



2025 Accessibility progress report for Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada



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1-800-567-9604

TTY only 1-866-553-0554

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Table of contents

- General
- Employment
- Built environment
- Information and communication technologies
- Communication, other than information and communication technologies
- Procurement
- Design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation

General

The 2025 Progress Report is included as Annex A to the 2026-2028 CIRNAC Accessibility Plan . This is the final progress report for actions identified in CIRNAC's [Accessibility Plan \(2023 - 2025\)](#), reflecting the 2025 calendar year and complements [previous progress reports for 2023 and 2024](#), which were published as per Section 13 of the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#). CIRNAC's *Accessible Canada Act* Secretariat collaborated with functional and programs and services leads to develop this annex. The following progress reporting data, reflecting seven priority areas of action as defined by the *Accessible Canada Act*, was collected in September and October 2025.

Employment

Barrier 1 : Requests for accommodation are not processed in an efficient or timely manner.

- CIRNAC's Duty to Accommodate (DTA) team continues to systemically promote the use of the Government of Canada Passport for Workplace Accessibility ("Passport"), to streamline the Duty to Accommodate process and reduce delays, including through:
 - Automatic response emails from the CIRNAC Duty to Accommodate/Accommodations team generic account, initial emails to employees and/or managers, and emails sent to employees and/or managers upon completion of DTA files.
 - Meetings with employees and/or managers, accompanied by the Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA)'s supplementary catalogue of common workplace barriers and related accommodation solutions.
 - A new form for DTA requests that includes questions to determine if an employee has an existing Passport and to receive employee permission to share Passport contents with manager. Support for completing employee Passports is provided upon request.
- The digital version of the Passport was officially launched for CIRNAC employees in October 2025, to further streamline the Duty to Accommodate process and make

workplace accommodation information easier to update, share and follow employees through their career. To support this launch:

- CIRNAC's internal communication strategy to promote the digital Passport includes the internal Express newsletter, Deputy Minister news meetings, and all-staff emails.
- Five employee ambassadors have been identified and will work to promote and support the use of the digital Passport within CIRNAC.
- Over the course of the 2024 to 2025 fiscal year, CIRNAC held 19 internal DTA information sessions, integrating accessibility and the social model of disability, to raise awareness and strengthen employees' and managers' ability to address accessibility needs:
 - A total of 599 participants attended these sessions, with a minimum of 118 participants being managers
 - Upcoming series of information sessions, for employees and managers within each CIRNAC sector, to be held beginning in winter 2025 to 2026
- CIRNAC's intranet page for DTA has been substantially updated to make accommodation processes easier and faster to navigate, reducing delays caused by unclear or hard-to-find information, including: revisions for plain language, redesign of content and navigation, step-by-step guidance, a new section outlining roles and responsibilities for managers, and added links towards information on the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport.
 - CIRNAC participated as one of the nine implementation partners in the interdepartmental pilot Better Accommodation Project (BAP), led by Employment and Social Development Canada, that began in the fall of 2024 and concluded in summer 2025. This initiative, via employee and manager consultations, identified priority barriers (sludge audit) and solutions in each participating department to improve accommodation processes and results for employees, using evidence-based approaches.
 - The sludge audit identified the priority barrier as being access to accurate, understandable, and up-to-date information was a priority barrier for action in order to improve DTA processes at CIRNAC. Another identified barrier was usability, content and navigation issues with the DTA intranet page.
 - Significant changes and updates were made to the Intranet information and a second sludge audit was conducted through consultation with CIRNAC employees and managers in June 2025. The feedback collected from the second audit determined that updates to CIRNAC's intranet page for DTA reduced barriers to accessing clear and relevant information about individual

workplace accommodation processes. Content was reported to be more useful and accurate, and with greater clarity and ease of intuitive navigation.

