



Progress Report – Year 2

January - December 2024



Canadian Space
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CSA Accessibility Plan 2023-2025

Progress Report – Year 2 (January-December 2024)

A. GENERAL

SUMMARY

The following Progress Report covers the period from January 2024 to November 2024, and anticipated progress for December 2024. To ensure consistency during the implementation of the Canadian Space Agency’s Accessibility Plan 2023-2025, the same individuals or teams who helped develop the Plan were involved in preparing the Progress Report, such as the members of the Accessibility Plan Working Group, the Co-Champions for Persons with Disabilities, the Accessibility Network, and CSA employees who took part in a survey and focus group discussions. An Accessibility Tracker was also updated to monitor the Plan’s implementation and regular meetings were held with Working Group members to help guide, track and report on the progress of Year 2 actions.

There were two new developments in 2024. Firstly, the CSA received the Accessibility Commissioner’s Inspection Report of the CSA’s Accessibility Plan 2023-2025 in January 2024. A Corrective Action Plan was submitted to the Office of the Accessibility Commissioner in February 2024. Most of the corrections called for minor modifications to section headings and to include specific language on how to provide feedback on the Accessibility Plan. These changes were implemented quickly and are reflected in the Accessibility Plan posted on the CSA’s website. Two other Areas of Focus (Built Environment and Transportation) required more detailed corrections as outlined in the Progress Report.

Secondly, the HR Team began planning and designing a new WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre (WAC). The WAC aims to serve all employees who request accommodations and not just those who self-identified as a person with a disability. The WAC strives to promote a “yes-by-default” approach to accommodations, be user-centric and offer results-based solutions that are co-created with employee networks and other stakeholders, contribute to eliminating barriers faced by employees with disabilities and streamline and integrate processes and improve user experience. The WAC will help facilitate the process of requesting accommodations for managers and employees by adopting a social model rather than medically based approach and promoting the use of the *GC Workplace Accessibility Passport*. The WAC will also focus on finding solutions and improvements to enhance accessibility for all. The updated common hybrid work model created a substantial influx of requests for accommodation support, which has impacted the WAC’s implementation timelines.

Like last year, the updated common hybrid work model and new workplace configurations were areas of concern for employees with disabilities. On May 1, 2024, the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) updated the [Direction on prescribed presence in the workplace](#), which requires employees to work on-site at least 3 days per week, and executives a minimum of 4 days per week, as of September 9, 2024. The CSA conducted an internal survey and focus groups in early June to inform the Progress Report for 2024, and includes feedback related to the updated direction. The feedback is highlighted in the following Areas of Focus: Employment, Built Environment, and Information and Communications Technologies.

A few important points should be considered when assessing the feedback on the updated common hybrid work model and its potential impacts on employees with disabilities:

- The Built Environment Area of Focus involves multiple teams, such as the Real Property Team, Occupational Health, and Safety (HR), Security and the WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre (HR). To ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities, specific teams are identified for certain issues under the Built Environment section.
- Like all government departments and agencies, the CSA is obligated to follow federal standards and objectives. It is important to keep this in mind when reviewing survey feedback, as some concerns expressed by respondents are beyond the control of facilities administrators who are tasked with implementing GC policies such as “return to work” and unassigned work points.
- The Duty to Accommodate process is in place to support employees with disabilities. Employees should discuss their needs with their managers as a starting point. Managers and employees can reach out to the WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre for additional guidance and support.

DESIGNATED OFFICIAL

Lynne Laramée, Executive Director, Human Resources

CONTACT INFORMATION

The following contact information may be used to:

- Request copies of the CSA’s accessibility plan, progress reports, and feedback process descriptions in some alternate format.
- Submit feedback about barriers you have encountered when dealing with the CSA.
- Submit feedback on the CSA’s implementation of the accessibility plan.

Lynne Laramée, Executive Director, Human Resources

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B. AREAS OF FOCUS

1. EMPLOYMENT

Status of Goal

The CSA has continued to make efforts towards its goals of increasing access to employment and promotional opportunities for employees and job seekers with disabilities so that they can contribute to their full potential, and of being regarded as an employer of choice.

Identified Barriers

Internal survey and focus group feedback has flagged new and previously identified barriers.

New barriers:

- The interview process may create barriers for neuro-diverse individuals who have difficulties with executive functions.

Previously identified barriers:

- The updated common hybrid work model coming into effect in September 2024, continues to raise concerns for employees with disabilities with regards to both well-being and productivity.
- Other previously identified barriers include workload and complex procedures, onboarding new employees with disabilities and language assessments during staffing processes.

Feedback taken into consideration during consultations

Public Service Employee Survey

Since a new Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) was not administered in 2023, there is no PSES data to compare and measure the impact of the CSA's employment-related actions on removing or preventing barriers to career progression.

