:
  - DFO management tables and governance committees; People and Culture enablers; Real Property, Chief Digital Officer
- Performance indicators:
  - governance structure is established and implemented
  - increase in the resolution rate of employees on the DTA Placement List: % of employees who have been temporarily placed and % of employees who have been provided with a permanent placement
  - resolution rate of cases at various levels of governance; cases are resolved at the lowest possible level of the governance structure
- Timeline:
  - June 2027

Objective ACC-4

Increased awareness of the Accessibility Passport and the social model of disability as related to medical accommodations.

Activity ACC-4a

Deliver information sessions on the Accessibility Passport and DTA.

Activity ACC-4b

Gather data on the awareness of the Accessibility Passport.

Activity ACC-4c

Publish communications products to promote the accommodation process and the Accessibility Passport.

Activity ACC-4d

Implement *myAccessibleWorkplace* which includes the digital Accessibility Passport providing secure, respected format for documenting accommodations agreements.

- Office of primary interest:
    - Pillar Lead for Accommodations (People and Culture, Disability Management Centre of Expertise)
- Support:
    - Accessibility Secretariat and Accessibility Network
- Performance indicators:
    - information and awareness sessions are offered at least 6 times per year until awareness level reaches 80%
    - % of employees and managers who are aware of the Accessibility Passport and the medical accommodation process increases (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
    - number of employees using the GC Accessibility Passport increases over time

- Timeline:
    - June 2026 and ongoing

Objective ACC-5

Managers are aware of their role, responsibilities, and financial obligation with regard to the DTA, and with regard to the requirements associated with the Duty to Accommodate Placement List process.

Activity ACC-5a

Publish communications products to managers regarding their responsibility to cover costs of accommodation measures and about the process of accommodations.

Activity ACC-5b

Enhance awareness about the AAACT lending library project via communications products and embed content in awareness sessions for employees and managers.

Activity ACC-5c

Provide information sessions to managers and employees about the Duty to Accommodate placement process.

Activity ACC-5d

Embed education about the DTA Placement List process within the staffing sub-delegation training.

- Office of primary interest:
    - Pillar Lead for Accommodations (People and Culture, Disability Management Centre of Expertise)
- Support:
    - Accessibility Secretariat; Corporate Staffing

- Performance indicators:
  - communications products are published to remind managers of their responsibilities related to the cost of accommodation at least annually
  - % of managers who are aware of their responsibilities towards the DTA process increases (Source: annual DFO Accessibility Questionnaire)
  - communications products promoting the AAACT service offerings and lending library are published at least annually
  - information sessions are delivered on the DTA Placement List at least twice per year
  - DTA Placement List process is embedded in the staffing sub-delegation training
- Timeline:
  - March 2027

Conclusion

The *Fisheries and Oceans Canada Accessibility Action Plan 2026 to 2028 - From Insight to Impact* is our next step in building a more inclusive and accessible department for everyone. It reflects what we've learned from our first plan and the voices of employees and partners who shared their experiences and ideas.

We know that creating a barrier-free workplace and service environment takes time, effort, and collaboration. This plan outlines clear goals and actions to help us move forward—whether it's improving how we hire, making our buildings and digital tools more accessible, or ensuring people get the accommodations they need.

Accessibility is a shared responsibility. Everyone at Fisheries and Oceans Canada has a role to play in making our organization more inclusive. By working together, listening to people with disabilities, and staying accountable, we can make real progress.

We are committed to tracking our results, learning as we go, and continuing to improve. Our goal is to make accessibility part of everything we do—so that all DFO employees and all Canadians can fully participate and thrive.

Footnotes

* Note that these and all employment statistics in the following paragraphs are as of June 2025 and therefore include CCG. At the next annual report statistics on representation will be available for the newly constituted DFO.