



Public Health Agency of Canada

2026–2028 Accessibility Plan and 2025 Progress Report



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada 

To promote and protect the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation and action in public health.

—Public Health Agency of Canada

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Table of Contents

Foreword.....	2
Introduction	3
General	4
Promoting the feedback process	4
Accessibility Statement	5
Areas described under Section 5 of the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i>	6
Employment	6
The Built Environment.....	8
Information and Communication Technologies.....	9
Communication, other than information and communication technologies.....	11
The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities	12
The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services	13
Transportation	14
Culture	14
Persons with Disabilities Network	16
Consultations	16
Internal consultations.....	16
External consultations	17
Accessibility Leadership Committee	17
Performance Measurement Framework for Accessibility	18
Conclusion	18
Annex: Public Health Agency of Canada 2025 Accessibility Progress Report	19

Foreword

Message from the President

Advancing accessibility is essential to building a healthier, more inclusive society. I recognize that health equity begins with ensuring every person, regardless of ability, can participate fully in our workplace, and engage with our programs and services.

This second Accessibility Plan for the Public Health Agency of Canada reflects our commitment to removing barriers, fostering inclusion, and ensuring that accessibility is embedded in everything we do. This plan offers a clear path forward to create environments where everyone can thrive. By integrating accessibility into our daily work, we are not only improving access, we are strengthening our ability to serve all people living in Canada more effectively.

Alongside this Plan is the third annual Accessibility Progress Report. Over the past year, we've taken meaningful steps to make our workplace more inclusive and free of barriers. The insights and knowledge of employees and Canadians with lived experiences have shaped the progress we've made. Thanks to the collaboration and dedication of persons with disabilities, colleagues, and internal and external partners, we are moving closer to lasting culture change.

Thank you,

Nancy Hamzawi (she/her)

President of the Public Health Agency of Canada

Introduction

The [Accessible Canada Act](#) (the Act) requires all Government of Canada departments and agencies to publish an Accessibility Plan that outlines how they will remove barriers to make their organizations accessible by 2040.

An Accessibility Plan must be published every 3 years. This is the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) second Plan, outlining its ongoing commitment to removing barriers to accessibility in 8 priority areas.

The Act also requires PHAC to report annually on progress made against the Plan. The 2025 Progress Report is annexed to this Plan, and describes the progress achieved in the final year of the first Accessibility Plan.

The actions identified to respond to the barriers in all 8 areas of this plan will continue to drive improvements in accessibility at PHAC by the end of the second 3-year cycle. They will also help the Agency reach the goal of being barrier-free by 2040.

About the Public Health Agency of Canada

The role of the PHAC is to:

- promote health
- prevent and control chronic diseases and injuries
- prevent and control infectious diseases
- prepare for and respond to public health emergencies

The Agency serves as a central point for sharing Canada's expertise with the rest of the world. As such, its role is also to:

- strengthen public health collaboration between governments
- facilitate national approaches to public health policy and planning
- apply international research and development to Canada's public health programs

The [mandate, mission, vision and core values](#) are available on the PHAC website.

General

Under a shared service partnership, the Accessibility Readiness Team (ART) at Health Canada (HC) is responsible for the development and coordination of the PHAC Accessibility Plan, Progress Report, and the feedback process, in accordance with regulations under the [Act](#) and direction provided in the [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#).

To request a copy of this Plan and Progress Report, or a description of the feedback tool in an alternate format, or to provide feedback, please contact the Director of ART, in one of the following ways:

Contact: Director of the Accessibility Readiness Team

By Mail: PHAC Accessibility Feedback
70 Colombine Dr; Brooke Claxton building
Address Locator 0907D
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0K9

Email: art-epa@hc-sc.gc.ca

Toll free Telephone: 1 833-725-2751

Teletypewriter: 1-800-465-7735 (Service Canada)

In 2022, PHAC launched a tool to collect, receive, acknowledge, and address feedback about accessibility. Internal processes are also in place to monitor, report on, and incorporate the feedback related to accessibility barriers. PHAC will acknowledge feedback in the same way it was received, unless it was submitted anonymously.

To submit feedback related to the Plan, the Progress Report, the feedback tool or about any barriers faced when interacting with PHAC, please visit the [Accessibility Feedback Form](#) page.

Promoting the feedback process

PHAC has 2 feedback processes: 1 for the public on the [Accessibility at PHAC webpage](#), and 1 for employees through the intranet.

To promote the public feedback tool, PHAC conducted social media campaigns in January and May 2025 on the [Healthy Canadians' Facebook page](#), [PHAC LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) accounts. During National Accessibility Week in May 2025, PHAC used Instagram to share a post and story that challenged common disability myths.

PHAC also actively promoted the internal feedback tool to employees through news bulletins, presentations, events and messaging on television monitors in 15 offices across Canada.

Accessibility Statement

PHAC is committed to an accessibility-first approach in the development and design of programs and services. This commitment means PHAC works to identify and remove barriers early in the process, so accessibility is built into how programs and services are created and delivered.

PHAC is also committed to making its workplaces accessible to everyone. The Agency works to remove barriers so that persons with disabilities can fully take part in all aspects of the organization. Accessibility is integral to how PHAC designs workplaces, shares information, and delivers services to the public. This ongoing work relies on input from people with lived experience.