- A centralized fund for workplace accommodations requests has been available since December 2024 to help managers and employees access the needed equipment/tools/services more quickly and reduce delays caused by budget considerations:
 - By the end of 2025 to 2026 fiscal year, the DTA team aims to simplify and accelerate this process by establishing a one stop shop service model using the centralized fund for accommodation purchases on behalf of employees and managers. Under the current process, the fund is only used if a manager does not have requisite budget to fulfill DTA needs.
- CIRNAC DTA employees continue to attend bi-monthly interdepartmental meetings for the Passport Community of Practice, and have enrolled in four courses offered by Pacific Coast University's Disability Management Practitioner Program to build knowledge and skills that help process accommodation requests more efficiently and effectively.

Barrier 2: Difficulty recruiting persons with disabilities.

- CIRNAC conducted few external recruitment activities during the reporting year. External recruitment activities were based on organizational needs, including the recruitment of persons with disabilities. The primary emphasis was placed on internal mobility, encouraging employees to express interest in new opportunities and to self-identify as members of designated groups to support employment equity. Efforts were made to promote the recruitment of persons with disabilities and to identify and mitigate potential biases and barriers within staffing processes, including through the contribution of diverse assessment committees. The findings of the 2024 to 2025 monitoring of staffing processes, with a focus on Public Service Employment Act (PSEA) section 36(2), reveals that managers need further support to understand and apply these requirements. HR must also improve documentation practices. We are participating in the Public Service Commission's (PSC) audit of section 36(2), with results expected in late 2026 to define better inclusive recruitment strategies.

Barrier 3: Difficulties faced by persons with disabilities in the hiring process.

- Public Service Commission (PSC) workshops and tools regarding biases and accessibility barriers in staffing processes are continuously promoted to managers and Human Resources (HR) advisors. These resources are distributed through

- internal emails and when new files are opened in order to improve fair and accessible hiring practices while reducing delays and barriers for applicants with disabilities.
- CIRNAC Human Resources and Workplace Services are developing tools and guidance to reduce barriers for applicants with disabilities and promote barrier-free, accessible, and equitable hiring processes:
 - An assessment form for managers to identify and mitigate biases and accessibility barriers at the onset of staffing processes. This form will promote accessibility, diversity and equity in staffing requirements, qualifications, assessments, and outreach activities.
 - A tool for Human Resources advisors about inclusive hiring practices that promotes plain language, distinctions between essential and asset qualifications, consideration of skill and experience equivalencies, statements on accommodation and equity, and awareness of biases. This was achieved by implementing an internal procedure to manage accommodation requests during staffing processes thus ensuring candidates' needs are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner. The data and insights gathered through this procedure will further support continuous improvement in our recruitment practices, helping us build more inclusive and responsive staffing approaches.
 - A guide for Human Resources advisors regarding accommodation needs in hiring processes. This guide will provide direction on identifying and implementing accommodation requests for candidates, in line with employment equity and accessibility requirements.
 - When the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) releases a new employee self-identification form, it will be integrated in CIRNAC staffing processes to help identify accessibility needs early and support a more inclusive and equitable hiring process. The current employee self-identification form is still available and valid, with completion being voluntary.

Barrier 4: Difficulties faced by persons with disabilities with respect to integration and retention.

- For the 2025 to 2026 fiscal year, CIRNAC employees, managers, and senior executives must include common work objectives aimed at promoting accessibility, respect, equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism in the workplace.
- To raise awareness:
 - Standardized welcome and onboarding messages for employees and students have been changed to highlight accommodation resources. A new message has also been developed for managers supervising students.

- Resources offered to employees and managers for learning, development, and performance agreements have been expanded to ensure a variety of options. This also includes references to accommodation processes.
- Letters of offer used when staffing executive positions now include a paragraph informing new hires, or those changing their roles, of their right to request accommodation from their new manager along with key information.
- Measures to make Public Service Commission (PSC) Second Language Assessment (SLA) more efficient have been successfully implemented, specifically by allowing employees who are taking assessments to directly submit their accommodation requests to PSC's centralized candidate assessment tool.
- Reports on completion rates for performance agreements and mandatory courses from the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS), specifically "Introduction to Gender-Based Analysis Plus" (INC101) and "Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce" (COR102) are sent to key departmental partners on a pre-established schedule.

