

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

2024 Annual Progress Report

December 2024

© 2024 National Film Board of Canada
Cat. No. NF2-5E-PDF
ISSN 2819-2451



TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL	3
EMPLOYMENT	5
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	6
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES	7
OTHER COMMUNICATIONS	8
PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES	9
DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	9
TRANSPORTATION	10
CONSULTATIONS	10
FEEDBACK	10

GENERAL

FEEDBACK

The NFB is committed to inclusivity for people with disabilities. We welcome feedback about barriers you have encountered when dealing with us and about the implementation of our Accessibility Plan.

We offer a variety of ways for employees, collaborators, members of our audience and the public to offer feedback. You may use any of the following communication channels:

E-mail: accessibility@nfb.ca

Feedback form: [Contact the NFB](#)

Phone: 1-800-267-7710 (toll-free in Canada)
We are available to take your call Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)

Mail: National Film Board of Canada
1501 Rue de Bleury
Montreal, Quebec H3A 0H3

Social media: [Twitter-X](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Instagram](#)

Information on our feedback process is also available on [our website](#).

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team receives feedback on barriers and the Accessibility Plan. Feedback is acknowledged through the same means by which it was received, unless it was sent anonymously.

ALTERNATE FORMATS

A [digital version of the Accessibility Plan](#), which works with assistive technology, is available on our website.

Alternate formats include:

- ✓ Print;
- ✓ Large print (increased font size);
- ✓ Braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers);
- ✓ Audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud).

You can also contact the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team to request a copy of the Accessibility Plan, progress reports or a description of our feedback process in an alternate format.

We will respond to requests for other formats as soon as we can.

THE NFB'S INTENTIONAL ACCESSIBILITY EFFORTS SO FAR

In 2022, the NFB started working on our first accessibility plan. In 2023, we teamed up with Left Turn Right Turn Ltd. (LTRT) and its Accessibility Advisory Committee to hear about barriers people with disabilities face. On August 29, 2023, we published our Accessibility Plan (2023–2025). The plan complies with the *Accessible Canada Act* and is aligned with the NFB's 2021 commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Grounded in the principle that disability rights are human rights, the plan asserts universal access as a shared benefit. This plan recognizes that the NFB cannot truly serve as Canada's public storyteller unless persons with disabilities are full participants in how its content is made and seen. This vision extends to ensuring individuals with disabilities can seamlessly connect with and enjoy our works.

Since we published the Accessibility Plan, we have been intentional in implementing it. This report documents our advancements up to and including December 2024, as well as actions that are underway or planned, to address key areas specified in the *Accessible Canada Act*. We focus mainly on objectives that were identified in our Accessibility Plan, so this is a non-exhaustive list of work we have undertaken toward accessibility. Overall, the NFB is on track to meet our accessibility objectives as set out in the plan.

Mid-year, the EDI Lead Team met with those responsible for different areas of the Accessibility Plan to determine what was needed to advance accessibility. The results of these discussions have been integrated throughout this report.

The NFB remains resolute in advancing accessibility, fostering inclusivity and championing the rights of people with disabilities.

This report presents our progress in six¹ of the areas of focus under the *Accessible Canada Act*:

- ✓ [Employment](#);
- ✓ [The built environment](#);
- ✓ [Information and communication technologies](#);
- ✓ [Other communications](#);
- ✓ [Procurement of goods, services and facilities](#);
- ✓ [Design and delivery of programs and services](#).

¹ The *Accessible Canada Act* covers seven areas. However, we did not report on the seventh area, transportation, which does not apply to the NFB.

Following our discussions on the progress made in each of these areas, this report contains information about the consultations we undertook and the feedback we received in 2024.

EMPLOYMENT

The NFB is dedicated to establishing a workplace that embraces inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring an equitable environment for people with disabilities. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for applicants with diverse needs, both during the application process and throughout their employment journey. Our goal is to cultivate a workplace culture that recognizes the value of diversity and accessibility, achieved through industry best practices and comprehensive training resources.