Internal Survey Feedback

In this year's internal survey (2024) on accessibility, 8% of respondents (employees with disabilities) said they experienced barriers during a staffing process, a decrease from last year's results (16%). In terms of their overall satisfaction with how accommodation requests were handled in the past year, 25% were very satisfied, and 32% were somewhat satisfied, a decrease from last year's results (34% were very satisfied and 50% were somewhat satisfied).

In response to the question regarding barriers experienced in day-to-day work, survey participants shared a number of barriers, such as the impacts of the updated common hybrid work model on well-being and productivity as well as how stigmatisation can lead to colleagues perceiving employees with disabilities as less capable. The fear of potential stigmatisation and

being misunderstood or dismissed can lead some employees with disabilities to decide against disclosing their disability and requesting accommodations. Workload and complex procedures were also mentioned as a barrier.

Regarding barriers experienced during a staffing process at the Agency, survey feedback raised a concern about language assessments not taking disabilities into account. With regards to barriers to promotion or career progression, survey participants raised issues such as:

- Interview processes may not be well suited to neurodivergent individuals.
- Difficulty participating in group discussions which leads to avoidance and being able to demonstrate abilities.

In addition, limited formal or informal onboarding provided, particularly when requesting an accommodation, was flagged as a concern.

When asked about levels of satisfaction with the way the Agency deals with accessibility and accommodation requests for employees living with a disability, survey respondents shared that more information and clarity on the accommodation process is required (e.g., guidelines, decision-making process, recourse). Concerns were also highlighted regarding the lengthy delays to process an accommodation request and questions were raised about whether accommodation requests would remain confidential with the manager. It was suggested that offering training to all employees on destigmatization and unconscious biases would be helpful.

Focus Group Feedback

When asked, *“What is working well at the Agency in terms of accessibility and accommodation?”*, focus group participants shared the following:

- Onboarding experience was very positive and distinct from previous work experiences. Support was provided when needs were expressed.
- The new WorkSPACE Accommodations Centre is doing an excellent job. We are going in the right direction with a more centralized approach to help access information.

In response to the question, *“What needs improvement?”*, focus group participants responded:

- Managers need to be better equipped to step up and develop solutions. The WorkSPACE Accommodations Centre provides guidance but does not make decisions for managers. Also, additional support for managers is required to help them onboard employees with disabilities.
- It is important to recognize that people have different learning curves, depending on their situation and needs. Creating documents and learning tools that are as accessible as possible (e.g., plain language, visually accessible) would facilitate onboarding and knowledge transfer.

Actions carried over from Year 1 (2023)

Update HR procedures to better track data at all stages of the employment cycle from recruitment to retention and promotion.

In last year's Progress Report, it was reported that dashboards were in development and would be published in Year 2. A dashboard has been created to track all stages of the employment cycle and will be published annually.

Review onboarding practices for accessibility to help new employees feel supported.

This action was deferred to Year 2. Work on a new onboarding program has started, which will include updated checklists for new employees and managers. All onboarding tools will raise awareness regarding accessibility and provide information about the WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre (WAC).

Status of Year 2 Actions (January – December 2024)

Present the HR Team's annual plan to the Accessibility Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.

The HR Team presented an overview to the Accessibility Network in October 2024.

Implement and promote the GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport.

The HR Team met with the Director of the Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) to discuss the implementation of the GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport at the CSA. The OPSA Director provided guidance and resources to support the HR Team's ongoing efforts to implement the Passport. In the past year, the WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre (WAC) beta-tested the Passport with current CSA employees and helped new employees with existing Passports with the implementation of their accommodations upon arrival at the CSA. An implementation approach to roll out the Passport throughout the CSA has been developed, with a target launch of December 3, 2024, which coincides with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Full implementation of the Passport is expected by the end of fiscal year 2024-2025.

Implement the transition plan to support employees with disabilities and managers in adapting to the GoC Workplace Accessibility Passport.

A transition plan is part of the Passport's implementation approach.

Design and deliver accessibility module(s) for "LearnHR" sessions for managers.

The CSA launched a new Managers Network in 2024. Given the high number of attendees, the HR Team has been leveraging this Network's monthly meetings to provide regular updates and content, in lieu of designing and delivering LearnHR sessions. In addition, the WorkSPACE Accommodations Centre (WAC) is currently developing a guide for managers called "*Managing employees with empathy*" to support them in handling duty to accommodate requests, with a projected release in early 2025. The WAC will continue to develop tools to support managers in their duty to accommodate in 2025.

Revise, as needed, and implement Year 2 of 3-Year Recruitment Strategy.