This second Accessibility Plan shows the next steps PHAC will take to find, remove, and prevent barriers. The Agency will work with persons with disabilities and other partners to make sure its actions meet real needs. Everyone at PHAC has a role to play in making the organization inclusive, respectful, and welcoming for all. By working together, PHAC can achieve lasting culture change.

The Better Accommodations Project

The Government of Canada (GC) launched the [Better Accommodations Project \(BAP\)](#) to create best-in-class workplace accommodation across the public service. This project produced key tools, shaped by feedback from employees and managers, to make the accommodation process faster, clearer, and more supportive. The BAP toolkit for users help managers and employees understand when and how to request accommodations, why timely and respectful responses matter, and how to use the [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) to make solutions portable when employees change jobs. Senior leaders also have a toolkit to assess and strengthen their organization's accommodation services.

PHAC supported the BAP by engaging directly with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) project leads and participating in BAP workshops. The Agency is actively promoting the BAP toolkits through various all-staff communications and calling on senior leaders to oversee enhancements to the accommodation experience for persons with disabilities. These efforts help build trust, improve workplace culture, and ensure employees have the support they need to succeed.

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

Below are the barriers PHAC heard through consultations with persons with disabilities. The corresponding actions describe how the Agency is taking measures to address the barriers and reduce identified gaps. Each action includes a projected timeline that reflects the intended timeframe for progress, recognizing that timelines may evolve as work advances.

The Accessibility Standards Canada's standards for the priority areas of Employment, the Built Environment, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Communications, other than ICT (plain language) are applicable to PHAC. The Agency is aligning itself with these standards and will continue to review and reference future standards as they are published.

Employment

The goal of the Employment area under the Act is to ensure access to employment opportunities and accessible workplaces.

PHAC's Desired Result by 2040

PHAC provides a barrier-free employment journey where persons with disabilities are recruited, retained, and supported with effective accommodations to progress and advance equitably.

Barriers and Actions

Barrier: Processes to request and obtain accommodations in second language evaluations and second language training are unclear.

- **Action 1:** The Single Window Access to Language Training team will clarify and share the steps branches must take for requesting and obtaining accommodations for second language training and evaluations. Detailed steps and contacts will be shared widely through Agency channels, including intranet, and email. Clarify the process to implement language exemptions due to medical reasons in staffing processes.
 - » **Projected timeline:** March 2026

Barrier: Lack of a clear and consistent process for identifying and approving accommodations (in accordance with the [Directive on the Duty to Accommodate](#)).

- **Action 2:** Offer practical support to managers and persons with disabilities on the accommodation process and the Duty to Accommodate by providing clear guidance and using available tools, including the BAP toolkits and the [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#).
 - » **Projected timeline:** On-going. A formal manager training program has been offered since summer 2025.

Did you know?

The [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) is more than a tool, it's a resource that helps foster an inclusive workplace by building shared understanding. Its inventory of barriers and accommodation solutions supports open, respectful conversations between employees and managers.

Barrier: Staffing assessment tools and mechanisms are not conducive to candidates with disabilities demonstrating that they meet the merit criteria outlined in the job poster.

- **Action 3:** Review and update staffing and assessment tools, approaches, and resources to ensure they are accessible and inclusive.
 - » **Projected timeline:** December 2026

Barrier: Lack of awareness and clarity on steps and expectations for performance management for persons with disabilities.

- **Action 4:** Provide managers with clear guidance on performance management for employees with disabilities. Develop resources to help managers reduce delays related to accommodations, and offer ongoing case-by-case consultations to keep managers and employees engaged throughout the performance management process.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Resources provided by December 2026 and promotion will be ongoing.

Barrier: Lack of career progression for persons with disabilities.

- **Action 5:** Enable career success and progression of employees with disabilities through increased onboarding guidance, training, mentorship and career navigation support.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

The Built Environment

The goal of the Built Environment area under the Act is to ensure all people can move freely around federal buildings and public spaces.

PHAC's Desired Result by 2040

PHAC facilities have barrier-free access for all.

Barriers and Actions

Barrier: Building code standards alone are insufficient in supporting workplace accessibility.

- **Action 1:** Support Accessibility Condition Reviews in existing facilities to identify further opportunities to improve accessibility beyond building code standards, where possible.

» **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Barrier: Persons with disabilities have identified visual and auditory barriers in open-concept work environments.

- **Action 2:** Where possible, adopt Public Services and Procurement Canada's (PSPC) GC Workplace model, in spaces that PHAC occupies, so that all employees have equal access to accommodations in a safe, functional, accessible and inclusive workplace based on their individual needs.

» **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Barrier: Some facility structures limit the possibility of adding modifications and features to more broadly support accessibility.

- **Action 3:** Work with PSPC to continue adding modifications and features, where possible, in buildings PHAC occupies.

» **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Did you know?

The Persons with Disabilities Network's (PWDN) [Accessible and Inclusive Meeting Spaces \(AIMS\)](#) initiative continues to expand! What started in 2020 with PHAC's first accessible and inclusive meeting space has now grown to 4 spaces. These rooms make it easier for everyone to participate fully in meetings.

Information and Communication Technologies

The goal of the ICT area under the Act is to ensure accessible digital content and technologies. ICT includes hardware, software, applications and websites for both external and internal facing systems for clients and employees.

PHAC's Desired Result by 2040

Ensure all PHAC ICT systems comply with accessibility standards by eliminating barriers and promoting digital accessibility across the organization. This will be achieved by focusing on the following areas:

- Ensuring all internal and external software, systems, and applications meet accessibility standards
- Promoting individual responsibility for accessibility through education, training, and guidance

Barriers and Actions

Barrier: Digital products, including online forms, still pose accessibility issues.