To actively promote inclusivity, the NFB has undertaken several initiatives, including:

- ✓ Proactively sought and adopted best practices for ensuring accessibility in employment processes. To this end:
 - all communications in the recruitment process have been reviewed to ensure that candidates are welcome to ask for accommodation at various points through the process;
 - when posting positions, we now consider the need for requirements related to personal qualities to limit potential barriers to employment.
- ✓ Contracted a specialized firm to conduct an HR policy audit, examining areas such as recruitment practices, onboarding, wellness, safety, career pathing, transition from manager to leader, and development. The recommendations that resulted from the audit included:
 - Implement an anti-racism and anti-discrimination policy, with reporting or complaint mechanisms that are very clearly identified and, ideally, an anonymous option as well;
 - Implement an Employee Resource Group program;
 - Implement an integrated talent-management process with clear career pathing and succession planning, identifying development projects for lateral growth, etc. Also, implement development plans for all employees, with a focus on underrepresented groups and tracking of allocated resources to ensure equity;
 - Create tailored leadership-development programs, including targeted programs for underrepresented groups such as persons with disabilities; focus on developing leadership skills in underrepresented groups to help them reach the upper ranks of the organization;
 - Create targeted recruitment campaigns for disabled communities; identify specific initiatives to accommodate specific needs and then create alliances with key organizations working with this community (e.g., blind or deaf communities);

- Create an advisory committee with individuals living with disabilities to get clear inputs on the experience of disabled employees throughout the employee life cycle, from hiring to onboarding and performance evaluations/promotions and career development;
- Create sponsorship programs specifically targeting women and members of underrepresented groups, to open doors, identify high-potential individuals and grow diversity at the higher levels.
- ✓ Launched an anonymous EDI survey, sent to all employees in spring 2024. The survey results showed that of the 232 respondents (a 67% participation rate), 13% indicated that they have a physical disability. Focus groups that will take place in 2025 will allow the NFB to further explore any unmet needs these employees may have.
- ✓ Started providing coaching to executive leaders on their EDI knowledge, allyship posture and accountability, to support a more compassionate and respectful workplace.

Also, we are in the process of developing a comprehensive workplace accommodation policy that provides clear guidance on requesting accommodations.

These measures reflect our ongoing commitment to fostering an environment where everyone, regardless of their abilities, can thrive professionally.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The NFB aims to create inclusive and barrier-free workspaces that cater to the needs of people with disabilities, fostering a more equitable and accommodating work environment.

Improving the NFB's physical work spaces is a key aspect of our accessibility work and will unfold over an extended period of time. Our goal is to improve physical spaces and adjust evacuation plans in every office by December 2025 to make them more accessible.

We've recognized some obstacles, like open offices posing challenges for neurodivergent individuals, as well as the absence of automatic door openers on certain doors and issues with faucets for people using wheelchairs. Since we are tenants in the buildings housing our offices, we must work with various stakeholders to make our facilities more accessible.

In 2024, we started collaborating with a Built Environment Accessibility Specialist, building management, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) and others. The firm has audited the NFB's headquarters in downtown Montreal and the Conservation Lab in the borough of Saint-Laurent and made an exhaustive list of additional barriers beyond what we'd already identified.

To adapt to a hybrid workplace that's become a permanent reality and a return to in-person work (at least three days per week for hybrid employees), and for financial efficiency, we've been reviewing the floor plans of our headquarters office to accommodate another federal government department that will soon be sharing the space. Accessibility for those who use a wheelchair is a key consideration of the floor-plan review. To support this change, we are planning to implement accommodation measures for employees working in open-concept spaces in 2025.