Built Environment

The list of CIRNAC-occupied buildings listed in this section do not represent all work locations. The worksites listed reflect those with updates related to current or planned renovations, as reported over the 2025 period.

Barrier 1: There is a lack of universal and accessible washrooms.

- All CIRNAC swing spaces in the National Capital Region (NCR) currently have available accessible washrooms.
- The following installations of universal accessible washrooms have been completed since the last progress report:
 - 100 Eglantine (Jeanne Mance Building) in Ottawa, Ontario, one universal accessible washroom per every three floors.
 - 1138 Melville in Vancouver, British Columbia, two accessible and universal washrooms.
- The following locations are in the implementation or planning stages for universal accessible washrooms:
 - 10 Wellington (Terrasses de la Chaudière Complex) in Gatineau, Quebec, floors 12-13-15-16-17-18-19-20; renovated floors to be released by PSPC in April 2026, with re-occupancy planned for Fall 2026 at earliest.
 - 9700 Jasper in Edmonton, Alberta, by March 2026.
 - 4923 52nd (Gallery Building) in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, by June 2026.
 - 391 York (Stanley Knowles Building) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, by Fall 2029.

Barrier 2 : There are challenges to accessing certain collaboration office spaces due to the lack of automatic door openers.

- For all renovation projects, CIRNAC requests from Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) the installation of automatic door openers exceeding minimum fit-up standards.
- The following installations of automatic door openers have been completed through renovation processes since last progress reporting:
 - 100 Eglantine (Jeanne Mance Building) in Ottawa, Ontario.
 - 1138 Melville in Vancouver, British Columbia.
- The following locations are in the implementation or planning stages for installations of automatic door openers:
 - 10 Wellington (Terrasses de la Chaudière Complex) in Gatineau, Quebec, floors 12-13-15-16-17-18-19-20; renovated floors to be released by PSPC in April 2026, with re-occupancy planned for Fall 2026 at earliest.
 - 9700 Jasper in Edmonton, Alberta, by March 2026.
 - 4923 52nd (Gallery Building) in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, by June 2026.
 - 391 York (Stanley Knowles Building) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, by Fall 2029.

Barrier 3 : Persons with disabilities are facing challenges related to common space areas.

Some challenges include difficulties accessing buildings, lack of braille signage, non-accessible height of kitchen sinks and counters, non-adaptable lighting, and narrow and cluttered passageways and corridors.

- CIRNAC floor designs for new and renovated spaces now incorporate maximum corridor width and turning radius for physical accessibility.
- Current and future changes to doors within CIRNAC office buildings prioritise accessibility criteria, including width and mechanisms for opening.
- Braille signage now requested for all renovation projects in CIRNAC spaces, exceeding PSPC fit-up standard minimums.

Additional actions

- Visual emergency alarm systems are now installed in CIRNAC workspaces upon request. These alarm systems will also be integrated into current and future renovation plans.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Barrier 1 : The information and communications technologies within the organization do not consistently meet accessibility requirements.

- ICT forms identified in CIRNAC's 2023 to 2025 for have been updated to be made accessible. However, a new ICT Performance Management Framework (PMF) is currently in development. This framework outlines what the ICT sector's goals are and what is expected from employees. As a result:
 - The remainder of 2025 to 2026 fiscal year will focus on finalizing the PMF, assigning new owners to forms, and ensuring that accessibility standards are in place for all new forms and templates.
 - Ownership of the PMF is now shared across three teams. A need for additional support and tools has been identified in order to make sure that all forms and templates are consistent in meeting accessibility requirements.