A few changes came into effect in Fall 2024 to enhance the recruitment of employees from employment equity groups, including employees with disabilities:

- Employment equity hiring goals are to be considered when selecting a candidate (advertised and non-advertised processes). This means that if there is a hiring objective for a designated group, a candidate from that group should be selected to fill the position. Otherwise, approval of a waiver from the responsible individual is required. This measure applies in consideration of hiring objectives at three levels: 1) at the Directorate level (in effect since November 2022), 2) at the corporate level (new) and 3) at the supervisory or management levels (new).
- Priority evaluation will be granted for Designated Group Members in advertised staffing processes in supervisory and management positions during the initial stages of staffing processes.

Undertake awareness and training sessions on accessibility.

To help raise awareness of accessibility issues and resources among HR Team members, information is included in the HR Team's internal newsletter, which is issued every 6 weeks. In addition, information on initiatives related to accessibility is presented to the HR Team during its "What's New in HR" monthly gatherings, such as a presentation on the CSA's new WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre.

Status of Targets

The CSA's Workforce Adjustment (WFA) is 8.6% and the representation of employees with disabilities was 13.1% by March 31, 2024, and 14.6% by September 30, 2024. As mentioned previously, we are unable to report on the potential impact of employment-related actions on PSES results pertaining to career progression in this Progress Report. Internal survey results indicate a decrease in barriers experienced during a staffing process and a decrease in overall satisfaction with out accommodation requests were handled in the past year.

2. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Status of Goal

Work is on track to improve barrier-free access for CSA's built environment.

Identified Barriers

Internal survey and focus group feedback raised previously identified barriers related to the updated common hybrid work model and new workspace configurations (see Feedback section for additional details). It should be noted that the new workspaces have been constructed to comply with the latest requirements in the [Real Property Directive Annex D](#).

Feedback taken into consideration during consultations

Public Service Employee Survey

Since a new Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) was not administered in 2023, there is no data to compare and measure the potential impact of the CSA's built environment-related actions on removing or preventing barriers for persons with disabilities.

Internal Survey and Focus Group Feedback

In this year's internal survey (2024) on accessibility, 45% of respondents (employees with disabilities) indicated that they were very satisfied/satisfied with the ergonomic and/or adaptive equipment they have been provided to do their work, a decrease from last year's results (64%). Survey respondents raised concerns regarding the potential availability of adapted desks and chairs in the new workspace configuration (*Duty to Accommodate Process, WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre and Real Property Team*).

Fifty-four percent (54%) of respondents (employees with disabilities), felt that the accessibility of their office building, based on their own needs, was very accessible/completely accessible, a decrease compared to 83% in 2023. Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents answered that they were somewhat satisfied this year, compared to 8% in 2023. Survey participants shared feedback regarding the new workspace configuration and concerns about its potential impact on various types of disabilities, such as physical or mental health disabilities (*Duty to Accommodate Process, WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre and Real Property Team*).

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

In response to the question, "What needs improvement?" focus group participants responded:

- New flex spaces can create challenges for individuals with hearing disabilities, particularly with hybrid meetings (*Duty to Accommodate Process and WorkSPACE Accommodation Centre*).
- Security cameras may not capture whether someone has fainted as they only capture images from the waist up (*Security Team*).
- Carpet cleaning schedule may impact the air quality, which is very challenging for people with asthma (*Occupational Health and Safety and Real Property Team*).

Status of Year 2 Actions (January – December 2024)

Revise and present the CSA's Built Environment Action Plan to the Accessibility Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.

The Real Property Team presented a progress report to the Network in Fall 2023 and engaged the Network in the spring of 2024 to seek their support and feedback to prioritize corrective actions regarding known built-environment accessibility concerns. In addition, a representative of the Real Property Team regularly participates in the Accessibility Network's monthly meetings.

Implement tasks defined in the action plan.

The implementation of tasks defined in the action plan is ongoing. The plan has been refined into discrete themes as our response to the Accessibility Commissioner inspection findings below. The Civil Infrastructure project, ending in Fall 2024, will correct the majority of non-compliances related to parking and pedestrian walkways:

- Compliance with universal accessibility standards to ensure that all facilities are accessible to people with reduced mobility.
- Integration of features such as access ramps, appropriate maneuvering spaces, and signage.
- The integrated pedestrian pathways with signage have been designed to meet accessibility criteria for all users.
- The sidewalks will be resurfaced and expanded to ensure improved accessibility.

Deficiencies associated with workstations are being addressed as workspaces throughout the JHCSC are sequentially redeveloped to meet CSA program needs as well as government directives.

Incorporate the findings and recommendations of the accessibility study at the David Florida Laboratory into the action plan.

On March 1, 2024, the CSA announced the closure of the David Florida Laboratory by March 31, 2025. The audit report findings from the David Florida Laboratory are being removed from the plan as the building is being planned for disposal and CSA programming is being phased out by March 31, 2025.

Undertake awareness and training options determined in the previous year.