With respect to emergency preparedness, all first aid kits in offices across Canada have been moved to ensure they are at a height that's accessible to all, just as the automatic external defibrillator (AED) machines are. Furthermore, forms that will help in the planning of emergency preparedness for people with disabilities have been prepared and posted on the Intranet. Over the next year, our Labour Relations and Health and Safety Advisor will work with disability specialists to review evacuation plans for all NFB offices.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

The NFB is dedicated to enhancing the accessibility of our public-facing websites and apps. Our objective is to identify and eliminate barriers, ensuring compliance with the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) by the conclusion of our Accessibility Plan. Through enhancements in captioning, navigation and overall design, we aim to establish an inclusive online environment that facilitates equal access and usability for people with disabilities. This initiative underscores our commitment to fostering digital inclusivity and ensuring user-friendly experiences for all.

Acknowledging the intricacies of information and communication technology, our full objectives span a more extended timeframe, with a targeted completion date of December 2025.

Meanwhile, our web team has actively been working to improve accessibility on our online platforms. The team has been striving to stay up to date with the most recent accessibility guidelines that were published on November 27, 2023 (WCAG 2.2). Our consultations with people with disabilities identified several barriers that we've started to remove. The changes include larger font sizes, accentuated colour contrasts and a better experience for screen-reader users on our websites and apps.

Also, during our review of nfb.ca in 2024, we identified a specialized firm that has competencies in accessibility. The firm has begun an audit, focusing first on the NFB's streaming activity. This work will continue into 2025.

We've also improved access to accessible content on the streaming platform (the option to skip to our Accessibility page when navigating with a screen reader and quick links to the accessible collection, i.e., titles with closed captioning and described video).

Additionally, we are staying informed about evolving standards for described video and audio descriptions in audiovisual content, as established by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

We have continued to leverage the expertise and resources available through the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) group at Shared Services Canada to identify technology and equipment that can assist people with various types and degrees of disabilities, and to support requests for accommodations as required. We have also shared resources with staff on how to use the accessibility features of the Microsoft Office suite through Office 365.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The NFB is committed to ensuring our communications are inclusive and accessible to all.

Since the release of the NFB's 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan, we have been implementing an accessibility standard for all new productions and co-productions. These works must be delivered with closed captioning in English and French and in descriptive video in the original language of production. This commitment has translated into significant progress in removing barriers to NFB programs and services. To date, the film catalogue on nfb.ca has a total of 2,729 versions with closed captioning and 513 films with descriptive video. This ensures a more accessible viewing experience for our audience.

When closed captioning or described video is available for a given film or series, the DV and/or CC icons will appear in the control bar of the video player. Clicking on one of these icons will start the alternative version of the film. Instructions on how to find films with closed captioning or described video on nfb.ca are available on our Accessibility page at <https://help.nfb.ca/accessibility/>.

Moreover, in 2024, the NFB submitted comments to the CRTC as part of the public consultation for the development of a regulatory policy for the distribution of described video and audio description of content on online undertakings. This consultation is being carried out under the reform of the *Broadcasting Act* (Online Streaming Act), but also under the *Accessible Canada Act*.

With respect to posters and other promotional visuals, we received feedback that there is a need for training and a general toolkit for our freelance graphic designers on how to create accessible design for promotional items and branding in general. Given our commitment to ensuring materials such as newsletters, web banners, digital and traditional ads, film trailers, behind-the-scenes videos, panels and posters are accessible, this need will be addressed in 2025.

Finally, we've created clear guidelines to make all-staff meetings more inclusive for neurodivergent employees. These guidelines help ensure that everyone can fully participate, through the inclusion of measures such as sharing agendas ahead of time, using visuals and using simple, clear language. These steps are designed to make meetings more comfortable and welcoming for everyone, so all employees feel supported and able to contribute.

PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The NFB is committed to promptly integrating industry best practices, developing guidance and checklists by December 2025, and conducting training for employees engaged in the procurement process. This effort is geared towards enhancing accessibility in the acquisition of goods, services and facilities.

In 2024, we participated in the federal public service's first Small Business Information Expo for small and medium businesses owned by underrepresented entrepreneurs, and we have been exploring potential partnerships and memberships with organizations such as Disability:IN's *Procure Access*.

DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The NFB is committed to making our resources and events accessible to everyone. Our goal is to ensure that educational materials, film submissions and interactions with creators are barrier-free and that people with disabilities receive effective support in our workshops and events.

In 2024, we have:

- ✓ Set up a process to monitor the participation of underrepresented groups, including people with disabilities, in key creative roles;
- ✓ Developed a new training program on disability-inclusive customer service, launching in 2025, which will build on our team's mental health response guide and knowledge-sharing practices for assisting clients with accessibility needs;
- ✓ Created clear language for event invitations so attendees can easily request accommodations, and developed an accessibility checklist for all NFB-organized events;
- ✓ Shared instructions for arranging sign-language interpreters on our Accessibility Intranet page.

Over 90% of events held at our headquarters in Montreal, at 1501 Rue de Bleury, are hosted by third parties. The main event space is on the ground floor and accessible. The building also offers accessible entry points, and the Alanis Obomsawin Theatre on the mezzanine level is accessible by elevator. Partners can request resources like our aforementioned list of sign-language services and sample accessibility statements for their event invitations.

TRANSPORTATION

The NFB does not provide passenger transportation services.

CONSULTATIONS

As mentioned in our Accessibility Plan, we plan to engage in ongoing discussions with people who have disabilities. This might involve forming an internal group of employees with disabilities (an advisory committee or employee resource group) or an advisory committee for our audience and/or a partnership with an organization such as the Disability Screen Office. We want to provide a platform for people with disabilities to share their experiences with accessibility at the NFB. We also want to hear their thoughts on our current accessibility efforts and any issues they see in the film industry regarding accessibility. We expect quarterly meetings with this group to consult on the main areas of our Accessibility Plan.

In 2024, an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Employee Council was created, which includes representatives on various aspects of diversity, including people with disabilities. Developing an Employee Resource Group (such as for people with disabilities) is among the priorities being evaluated for 2025.

Additionally, as mentioned above, during the reporting year, the NFB contracted specialized firms to support its accessibility goals, notably in the areas of employment, web accessibility and the built environment.

Finally, the EDI Lead Team participates in communities of practice and sessions with firms such as LTRT to exchange ideas on best practices in the area of accessibility.

FEEDBACK

We value feedback on accessibility at the NFB and welcome input from employees, collaborators, audience members and the public. As indicated in the General section of

our Accessibility Plan and this report, various channels, including email, phone, mail and social media, are available for submitting feedback. Feedback can be submitted anonymously, and the EDI team reviews and considers all feedback for progress reports and future accessibility plans.

In addition to the points listed in the Consultations section above, we have received the following feedback:

Website Accessibility

- A representative from the Regroupement des aveugles et amblyopes du Montréal métropolitain (RAAMM) who uses Jaws software reported difficulties navigating the website and accessing audio-described films. Information about video descriptions was also inaccessible. The web team has incorporated this feedback into website design improvements.
- Representatives from the Festival International de Cinéma Adapté de Montréal (FICAM) suggested several improvements, including the addition of LSQ-subtitled feature films, a more accessible website for visually impaired users, contrasting background colours for interpreters, and LSQ interpreters for post-screening discussions.

Subtitles and Closed Captioning

- An Ontario customer wished to add homemade subtitles to four films due to a lack of closed captioning. Transcripts were shared to assist them.
- A university instructor raised concerns about films without closed captioning, which created accessibility barriers for students.
- A hearing-impaired customer was unable to hear dialogue in a 1940 film. In response, a transcript was provided by our Archives team in lieu of subtitles.

Film Catalogue

- A high-risk, COVID-vulnerable senior inquired about alternative media options for films currently screening in theatres. For now, no alternatives are available until these films are uploaded to nfb.ca.
- A customer sought Quebec films with video descriptions. They were guided on how to refine their search on nfb.ca.

We will continue to promote the feedback process both internally and externally through our social media channels and messages to staff.