- **Action 1:** Continue improving the accessibility of new web pages, mobile applications, and digital documents (both internal and public-facing) to meet the current digital accessibility standard (CAN/ASC-EN 301 549).
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing, based on new regulations.

Barrier: The majority of software in use at PHAC is not fully accessible, including limited compatibility with assistive technologies, which creates barriers for employees who depend on these tools to perform their work.

- **Action 2:** Implement the Accessibility Update Program to assess existing ICT within the Agency, collaborating with the teams responsible for these tools to create roadmaps for improving accessibility.
 - » **Projected timeline:** March 2027
- **Action 3:** Integrate accessibility checks into the software procurement process and ensure that accessible software options are clearly identified for users.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Barrier: New and upgraded software implementation requires proper checks and balances to ensure accessibility features are enabled.

- **Action 1:** Continue improving the accessibility of new web pages, mobile applications, and digital documents (both internal and public-facing) to meet the current digital accessibility standard (CAN/ASC-EN 301 549).
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing, based on new regulations.
- **Action 3:** Integrate accessibility checks into the software procurement process and ensure that accessible software options are clearly identified for users.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Did you know?

To help raise awareness about accessible technology, the ICT lead created Microsoft Teams backgrounds focused on accessibility. These visuals raise awareness and encourage everyday thinking about how digital tools and spaces can be made more inclusive.

Barrier: Software does not align with the principle of universal design.

- **Action 1:** Continue improving the accessibility of new web pages, mobile applications, and digital documents (both internal and public-facing) to meet the current digital accessibility standard (CAN/ASC-EN 301 549).
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing, based on new regulations.
- **Action 3:** Integrate accessibility checks into the software procurement process and ensure that accessible software options are clearly identified for users.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Barrier: Persons with disabilities lack access to Information Technology (IT) systems or to tools needed to fully participate in the workplace.

- **Action 1:** Continue improving the accessibility of new web pages, mobile applications, and digital documents (both internal and public-facing) to meet the current digital accessibility standard (CAN/ASC-EN 301 549).
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing, based on new regulations.
- **Action 4:** Promote accessibility awareness across the Agency by offering training, guidance, and support to foster an accessibility-first approach in all IT projects.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Communication, other than information and communication technologies

The goal of the Communications area of the Act is to ensure barrier-free services and spaces for persons with disabilities.

PHAC's Desired Result by 2040

All communication materials produced by the Agency are designed to be accessible, inclusive, and easy to understand for all audiences, including the public and employees, regardless of ability, disability (visible or invisible), or communication needs.

Barriers and Actions

Barrier: Inconsistent use of plain and inclusive language across corporate communications, including those developed outside of the Communications and Public Affairs Branch (CPAB), may reduce clarity and accessibility for diverse audiences.

- **Action 1:** Share tools, templates and tips across the Agency, that improve the accessibility of corporate communications. Encourage branch-level leadership to ensure their corporate communications are accessible by using these resources, supported by the results of CPAB's AI projects and plain language training.

» **Projected timeline:** 2027–28

Barrier: Employees may develop or maintain digital tools or products that are not accessible, limiting equitable access to information and services.

- **Action 2:** Share resources and provide support to all branches to develop and deliver accessible communications. Branch-level leadership is accountable to ensure their branch's digital tools or products are accessible.

» **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Did you know?

Many everyday conveniences started as accessibility accommodations. For example, closed captions were first developed to make television accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Today, they're widely used in noisy environments, for language learning, or simply to follow along more easily.

Barrier: Ministerial events held without appropriate accessibility measures, such as sign language or simultaneous interpretation, may limit individuals, regardless of location or ability, from fully understanding or engaging with the content being delivered.

- **Action 3:** Improve the frequency of fully accessible Ministerial events delivered by the Agency by incorporating sign language interpretation and/or simultaneous interpretation, prioritizing high-profile, national announcements, especially announcements targeted to persons with disabilities, and applying accommodations wherever operationally feasible.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

The goal of the Procurement area of the Act is to ensure the purchasing of goods, services and facilities is accessible. PHAC procures most goods, services and facilities through a relationship with Shared Services Canada and PSPC. PHAC is working to strengthen accessibility by identifying ways to build awareness and improve practices.

PHAC's Desired Result by 2040

PHAC business owners and procurement authorities include accessibility requirements in their procurement specifications to ensure deliverables have the necessary accessibility features.

Barriers

In February 2025, PHAC's consultation with employees and the PWDN did not identify any procurement-related barriers. A review of internal procurement policies and services was completed. PHAC will continue to assess accessibility needs on a case-by-case basis. The Agency will ensure that procurement templates developed in-house are accessible.

To support this work, PHAC is identifying mandatory training options on accessibility in procurement and will raise awareness among its Contracting Authorities to help strengthen accessibility practices across the organization.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The goal of the Design and Delivery of Programs and Services area of the Act is to ensure Canadians receive services that are accessible to all.

PHAC's Desired Result by 2040

PHAC is equipped to design and deliver programs and services that are accessible to persons with disabilities. The Agency builds accessibility into every stage of program and service development, from planning and design to implementation and evaluation.

Barriers and Actions

Barrier: Programs and services teams have gaps in their knowledge and awareness of accessibility.