The Real Property Team has assigned key personnel to develop expertise in accessibility. This team member has completed two courses. It is intended that additional staff members will also undergo training once roles and responsibilities have been fully defined.

ACCESSIBILITY COMMISSIONER INSPECTION FINDINGS

It should be noted that two sections of the CSA's Corrective Action Plan in response to the Accessibility Commissioner's Inspection related to Built Environment.

1. It was found that *"The regulated entity has not identified any barriers in its policies, programs, practices and services in relation to built environment"*. In response, the Real Property Team established the following corrective measures (Deadline: March 31, 2025 – Year 3 of the CSA Accessibility Plan):
 - Consolidate the non-conformities identified in accessibility audits as well as concerns from surveys and focus groups into a list of discrete themes that will clearly identify barriers.
 - Present the list of discrete themes to the Accessibility Network for their support in prioritizing which actions to take. The prioritization will be geared towards providing the best value/impact on reducing barriers to CSA's built environment.
 - Amend the Accessibility Plan on the CSA's website to add the list of discrete themes identifying barriers.

- STATUS: All actions have been completed ahead of schedule. The Accessibility Plan will be amended by February 1, 2025.
2. The second inspection finding indicated that: *“The regulated entity has not indicated what steps it has taken, or will be taking, to Remove barriers and prevent new barriers in relation to built environment.”* In response, the Real Property Team established the following corrective measures (Deadline: March 31, 2025 – Year 3 of the CSA Accessibility Plan)
- For existing barriers, the facilities planning, and operations teams will meet approximately 6 times per year, in alignment with the CSA Accessibility Network, to review our progress on itemized conformance issues and optimize our approach.
 - The facilities team is implementing an internal green light process that requires each investment to be reviewed for inclusion of accessibility measures, where warranted.
 - The CSA’s Accessibility Plan will be amended, on the Agency’s website, to outline steps to remove and prevent new barriers.
 - STATUS: The Team meets with the CSA Accessibility Network regularly to review progress. Implementation of an internal green light process will be completed by December 31, 2024. The CSA’s Accessibility Plan will be amended on the Agency’s website by February 1, 2025.

Status of Targets

Tasks and milestones have been established for each discrete barrier theme. Some actions that could be implemented in year 3 are dependent on funding requests are awaiting approval/rejection. Furthermore, there are other deficiencies identified that require significant investment or present significant operational impacts thus they are earmarked for correction when future projects take place that align in scope.

3. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Status of Goal

Work is ongoing to incorporate and prioritize accessibility in IT projects and processes to ensure greater access to electronic and software tools needed to do their work while also adhering to security requirements.

Identified Barriers

Survey feedback raised the issue that flex stations don’t all have the same IT equipment, which could potentially create a barrier to accessibility.

Feedback taken into consideration during consultations

Public Service Employee Survey

Since a new Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) was not administered in 2023, there is no data to compare and measure the potential impact of the CSA's information and communication technologies-related actions on removing or preventing barriers for persons with disabilities.

Internal Survey and Focus Group Feedback

An internal survey conducted in June 2024 indicates that 71% of respondents (employees with disabilities) felt very satisfied/satisfied with the IT ergonomic and/or IT adaptive equipment, a decrease compared to 88% last year. As well, 29% were not very satisfied/very unsatisfied, compared to 12% last year. In terms of the level of satisfaction with the support provided by IT specialists when there are questions or concerns regarding accessible software and technologies they are using, 90% of participants were very satisfied/somewhat satisfied, a decrease compared to 97% last year. Survey respondents provided feedback:

- Flex stations don't all have the same IT equipment, which creates the need for adjustments before using a flex station.
- Some respondents stated that IT and ergonomic hardware may be acceptable, but not always ideal, while others shared that requests are often well responded to.
- There is a need to raise awareness on how to request improvements.
- Teleconferencing systems need improvements.

In the same internal survey, 72% of respondents (all employees) were very satisfied (compared to 85% last year) that virtual meetings and events are fully accessible to them, and 26% were somewhat satisfied (compared to 13% last year). Survey respondents provided feedback:

- There are certain meetings and events which are in-person only, such as some departmental all-staff meetings, which can create barriers for some employees with disabilities. For example, virtual meetings and events enable employees with hearing disabilities to use their headphones and hear the discussions more clearly.
- For some employees with disabilities, hybrid meetings are a preferred option. For example, some employees with ADHD may prefer to attend meetings in person and avoid distracting notifications on the screen.

Status of Year 2 Actions (January – December 2024)

Research IM/IT accessibility best practices and new trends in both technology and service delivery to inform the annual update of IM/IT 3-year strategy.

The IM/IT newsletter has been launched and informs employees of all new improvements, including those related to accessibility such as new available features in MS Teams, Windows 11, etc. The IM/IT teams remain on the lookout for new features to include in their future plans.