Barrier 2: Instilling accessibility culture within IT Service and with our employees will involve change that may be met with some resistance. Employees want fully interactive and visually complex solutions that may not be accessible. IM-IT professionals may lack the knowledge and awareness of adaptive technologies required for employees with disabilities.

- Accessibility training curriculum has been developed for Information Management Branch (IMB) employees, and has been submitted to be included in future employee performance management agreements. This training aims to equip IMB employees with knowledge and confidence in accessibility matters in order to encourage further culture change.
- Plans for the remainder of the current fiscal year (2025 to 2026) and next fiscal year (2026 to 2027) within CIRNAC ICT include:
 - Developing resources to improve the tracking and reporting of progress for Accessibility Plan actions related to ICT, and creating measurable performance indicators for accessibility. These developments improve the accountability and measurement of ICT-related actions in future accessibility progress reports.
 - Identifying new employees to act as accessibility champions for ICT service areas. There is currently only one ICT-specific accessibility champion, and the addition of other champions will grow capacity for accessibility culture change within ICT and the sharing of knowledge and best practices.

Barrier 3: There is currently no funding allocated for accessibility development and testing within IT Services. Funding is required to increase IT Services' expertise and ability to assess information and communication technologies accessibility.

- Funding for accessibility development and testing are to be considered for prioritisation in ICT planning processes for the next fiscal year (2026 to 2027).

Communications other than information and communication technologies

Barrier 1: Internal and external email communications are not fully accessible and not in plain language.

Barrier 2: Documents, presentations, videos and events can be visually complex and not accessible to all.

- To widely promote best practices in accessible communication, 23 articles about accessible communication - including email messages, plain language, and visual communication products - were published in the *Express* internal newsletter for all CIRNAC employees since October 2024.
- The Digital Accessibility Toolkit and plain language best practices are used for content development of the *Express* weekly internal newsletter, ensuring that CIRNAC employees encounter minimal barriers in accessing important information.
- To reduce barriers to accessibility, CIRNAC Communications continues to advise employees and clients regarding accessibility guidelines for events, visual content, and other communication products.
- CIRNAC continues to provide both oral simultaneous and sign language interpretation for department-wide official events.
- A one-pager overview regarding mandatory requirements for accessible video productions has been developed and will be published in the intranet as a reference for communications advisors. This one-pager will support the consistency of accessibility standards across CIRNAC video products.
- All corporate templates, including PowerPoint presentations, have been made accessible and will be shared with employees. This will ensure that corporate templates consider accessibility from the start, including use of screen readers and visual barriers for persons with disabilities.

Barrier 3: Existing internal and external web content contains information that is inaccessible.

- Communications continues to advise regarding accessibility requirements for intranet and web content, with resources made available for employees and clients, to reduce barriers to accessibility in the presentation of information.
- To reduce barriers to accessibility before publishing, most new web content and updates are reviewed for plain language and alignment with Canada.ca Writing Style Guide before publishing.
- A partnership was launched in 2025 between Communications and PSPC's Translation Bureau to increase the use of Indigenous languages in digital communications products:

- 96 CIRNAC webpages are now available in at least one Indigenous language, with 15 Indigenous languages currently reflected in public internet communication products.
- This partnership continues, with expansion of CIRNAC's web management system to support additional Indigenous languages to be completed by end of 2025.
- Reviews of external web functions include evaluating how responsibility for ensuring accessibility in service and digital transformation is shared between Information Management/Information Technologies (IM/IT) and Communications.

Additional actions

- Communications employees regularly participate as members of the interdepartmental Accessibility Community of Practice and attend its monthly meetings, ensuring up-to-date knowledge of accessibility tools and best practices within the federal service.

Procurement

Barrier 1: The Accessible Canada Act is not always considered by business owners, technical authorities (TA), and employees when specifying requirements.