- **Action 1:** Provide programs and services teams with the individualized supports, resources, and tools, to build and maintain capacity to consult, develop, design, deliver, and evaluate accessibility for their programs and services.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Barrier: Unclear roles and responsibilities in advancing accessibility limit branches and senior management's ability to make programs and services barrier-free.

- **Action 2:** Ensure that all levels of the organization understand their responsibilities in advancing the accessibility of programs and services. Equip senior management to support their teams to identify and remove barriers within their programs and services.
 - » **Projected timeline:** December 2026

Barrier: Lack of engagement with persons with disabilities during the design and development of programs and services limits accessibility.

- **Action 3:** Support program and service teams, as needed, to engage with the disability community early and throughout the design and development process.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Barrier: Some persons with disabilities in Canada cannot access digital services because they lack computers, smartphones, adaptive technology, or reliable internet. They need alternative ways to access services, such as by phone or mail.

- **Action 4:** Continue to support the teams providing programs and services in applying accessibility best practices, such as offering information in multiple formats, and by varying means, to help remove barriers.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Transportation

The goal of the Transportation area under the Act is to ensure a barrier-free federal transportation network. This priority area applies to the accessibility of PHAC's fleet vehicles, which fall within the scope of responsibility of this Accessibility Plan. Other aspects related to transportation, such as public transit, municipal sidewalks or employees' personal vehicles, are outside the scope of this priority area.

PHAC's Desired Result by 2040

PHAC regularly assesses accessibility requirements for its fleet and ensures all vehicle purchases meet current and future accessibility standards.

Barriers

PHAC's consultation with employees and the PWDN did not identify any transportation-related barriers. The Agency has carefully reviewed its policies and services for this priority area and will consider any needs on a case-by-case basis should a barrier be identified.

Culture

The Act includes a focus on building accessibility confidence and creating a culture of accessibility within the federal public service.

PHAC's Desired Result by 2040

PHAC employees actively participate in creating an accessible workplace and integrate accessibility into their work. Persons with disabilities feel fully included and supported.

Barriers and Actions

Barrier: Limited knowledge and empathy about accessibility prevent inclusion.

- **Action 1:** Expand the range of topics and resources on the Accessibility Hub, PHAC's internal resource site. Add guidance on empathetic and inclusive communications, invisible disabilities, intersectionality, and tools to help managers create welcoming workplaces. Promote the content widely to reach the largest audience possible in ways that support diverse learning styles.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Resources provided by August 2026 and promotion will be ongoing.

Barrier: Persons with disabilities continue to experience stigma, discrimination, and a lack of psychological safety.

- **Action 2:** Add resources on psychological safety, stigma, equitable treatment of employees with disabilities and disability-inclusive leadership on the Accessibility Hub, and share them through staff presentations, as outlined in the internal communication and engagement plan.
 - » **Projected timeline:** Resources provided by August 2026 and promotion will be by August 2028.
- **Action 3:** Use engagement activities to build awareness of the complexities of how intersecting identities, such as disability, race, gender, and socioeconomic status, shape workplace experiences and increase barriers to inclusion.
 - » **Projected timeline:** August 2028

Did you know?

PHAC is exploring how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can support persons with disabilities in the workplace. AI can assist with everyday tasks, such as summarizing long documents or meeting notes, and it has the potential to improve communication, simplify tasks, and reduce barriers.

Barrier: Persons with disabilities continue to experience inaccessible work practices and barriers in communications.

- **Action 4:** Continue to model and promote accessibility best practices, tools, and resources to create messaging, meetings, and documents which are accessible to a variety of disabilities. See also [Communication Action One](#).
 - » **Projected timeline:** Ongoing

Barrier: Managers do not fully understand the accommodation process.

- **Action 5:** Increase awareness of accommodation policies and processes at PHAC through targeted communications and engagement, working with the Accessibility Service Centre and the Office of Primary Interest for Employment. See also [Employment Action Two](#).
 - » **Projected timeline:** August 2027

Persons with Disabilities Network

The PHAC PWDN is a community of employees with disabilities and allies dedicated to advancing accessibility in the workplace. Guided by the principle of *Nothing About Us Without Us*, the Network provides a voice for employees with disabilities and works to remove barriers so that all employees can participate fully at PHAC.

Over the next 3 years, the PWDN will:

- strengthen collaboration with corporate allies to remove barriers and implement applicable BAP learnings
- continue monthly listening sessions to hear directly from employees and bring forward their priorities
- promote accessible practices, raise awareness through guest speakers and events, and share practical tools, such as the accessible document campaign

Through these commitments, the PWDN will continue to build a more accessible workplace where employees with disabilities can fully participate and thrive.

Consultations

Internal consultations

PHAC invited all employees to participate in barrier consultations through targeted all-staff communications and promotion by the employee networks.

Internal engagement played a key role in identifying barriers and shaping meaningful actions for this Accessibility Plan. In February 2025, with support from the PWDN, PHAC invited employees with disabilities to join these engagement sessions. The sessions were open to all staff and network members, giving them the chance to share experiences and identify workplace barriers.

After these sessions, Offices of Primary Interest (OPIs) drafted actions based on known barriers. In May 2025, PHAC held a second round of consultation sessions with OPIs and the PWDN to validate the draft actions and confirm they reflected the priorities and needs of employees with disabilities.