Present the CSA’s IM/IT 3-year strategy to the Accessible Network for information and feedback and provide an annual progress report.

The IM/IT Team is still following the same plan as 2023 and moving forward with the identified initiatives.

Prepare an action plan and begin implementing to address accessibility issues identified while creating the inventory of systems, software, and equipment.

The creation of the inventory is still ongoing, and the analysis was not started in 2024, based on priorities.

Implement the plan to ensure compliance with new TBS Web Accessibility Standards (Phase 1), which are expected by the end of fiscal year 2022-2023.

The CSA complies with the latest TBS Web Accessibility Standards.

Continue to research options to overcome technological limits that hinder accessibility.

The Team has researched options based on clients’ requests since Year 1 and will research additional options to overcome technological limits that hinder accessibility based on clients. There have been many improvements in virtual meetings using tools integrated into MS Teams.

Implement mechanism to collect, track and analyze accessibility-related ITC feedback, and include findings in IM/IT planning exercises on an annual basis.

The ITSM request system now allows IM/IT to better capture client feedback on their request, track it and analyze it.

Undertake awareness and training sessions on accessible ICT.

The inventory of IT training, including accessibility, has not been developed due to the 2024 priorities. It is still in the plans. In terms of training for IM/IT employees providing services, the training priorities have been placed on the technical aspect and cybersecurity. By the end of 2024, there will be proposed guidelines to help employees create accessible documents (e.g., PowerPoint).

Status of Targets

The implementation of Windows 11 has started, which offers new accessibility features. In addition, new hardware (noise cancelling headphones) has been proposed to employees. Internal survey results for 2024 indicate a decrease in the satisfaction rate for both IT ergonomic and/or IT adaptive equipment and the level of satisfaction with the support provided by IT specialists when there are questions or concerns regarding accessible software and technologies.

4. COMMUNICATION (OTHER THAN ICT)

Status of Goal

Efforts are ongoing to enhance accessible communications at the CSA with the addition of the Accessibility Hub on the intranet and through efforts to raise awareness and share resources on accessible communications.

Identified Barriers

A new barrier was identified with regards to language disorders. Additional information is provided in the following section.

Feedback taken into consideration during consultations

Internal Survey and Focus Group Feedback

In this year's internal survey, participants (all employees) were asked about their current level of knowledge or ability to make documents more accessible, respondents answered as follows: high (26% vs. 31% in 2023), medium (34% vs. 36%), low (40% vs. 25%). In terms of plain language, 76% of respondents felt that the CSA's communications are written in plain language (compared to 69% in 2023) and 17% responded sometimes (compared to 23% in 2023).

A survey respondent offered the following suggestion to improve accessibility for employees with language disorders: *"As pertaining to plain language, there are tools that will take a text and simplify it for the reader. Equipping employees with language disorders and other disorders with those tools would be more straightforward than attempting to reduce the vocabulary span of everyone, especially in an organization where specialized vocabulary is required."*

Status of Year 2 Actions (January – December 2024)

Revise and implement Year 2 of the Accessibility Plan's communications strategy.

The Communications Teams and HR Team reviewed and updated the Communications strategy to include updated information, such as the National Accessibility Week activities, led by the Accessibility Network, and the DID YOU KNOW series (additional information provided below).

Work with the Human Resources Directorate to develop and promote Year 2 of the CSA's Top 5 Accessibility Tips campaign.

In Year 1, the Accessibility Network took part in an interactive session to brainstorm accessibility tips, which evolved into the "DID YOU KNOW" series. This series covers topics such as the new disability definition, self-identification and self-declaration, accessibility mindsets and tips to improve workplace accessibility for everyone, including accessible communications tips, and more. Since January 2024, the DID YOU KNOWs have been featured on the internal screens in the CSA's three work locations, rotating every two weeks.

Roll-out and launch the new Accessibility Hub on the intranet.

The Accessibility Hub has been posted on the CSA's intranet and additional content will be added iteratively over the coming months. Included in the new Accessibility Hub are a list of resources for creating accessible documents, training materials related to accessibility, and activities and events on the topic of accessibility.

Complete revamp of the intranet site.

Work is ongoing to migrate site platforms and revamp the intranet's content and information architecture to ensure the CSA's intranet site is compliant with web accessibility standards.

Begin delivering training to internal teams on creating accessible documents.

Due to operational constraints, in lieu of delivering training to internal teams, the Executive Director of Human Resources and Delegated Official on the Accessibility Plan sent an email to all Directors within the Corporate Strategy and Innovation Branch asking them to share resources on accessible communications with their teams, such as the Digital Accessibility Toolkit, and encouraging them to help enhance accessible communications at the CSA. The internal communications team also developed a guide on sending emails to all employees, including how to make them accessible, which was posted to the intranet site. When noncompliance is observed in messages to all employees, the internal communications team actively engages with the teams involved explaining and provide resources on how to make emails more accessible.