- CIRNAC pre-procurement checklists – a practical tool used by CIRNAC employees to follow procurement requirements – continue to require confirmation that accessibility is considered. This is to make sure that the *Accessible Canada Act* is considered in procurements.
- To strengthen knowledge and confidence to apply the *Accessible Canada Act* in CIRNAC's procurements, technical guides for accessible procurement are available and will be uploaded to CIRNAC's intranet by December 2025.
- Accessible procurement training sessions – held by PSPC in July 2025 – were advertised internally through the CIRNAC employee newsletter, encouraging employees to strengthen their knowledge of how accessibility applies to procurement.

Barrier 2: Contracting officers lack commodity and market knowledge necessary to challenge the non-applicability of the Accessible Canada Act.

- To strengthen employee confidence in applying the *Accessible Canada Act* to procurement processes, all CIRNAC procurement officers attended PSPC/Shared Services Canada (SSC) accessible procurement training sessions in September 2025, with participation counting towards professional development hours. These sessions were promoted internally through procurement operations.

- CIRNAC procurement officers collaborate with subject matter experts from PSPC and SSC to continue strengthening accessibility in policy and practice.
- CIRNAC is in the planning stages to develop an internal procurement checklist, including accessibility considerations, for both procurement officers and for clients. This checklist will support increased compliance with accessibility requirements in procurement processes.

Design and delivery of programs and services

Barriers 1 and 2: Currently the design of new external programs and services does not adequately address accessibility. This presents a barrier to external clients with disabilities in fully accessing CIRNAC programs and services.

Some programs and services, and aspects of programs and services, still present accessibility barriers to persons with disabilities.

- The Modern Treaties, Consultation and Intergovernmental Relations (MTCIR) sector is in the process of redesigning the interface of the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System (ATRIS), including testing to meet accessibility standards. This redesign will improve access for all ARTIS users, including those with disabilities.

Barrier 3: There is a greater need for employees that deliver programs and services to understand what accessibility standards must be followed when interacting with external clients. When delivering programs and services, the application of consistent accessibility best practices is not always provided. Sometimes, this will lead to inconsistent levels of accessibility when delivering programs and services to clients.

- The MTCIR sector has established an advisory group with external representatives, with a mandate including accessibility concerns in delivery of programs and services.
 - MTCIR also shares training resources and lists of Indigenous partners to support program and service accessibility. This sector plans to refer to relevant publications from Accessible Standards Canada, as they are published, to further best practices in accessibility from subject matter experts.
- The Northern Affairs Organization (NAO) sector actively encourages its employees and managers to take available trainings and other education opportunities regarding accessibility, in order to promote best practices and accessibility confidence in the delivery of their programs and services.
 - NOA has also broadened its internal awareness of accessibility requirements for program and service delivery, including accessible and plain language use

in public-facing program and service webpages, to improve program and service delivery for clients with disabilities.

Barrier 4: There are several barriers that clients with disabilities experience when completing program and service application forms. Some examples of barriers that were identified include forms that are not in plain language, complex application processes, and the location of regional offices in some areas make the in-person access option not possible for many. There is also a need for increased awareness of the accessibility features and supports that CIRNAC offers clients.

- The NAO sector offers clients and partners access to printed materials and telephone services as alternatives to internet-dependant documents and forms, making application processes more accessible for clients both with disabilities and without reliable internet access.
- Access to braille and tactile writing systems for documents and forms to be considered over the timeframe of the 2026 to 2028 CIRNAC Accessibility Plan, in order to further accessibility for clients in application processes in the ways that information can be given or received.

Transportation

The CIRNAC Accessibility Plan for 2023 to 2025 was published in December 2022. At that time, no transportation barriers were identified through internal and external consultations. However, recognizing the critical role of transportation in accessibility, these barriers have been queried in 2024 and 2025 through consultation and engagement with persons with disabilities. The CIRNAC Accessibility Plan for 2026 to 2028 includes priority barriers for transportation as identified through these activities.

Text