PHAC used accessibility best practices to make sure the sessions were inclusive. A total of 38 participants attended. They received written content in advance and were invited to request accommodations ahead of time. During the sessions, participants were able to provide live feedback in multiple ways, in writing afterward, or anonymously.

The Accessibility Leadership Committee (ALC) also reviewed the barriers and actions to ensure alignment with organizational priorities and to show leadership accountability in advancing accessibility.

External consultations

External engagement was central to identifying barriers for this Accessibility Plan. Guided by the principle of “Nothing Without Us”, the PWDN worked with the ART to identify stakeholder groups representing different disability types and intersectional identities. These groups included advocacy organizations, service providers, and individuals with lived experience of disability.

ART invited 63 stakeholder groups to take part in virtual sessions. Of these, 26 accepted and ART held 6 group sessions between July and December 2024. Some participants also shared feedback in writing afterward.

To support broad and inclusive participation, consultations used multiple methods beyond the virtual group sessions. These included one-on-one calls and an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was posted on the [Consulting with Canadians](#) webpage from March to April 2025, and reached approximately 6,000 potential respondents through distribution lists and a social media campaign.

Feedback from these consultations directly informed the barriers and actions in this Accessibility Plan.

PHAC is also committed to continuing accessibility testing that reflects the experiences of persons with disabilities. This work includes ongoing consultations with external individuals and organizations to identify and address barriers as they arise.

Accessibility Leadership Committee

The ALC brings together senior executives from PHAC and HC, along with the Chairs and Champions of the PWDN. The ALC oversees and guides the implementation of the Act and the Accessibility Plans in both organizations. It also helps ensure accountability across the Agency in advancing accessibility.

The committee is chaired by the Director General of the Talent and Workplace Culture Directorate in the Corporate Services Branch in HC. It provides feedback to the Accessibility Centre of Expertise (ACE), while members offer accessibility leadership within their own branches.

Performance Measurement Framework for Accessibility

To track progress towards eliminating barriers and achieving the desired result for each priority area, ART is developing a performance measurement framework (PMF) in collaboration with OPIs and persons with disabilities. This approach aligns with guidance from the Office of Public Service Accessibility.

The PMF will include specific activities derived from the actions outlined in this Accessibility Plan, outcomes to assess the impact of these activities, and deliberate, data-driven key performance indicators to measure both outcomes and activities.

The PMF will be the internal reporting tool for this Accessibility Plan, as of April 2026. It will help PHAC identify and close gaps, ensure meaningful accessibility progress over the next 3 years, and inform the annual Progress Reports.

Conclusion

Accessibility and public health go hand in hand. A truly healthy society is one where everyone can participate fully and equitably, without barriers. This second Accessibility Plan represents a meaningful step toward the vision of a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

By setting clear actions and timelines, PHAC is laying the groundwork for lasting change within the Agency and in the way it serves the public. Accessibility is not a one-time initiative; it is a continuous commitment to inclusion, equity, and respect.

Annex: Public Health Agency of Canada 2025 Accessibility Progress Report

Summary

PHAC's third Progress Report concludes the progress made in removing barriers across the 8 priority areas from the [first Accessibility Plan](#). PHAC published this Progress Report alongside its second Accessibility Plan to maintain annual reporting. The reporting period runs from September 1 to August 31 each year. Please see the "[General](#)" section in the Accessibility Plan as it also applies to this Progress Report.

Areas in Section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*

Employment

Commitment: Working with the PHAC PWDN and key disability stakeholders, revise staffing and assessment tools, approaches, and resources to ensure they are accessible and inclusive.

PHAC continued to support managers and employees with disabilities through the Persons with Disabilities Specialized Recruitment Team (PWD SRT). This team provided one-on-one guidance to 13 managers on the Directive on the Duty to Accommodate, helping them understand their responsibilities and identify appropriate solutions in collaboration with employees. The PWD SRT fulfilled all requests for orientation from employees with disabilities.

The team also launched "Office Hours" in partnership with ACE. These confidential one-on-one appointments offer tailored guidance to managers on Duty to Accommodate. There have been 44 sessions with managers completed to date.

The PWD SRT also began the development of a formal manager training series. Initial content for these sessions drew on early findings from the BAP. The Managers' Network and the PWDN have provided feedback to support the development of training materials.

Commitment: Support managers in meeting or exceeding PHAC hiring targets using an enhanced recruitment experience.

Managers have continuous access to updated data on hiring, promotions, and retention. Regular monitoring tracks career development and progression rates for employees with disabilities to assess progress toward achieving equality with employees who have not disclosed having a disability.

PHAC enhanced the recruitment experience by offering hiring managers the knowledge and guidance they needed to make staffing more accessible for persons with disabilities. For example, managers can work with staffing advisors to ensure accommodations are in place when candidates request them. The PWD SRT supports recruitment by drafting narrative assessments, helping managers articulate selection decisions, and coordinating resources such as specialized employment service providers and the Accessibility Service Centre.

Commitment: Enable career success and progression of employees with disabilities through onboarding, training, access to accommodations, talent management, and mentorship.

87 employees with disabilities received career development opportunities such as acting in a higher level position. 13 employees with disabilities successfully moved to a permanent position at a higher level in the Agency.

PHAC's Mentorship Plus Program has achieved 100% matching to date, fulfilling all mentorship requests from employee with disabilities. The Equitable Access to Language Training Program has accepted 100% applications from employees with disabilities.