Implement measures needed to meet the remaining [Guidelines for Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#), as required.

This action is complete.

Actively participate in the Community of Practice for Accessible Communications.

A representative from the internal communications team has contacted the Community of Practice for Accessible Communications to join future meetings.

Status of Targets

While there has been an increase in the number of respondents who feel that the CSA's communications are written in plain language, there has been a decrease in the number of respondents with a high level of knowledge or ability to make documents more accessible.

5. PROCUREMENT

Status of Goal

The Procurement Team is continuing to progress on its goal of weaving accessibility requirements into various aspects of the CSA's procurement process, tools and templates.

Identified Barriers

No new barriers have been identified. The level of accessibility of procurement tools and templates remains unknown.

Feedback taken into consideration during consultations

The CSA does not currently have a mechanism in place to regularly seek input or feedback from persons with disabilities outside of the CSA such as an advisory committee or stakeholder networks that can provide advice, direction, or guidance on procurement's accessibility. A representative of the Procurement Team attends Accessibility Network meetings to provide updates and consult members when needed.

Actions carried over from Year 1 (2023)

Create an inventory of procurement tools and templates for internal clients. Conduct an accessibility assessment of this inventory to 1) determine the level of accessibility of the tools and templates and 2) ensure accessibility is included as a requirement and/or consideration in procurements.

Work is ongoing to develop an inventory of procurement tools and templates for internal clients. For instance, most procurement terms and conditions in use at the CSA are developed and implemented by PSPC. PSPC conducted reviews of procurement documentation from an accessibility perspective and have implemented various updates resulting of these consultations (e.g., the new Contract Management Initiative (CMI) tool includes a 'Colour blind mode with different text formats for people who require these formats). This tool will be implemented by the CSA in the coming year, but delay is possible. Also, the Procurement Team has implemented a new integrated process that asks if accessibility is being considered. If the answer is no, an explanation is required. The next step will be to implement a procedure to audit the responses.

Conduct research on best practices for making complex procurement documents accessible (e.g., large documents containing multiple tables) for potential bidders.

Best practices are available for specific commodities, with other tools still being developed in other areas. The Procurement Team has contacted PSPC for more resources.

Status of Year 2 Actions (January – December 2024)

Begin implementing changes to procurement tools and templates (Phase 1) for internal clients, as identified in Year 1 accessibility assessment.

Deferred to Year 3 given that this action is tied to the inventory of procurement tools and templates, which is still ongoing. However, as previously mentioned, the new integrated process includes a question regarding whether accessibility has been considered and an audit function will be incorporated in the future.

Communicate and socialize updated procurement tools and templates (Phase 1) to help internal clients identify accessibility requirements, and provide additional guidance as required.

Pending more information on best practices. In the interim, the Procurement Team is providing more guidance to procurement agents on what kinds of questions to ask clients and are encouraged to promote accessibility considerations.

Begin to implement best practices for making complex procurement documents accessible for potential bidders, as required.

As mentioned above. CSA procurement terms, conditions, and other tools often emanate from PSPC. PSPC has included various accessibility considerations in these tools to make the procurement process more accessible. Pending more information on best practices given the complexity involved in making tables in documents more accessible.

Actively participate in the Agents of Change for Accessible Procurement group to stay well informed of the latest information and share best practices.

Attendance is ongoing monthly.

Status of Targets

Though some tools are from PSPC, CSA will continue to work towards making other internal tools and templates accessible, where required, by Year 3.

6. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Status of Goal

The CSA is continuing to work towards its goal of enhancing the accessibility of its programs and services through increased awareness and knowledge of accessible and inclusive design and delivery.

Identified Barriers

No new barriers have been identified and previously identified barriers remain.

Feedback taken into consideration during consultations

The CSA does not currently have a mechanism in place to regularly seek input or feedback from persons with disabilities such as an advisory committee or stakeholder networks that can provide advice, direction, or guidance on the accessibility of our programs and services.

The CSA has not yet developed data on client satisfaction from the perspective of persons with disabilities.

Status of Year 2 Actions (January – December 2024)

Identify internal services within CSA as part of the Service and Digital Policy directive.

The Service Management and Experimentation Team, in collaboration with corporate services managers, identified and analyzed CSA's internal services. An initial assessment of the customer experience, including service accessibility, was carried out in Fall 2023–Winter 2024.

Assess G&C service and program design to identify and remove potential barriers.

CoE is active in the G&C Interdepartmental Forum, as well as CSA's G&C advisory committee and a new CSA G&C Forum will be put in place in 2024, that will be composed of all CSA G&C practitioners. Accessibility considerations will be included in discussions at these ongoing committees, and forums so as to identify potential opportunities to remove potential barriers. The status is ongoing.

Share information on best practices for designing and delivering accessible and inclusive programs and services.

The G&C CoE is active in the G&C Interdepartmental Forum. More specifically, this community of G&C federal practitioners shares best practices, tools, and processes, including accessibility. A CSA G&C Forum will be put in place in 2024, this forum composed of all CSA G&C practitioners will meet bimonthly, and the G&C CoE will include in its subjects for discussion best practices for designing and delivering accessible and inclusive programs and services. The G&C CoE is responsible for the development of internal tools for the G&C community, via the CSA Intranet Tool Box, and will include best practices for designing and delivering accessible and inclusive programs and services as each tool, processes, guidelines and best practices are created and / or updated. The status is ongoing.

Develop strategy to 1) develop data on G&C client satisfaction from the perspective of persons with disabilities and 2) consult persons with disabilities to identify and remove barriers, based on Year 1 best practices research findings.

The kick-off for the CSA survey to external clients / G&C recipients review will be held in 2024. The complete review is expected to take place during the 2024-25 and 2025-26, and as indicated in the Departmental Plan, the CSA survey to external clients / G&C recipients will include actions to review CSA's services and obtain feedback. This will also support the development of a strategy to 1) develop data on G&C client satisfaction from the perspective of persons with disabilities and 2) consult persons with disabilities to identify and remove barriers, based on Year 1 best practices research findings. The status is ongoing.

Implement mechanisms to monitor the proportion of G&C recipients who have individuals who self-identify as persons with disabilities within their organizations.

The kick-off for the CSA survey to external clients / G&C recipients review will be held in 2024.

The complete review is expected to take place during the 2024-25 and 2025-26.

The G&C CoE is currently working on the renewal of the Announcement of Opportunity Guide and Applicant Forms in which self-identification will be included. Status is ongoing.

Status of Targets

All targets are currently ongoing.

7. TRANSPORTATION

The Accessibility Commissioner's Inspection included two sections related to Transportation.

1. It was found that *"The regulated entity has not identified any barriers in its policies, programs, practices and services in relation to transportation."* In response, the HR Team established the following corrective measures (Deadline: October 31, 2024 – Year 2 of the CSA Accessibility Plan)
 - The HR Team will consult the Accessibility Network and internal partners to identify transportation barriers at the CSA. Specifically, the team will determine whether there are transportation barriers related to:
 - o Travel policies and procedures.
 - o Vehicles used by CSA employees.
 - In addition, the HR Team will consult partners to identify whether any transportation accessibility issues exist for Canadians the CSA serves.
 - STATUS: The HR Team consulted internal partners and the Accessibility Network to identify transportation barriers at the CSA.

2. The second finding indicated that *"The regulated entity has not indicated what steps it has taken, or will be taking, to remove barriers and prevent new barriers in the area of Transportation"*. In response, the HR Team established the following corrective measures (Deadline: November 30, 2024 – Year 2 of the CSA Accessibility Plan)
 - The HR Team will use the feedback and information collected during consultations held with the Accessibility Network and internal partners to develop an action plan to remove and prevent new transportation barriers.
 - STATUS: The HR Team prepared an action plan based on the feedback received by internal partners and the Accessibility Network.

It should be noted that initial guidance the HR Team received from the Office of Public Service Accessibility in 2022 as it was preparing the CSA's Accessibility Plan was as follows:

This includes travel between provinces or outside of Canada by plane, train, bus, or ferry. It also includes vehicles used by organizations that are regulated by the federal government (examples: Canada Post, television stations). Here are examples of barriers in this area:

- *Planes and trains are not wheelchair accessible*
- *Airports that do not have braille signs*

Given this definition, the CSA initially deemed this Area of Focus not applicable. Moving forward, the Transportation Area of Focus will be part of all future accessibility plans and progress reports.

8. ACCESSIBILITY CONFIDENCE

Status of Goal

The CSA is continuing to make strides towards greater awareness and understanding among CSA leaders and employees on why accessibility matters and increasing commitment to creating a more accessible and inclusive workplace.

Identified Barriers

Internal surveys and focus group feedback have flagged new and previously identified barriers.

New barriers:

- There is an unrecognized emotional cost of living with a disability and the energy exertion that is required to “keep up appearances”.

Existing identified barriers:

- There is an ongoing need to raise awareness and understanding on the part of managers and colleagues about accessibility needs and requirements and how they can help reduce systemic and attitudinal barriers for people with disabilities.

Feedback taken into consideration during consultations

Public Service Employee Survey

Since a new Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) was not administered in 2023, there is no data to compare and measure the potential impact of the CSA’s information and communication technologies-related actions on removing or preventing barriers for persons with disabilities.