In 2025, PHAC launched a tailored training program for managers on the Duty to Accommodate and best practices for onboarding employees with disabilities.

The Built Environment

Commitment: Work with PSPC to ensure that all new facility fit-ups/construction are accessible; implement an assessment process for existing facilities to identify potential accessibility upgrades to be incorporated into planned/future projects.

This year, in collaboration with PSPC, PHAC conducted formal accessibility reviews for every facility project to ensure compliance with accessibility standards. The Agency built accessibility features into major renovations such as the PHAC Accessible and Inclusive Meeting Spaces.

PHAC also worked with PSPC to finalize the Long-Term Accommodation Plan and the Accessibility Condition Reviews Plan, which will assess the built environment and identify opportunities to make facilities more accessible.

Commitment: Continuously engage internal and external stakeholders to identify and remove barriers to the built environment and use innovative or novel technologies to support accessibility.

The National Intake Office responded to 100% of accessibility-related inquiries, including workplace lighting, accessible doors, lockers, and Duty to Accommodate requests. Although some requests, such as lockers, and desk assignments, fall outside formal Building Management Plans, PHAC remains committed to exploring practical solutions, wherever possible.

Information and Communication Technologies

Commitment: Strengthen the current level of accessibility of ICT at PHAC by continuing to ensure new (internal and public facing) systems, including internally developed or procured hardware and software, meet modern accessibility standards.

The Digital Accessibility and Product Development (DAPD) team assessed the accessibility of all newly developed web, mobile, and desktop applications registered in the Application Portfolio Management (APM) system before putting them into operation. Every application must complete an Accessibility Impact Assessment (AIA) to receive an Authority to Operate. However, because branches do not always communicate this requirement to their employees, some applications are released without an assessment and are not always registered in the APM.

PHAC assessed all software in the HC and PHAC joint service catalog for accessibility. Of 1,111 software products:

- 16 (1.4%) were fully accessible
- 250 (22.5%) were accessible with known limitations
- 783 (70.5%) were not accessible
- 62 (5.6%) were assistive technologies

Commitment: Improve accessibility support (guidance and advice) to users in the development and procurement and acquisition of new software.

The Change Advisory Board (CAB) reviewed all new software requests to assess accessibility. CAB processed 288 software requests:

- 174 (60.4%) were approved outright
- 86 (30%) were approved with restricted use and only if no alternative was available
- 20 (6.9%) were approved with known limitations
- 1 (0.3%) were approved conditional on accessibility testing
- 7 (2.4%) were rejected

The Digital Transformation Branch (DTB) met with vendors from the 7 rejected requests to reinforce accessibility requirements for procurement and implementation.

PHAC has accessibility advisors who are available to support IT investment projects. There are 21 projects with IT components in process. Twelve projects do not qualify for an advisor because they already completed the accessibility process, use a commercial off-the-shelf product, or continue from last year and will undergo the AIA process. Of the remaining 9 eligible projects, advisors are assigned to 5 and 4 are pending assignment.

Commitment: Promote accessibility awareness across the Agency by providing training and raising awareness to foster an accessibility-first mindset for all IT projects.

DTB delivered all planned accessibility training sessions. Six group sessions reached 85 employees. In addition, PHAC met every request for one-on-one custom training, providing 3 tailored sessions to 47 stakeholders.

During National AccessAbility Week in May 2025, as part of an interactive roadshow, DTB visited a PHAC location to raise awareness and promote an accessibility-first culture within the Agency.

Commitment: Strengthen the accessibility governance and process by developing internal policies and procedures for accessible ICT.

In April 2025, DTB reinstated the ICT Accessibility Working Group (AWG), approved its Terms of Reference and confirmed membership. The AWG is identifying and documenting accessibility gaps in ICT systems to guide future action.

Communication, other than information and communication technologies

Commitment: Ensure PHAC external digital content and new internal digital content are accessible by default.

CPAB approved and implemented the PDF accessibility policy. This policy ensures that PDFs are created in ways that people with disabilities can access and use, since PDFs are often inaccessible, especially to those using assistive technology.

CPAB also delivered 16 digital literacy training sessions, covering plain language writing for recalls, safety alerts, guidance documents, and inclusive communications. In addition, CPAB delivered 9 digital skills outreach sessions on how to create accessible products.

Commitment: Provide Agency communications products and events in accessible formats.

CPAB produced 36 videos with accessible components, including closed captions, described video, transcripts and/or web equivalent information for videos on Canada.ca, YouTube, and Facebook.

CPAB supported PHAC in delivering 8 fully accessible all-staff events, providing simultaneous translation and sign language for each event. The Branch also supported 9 accessible newsletters published on the intranet.

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Commitment: Incorporate accessibility into procurement and contracting documents, templates, and guidance.

PHAC's Procurement Operations Division carried out a multi-year plan to update its templates and guidance, ensuring they are accessible. The work is now complete, and future updates will go through the same accessibility check. The Division communicated these changes to Contracting Authorities and clients, and promoted the use of accessible documents.

Commitment: Increase awareness amongst procurement officers and cost centre managers to consider accessibility from the start of a procurement process through training, information sessions, or guidance documentation.

Procurement officers must now complete mandatory accessibility training by March 31, 2026. This requirement is included in employee training plans, and managers reinforce it during Performance Management Agreement discussions.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Commitment: Build capacity to consult, develop, design, deliver, and evaluate accessible and inclusive programs and services.