Internal Survey Feedback

Survey participants shared some positive feedback and encouragement to continue to do more to increase accessibility at the CSA. For example, a survey participant shared that, upon arrival at the CSA, both their manager and HR were very clear about the importance of inclusivity and several actions were taken to remove barriers and raise awareness. Others encouraged the CSA

to continue to promote accessibility so that it becomes part of the organizational culture, which would make it easier for everyone to live without barriers.

The survey asked respondents who decided to not self-identify as a person with a disability to specify why they have chosen not to do so. Feedback shared related to:

- Concerns about misperceptions and the possibility of discrimination and the future impacts to career opportunities. Also, there were concerns about the stigmatisation of mental health disabilities and the possible impacts on the credibility and career progression.
- Uncertainty about whether specific conditions are considered disabilities and therefore not feeling comfortable requesting accommodations (e.g., chronic pain, episodic migraines).
- Uncertainty about whether information will remain confidential while going through the accommodation process.
- Lack of trust that needs will be listened to and met with empathy by manager and fear of being judged negatively and seen as incapable of handling the workload because of disability.

Focus Group Feedback

When asked *“What is working well at the Agency in terms of accessibility and accommodation?”*, focus group participants shared the following:

- There is more visibility now on how to participate and bring up issues to senior management through the Accessibility Network. There’s an increased willingness to ask for feedback (e.g., consultations on setting up the collaboration spaces).

In response to the question, *“What needs improvement?”*, focus group participants responded:

- Training is required to counter misconceptions, ignorance and fear around working with people with disabilities. Increased awareness is also required regarding the emotional costs of living with a disability and the energy exertion that is required to “keep up appearances”.
- Certain precautions could be put in place to create additional safety for employees with disabilities. For example, for employees with certain conditions, it would be helpful for safety officers to be advised and know how to respond if needed. Also, being able to store emergency medication at the infirmary would provide extra security.

Status of Year 2 Actions (January – December 2024)

Provide implementation update to Accessibility Network using the Accessibility Tracker.

The HR Team met with the Accessibility Network in October 2024 to provide an update on HR action items. Other teams have attended Accessibility Network meetings and provide updates on their actions. In addition, the Accessibility Network members reviewed the draft Progress Report and provided feedback.

Ensure ongoing integration of accessibility into the Leadership Framework’s leadership programs, policies, and initiatives, including the learning strategy.

Accessibility has been integrated into the Integrated Leadership Framework. The Framework’s main focus is the integration of Character-Based Leadership (CBL) which consists of developing and delivering CBL 101 (introduction of model and character dimensions), CBL 201 (self-awareness of character dimensions) and CBL 301 (deeper dive into character dimensions). The learning strategy has been paused due to operational requirements.

Implement Year 2 of the employee engagement strategy.

The employee engagement strategy has been paused due to operational requirements.

Organize annual events co-hosted by Accessibility Champion and Mental Health Champion (e.g., National AccessAbility Week).

A panel discussion, “*Talk on Mental Illness and the Workplace*”, was hosted by the Mental Health Co-Champions on October 10, 2024, to coincide with Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 6-12, 2024). The hybrid event touched upon mental illness, its impacts, and best practices in the workplace. The Accessibility Co-Champions were consulted to help inform the organization of the panel discussion.

Develop and promote Year 2 of Top 5 Accessibility Tips with the Communications Team.

This action is on track. Please refer to the Communications Area of Focus for additional information.

Status of Targets

As mentioned previously, we are unable to report on the potential impact of accessibility confidence-related actions on removing or preventing barriers for persons with disabilities since the Public Service Employee Survey was not administered in 2023.

C. CONSULTATIONS

An internal survey was launched in late May-early June 2024 to gather feedback on accessibility issues at the CSA. The survey, which garnered a total of 180 responses (compared to 190 in 2023), had two separate streams, one for employees with disabilities (63 respondents vs. 53 in 2023) and the other for employees without disabilities (111 respondents vs. 134 in 2023). The survey covered a variety of topics ranging from employment-related issues to information and communications technology and built environment. Three virtual focus groups were held in mid-June with individuals who self-declared as employees with disabilities. A total of 9 participants took part in the focus groups and answered the following questions:

- What is working well at the Agency in terms of accessibility and accommodation? What has room for improvement?

- What barriers have you or your colleagues experienced in your day-to-day work? Any physical, communications, technological, systemic, or attitudinal barriers?
 - o What has room for improvement?
 - o What would be helping remove or prevent these barriers?

The summary results of both the survey and the focus group discussions are outlined in the Feedback sections of each Area of Focus. More detailed results were provided to the respective Accessibility Plan Working Group members in an anonymous manner. The feedback received helped to identify new barriers and track the CSA's progress in addressing existing barriers. In addition, the feedback will help inform the implementation of the CSA's Accessibility Year 3 actions.

D. FEEDBACK

The CSA has not received any feedback, either via email or anonymously, regarding its Accessibility Plan or Progress Report (2023).