In 2025, ART maintained the Accessible Programs and Services Community of Practice (P&S CoP). With no central office for programs and services at PHAC, this CoP connects leads across the Agency and bridges gaps in knowledge of how to make services accessible. ART continues to send bi-monthly newsletters to members, who meet quarterly to facilitate knowledge sharing, discussion, and collaborative problem-solving related to accessibility.

ART's Microsoft Teams for the P&S CoP continues to serve as a forum where members can connect, ask questions, access meeting materials, presentation recordings, and more.

Commitment: Integrate accessibility features into new and existing programs and services.

In 2025, ART offered a new service to members of the P&S CoP to help improve the accessibility of PHAC programs and services. The P&S Accessibility Support Service helps teams conduct accessibility reviews of the design, delivery and business practices of their program or service. ART provides tailored recommendations and best practices to improve accessibility and guidance to eliminate barriers within programs and services.

Transportation

Commitment: Identify any potential accessibility features available that can be included in new fleet vehicle acquisitions.

PHAC reviewed and assessed potential accessibility features for new fleet vehicles. Employee input and lived experience of disability shaped the identification of the most valuable features. Because accessibility needs vary, PHAC continues to work with the PWDN to gather input on accessible features for fleet vehicles.

Commitment: Implement any new accessibility standards relating to fleet vehicles as prescribed by the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) and PSPC.

This commitment remains on hold until TBS and PSPC release new fleet accessibility standards.

Culture

Commitment: Promote an accessibility-informed culture that creates a positive, inclusive workplace.

ART undertook a literature review, with support from internal Library Services, to gain a stronger understanding of culture change and accessibility. ART examined over 400 articles to determine their relevance to culture change activities and methods for measuring culture change, retaining 107 articles for further review. ART summarized the key themes, which will inform the accessibility PMF, with the goal of strengthening the Agency's ability to design, deliver and measure impactful initiatives that drive lasting culture change.

As part of PHAC's internal accessibility communications and engagement plan, ART offers presentations on accessibility, which include a call to action and provide resources for staff to enhance their knowledge. There were 2 branches that requested the presentation, and ART reached 81 participants between September 2024 and August 2025.

For National AccessAbility Week 2025, ART launched a course titled "Accessibility Matters", available to all employees through the internal learning platform. To date, 270 employees have enrolled in the course.

Did you know?

ART created an introductory course called **Accessibility Matters** for all PHAC and HC employees. Interactive elements are used to explore common accessibility myths, share scenarios and introduce how to create a barrier-free workplace. Prior to its release, the course was carefully reviewed to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards. To support different learning styles, multiple options are available to access the content including a Word version, a voice-over function, and closed captions.

As the lead for the annual PHAC International Day of Persons with Disabilities event, ART collaborated with the PHAC PWDN in 2024 to host “Finding purpose in accessibility”. The guest speaker, Ryan Straschnitzki, a former member of the Humboldt Broncos Junior Hockey Team, shared his insights on disability awareness, accessibility, and fostering an inclusive workplace. The live event drew over 1,000 attendees. The intranet recording received 438 views.

Commitment: Ensure all PHAC employees have the knowledge and tools to become accessibility confident through training and engagement.

The updated Accessibility Hub on the intranet offers employees event recordings, resources and tools to support best practices. The Hub serves as a central place for employees to share feedback on barriers and explore ways to advance workplace accessibility. In 2025, ART added a Manager’s Corner to better support managers in their role. A key addition, Manager’s Office Hours, provides one-on-one support to PHAC managers on accessibility, the Duty to Accommodate, and the accommodation process for employees with disabilities.

In winter 2025, PHAC updated the internal employee feedback form, part of the legislated feedback mechanism tool, to include a section on employee accommodations. This update shows PHAC’s commitment to identifying and removing barriers to accommodation.

The Agency refreshed its Employee Accessibility Playbook in June 2025. PHAC archived 2 plays and replaced them with plays on trending topics: using PowerPoint Live and making accessible email signature blocks. Employees continue to view and download it frequently.

In August 2025, the OPIs for ICT and Culture established an Accessibility Ambassador Collective, bringing together branch-level accessibility leaders from PHAC and HC. The Collective will share best practices, tools, and resources to reduce duplication of effort across branches within both PHAC and HC. Representatives from 86% of PHAC branches attended the first meeting.

PHAC was consulted as part of the BAP. ACE promoted the BAP initial findings and toolkit through the Manager Technical Briefing sessions and through internal communication channels. The BAP toolkits will guide the Agency towards an improved and more consistent approach to accommodations.

Consultations

Internal Consultations

In 2025, PHAC continued to work closely with the PWDN to ensure persons with disabilities directly shaped accessibility efforts. This reinforced the Agency's commitment to an inclusive approach.

Key activities included:

- monthly meetings between ART and the PWDN to advance shared priorities, gather feedback, and find opportunities to work together
- monthly director-level Forum meetings where the PWDN and OPIs advance commitments and provide input on accessibility initiatives
- consulting the PWDN on the internal implementation plan
- facilitating all-staff consultation sessions in February 2025 to identify barriers
- leading PWDN consultation sessions in May 2025 to gather feedback on draft actions to remove known barriers
- engaging the PWDN Executive Committee in September 2025 to review the draft Accessibility Plan and Progress Report

Accessibility best practices supported these activities. For example, materials were shared in advance, participants could request accommodations, and employees could share feedback in different ways, including anonymously.

Key themes from the 2025 consultations highlighted the need for:

- clear and accessible communication
- accessible information technology systems
- continued investment in training and awareness
- better and more consistent accommodation processes
- stronger integration of accessibility into daily work practices

These consultations ensured the second Accessibility Plan reflects the real needs and priorities of employees with disabilities.

Feedback

How feedback was collected

PHAC collects accessibility feedback by phone, email and through 2 online forms, one for the public on the [PHAC Feedback on Accessibility web page](#) and one for employees on the intranet, both are monitored by ART.

PHAC ran social media campaigns in January and May 2025 on the [Healthy Canadians' Facebook page](#), [PHAC LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) accounts, to invite feedback and raise awareness of the options available to provide feedback. The May campaign aligned with National AccessAbility Week and also highlighted accessibility myths.

PHAC promoted its internal feedback tool in the Agency's news bulletin, events and messaging on its internal broadcasting system, Health Television.

What we heard

PHAC received 17 feedback submissions this period, up from 9 last period, and tagged each identifiable accessibility barrier by priority area. PHAC employees made 15 submissions and the public made 2. PHAC received all feedback through the online forms.

The breakdown of the number of feedback submissions per priority area is shown in the table below.

Priority area	Number of feedback submissions
Employment	2
Built Environment	3
Information Technology	2
Communications	2
Procurement	0
Programs and Services	2
Transportation	0
Culture	6
Total	17

ART shared all the feedback received with the appropriate OPIs. Below is a summary of the actions to address the feedback.

Employment

The Employment OPI grouped its feedback under this theme:

- Hiring and promotions
 - » Difficulties with jobs and promotions
 - » Retention of persons with disabilities should be a priority

Actions

PHAC uses the HR Data Hub to identify equity gaps and reduce barriers in the hiring and promotion of persons with disabilities. The PWD SRT encourages managers to apply this data during candidate assessments to help support PHAC's efforts to close those equity gaps.

PHAC reviews staffing practices to ensure fair career opportunities for employees with disabilities. PHAC supports managers in using inclusive assessment practices and flexible hiring and retention strategies, such as assignments or mentoring to build a more inclusive and accessible workplace.

In fall 2025, the PWD SRT launched a training program to guide managers in supporting the career growth of employees with disabilities. The program takes a practical and process-focused approach covering Duty to Accommodate, Duty to Inquire and strategies to reduce bias and improve retention.

The Built Environment

The Built Environment OPI grouped its feedback under this theme:

- Inaccessible facilities
 - » Lack of equipment in the office designated quiet rooms
 - » Workplace lockers are positioned too low for easy access
 - » Exterior doors open onto landings that are not accessible

Actions

PHAC follows the GC guidelines for [activity-based workplaces](#). This approach offers different types of work points to support varied activities from focused individual work to collaborative meetings.

PHAC continues to work with the Accessibility Service Centre and applicable facilities management teams to explore alternative storage and locker options that support accessibility and the well-being of employees.

PHAC follows federal accessibility standards and collaborates with PSPC and building owners to improve accessibility in Crown-owned or leased buildings.

Information and Communication Technologies

The ICT OPI grouped its feedback under this theme:

- Digital applications and web accessibility
 - » Inaccessible online form
 - » Include persons with disabilities in next phase of Copilot

Actions

PHAC reviews all software for accessibility and flags any that do not meet accessibility standards. If no alternate is available, PHAC may approve the software for limited use and informs employees that it does not comply with accessibility requirements.

DTB assesses the accessibility of internally developed digital products (e.g. a new web page using MS Dynamics) and records the results in an AIA. DTB shares the AIA with the relevant stakeholders to flag any risks. If the digital product is not fully accessible, the client must submit a roadmap for how they will meet accessibility compliance.

PHAC recently completed a successful Copilot pilot project involving a diverse group of participants to evaluate its effectiveness as a productivity tool. Although the pilot has ended, Shared Services Canada and PSPC have been working on an authorized method to permanently procure Copilot. In the meantime, employees facing workplace barriers are encouraged to speak with their managers or explore support options, including the [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) inventory of known barriers and accommodations.

Communication, other than information and communication technologies

The Communication OPI grouped its feedback under this theme:

- Inaccessible internal tools
 - » Branded templates are inaccessible and lacked user training
 - » No contact person for the intranet pages

Actions

PHAC is exploring options to develop and promote an internal communications toolkit, including inclusive language guidance, and document templates to assist in creating accessible communication products.

PHAC added a new option to the footer of its intranet pages to help employees report technical accessibility issues more easily.

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

PHAC did not receive any feedback about procurement barriers.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The Programs and Services OPI grouped its feedback under this theme:

- Employees raised concerns about internal service standards related to the accommodations process

Action

PHAC now has a 10 business-day service standard to better support employees with disabilities who request accommodations.

Transportation

PHAC did not receive any feedback about transportation barriers.

Culture

The Culture OPI grouped its feedback into these themes:

- Request for resources and support
 - » Managers asking for resources and guidance to better support neurodivergent employees
- Feedback on organizational activities
 - » Employees appreciate internal communications about accessibility and the opportunity to take part in discussions about workplace accessibility
 - » Comments on the PHAC Progress Report

Actions

PHAC created the Manager's Corner on the Accessibility Hub to help managers better support employees with disabilities.

PHAC is promoting more inclusive representation by consulting with the PHAC PWDN to better understand the barriers employees with disabilities face in the workplace.