



The Correctional Investigator  
Canada

L'Enquêteur correctionnel  
Canada

# Accessibility Plan – Progress Report #1

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR  
2023-25

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## Table of contents

A. General.....	3
B. Organizational Context .....	4
C. Priority areas identified by the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> .....	5
1. Employment.....	5
2. Built environment .....	6
3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).....	6
4. Communications other than ICT.....	6
5. The procurement of goods, services and facilities .....	7
6. The design and delivery of programs and services.....	7
7. Transportation .....	7
D. Consultations .....	7
E. Feedback.....	8
F. Lessons Learned .....	8
G Training.....	8
H. Glossary.....	9
End Notes .....	10

## A. General

In July 2016, the Government of Canada began consultations with more than 6,000 Canadians in order to determine what an accessible Canada means to them. Following these consultations, Bill C-81: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada, was tabled in June 2018. The Accessible Canada Act,<sup>i</sup> which aims to make Canada a barrier-free country by January 1, 2040, came into force in July 2019. In order to attain that goal, all Government of Canada organizations are required to proactively identify, remove and prevent barriers in the following seven (7) priority areas:

- employment
- the built environment (buildings and public spaces)
- information and communication technologies
- communication, other than information and communication technologies
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities
- the design and delivery of programs and services
- transportation (airlines, as well as rail, road and marine transportation providers that cross provincial or international borders)

In light of various studies conducted since 2017, it is evident that the public service as a whole has some work to do to in terms of improving representation in the public service and ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate fully and meaningfully in the workplace. The Government of Canada's Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada<sup>ii</sup> (the Strategy) lays out a vision for becoming the most accessible and inclusive public service in the world.

### **The Strategy's guiding principles**

- "Nothing about us without us" – persons with disabilities are involved in the design and implementation of the Strategy
- Collaboration – GC organizations work in collaboration with each other, with bargaining agents and with other public, private and not-for-profit organizations
- Sustainability – the Strategy prioritizes actions that will have an enduring impact
- Transparency – the Strategy is developed and implemented transparently; and GC organizations will report openly and transparently on their efforts to remove barriers

### **The Strategy's goals**

Five goals are key to realizing the vision:

- Employment – Improve recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities
- Built environment – Enhance accessibility
- Technology – Make information and communications technology usable by all
- Services – Equip public servants to design and deliver accessible programs and services
- Culture – Build an accessibility-confident public service

In addition to the publication of Government of Canada organizations' first Accessibility Plan, the *Accessible Canada Act* has the following planning and reporting requirements:

- Prepare and publish accessibility plans
- Establish a feedback process
- Prepare and publish progress reports

This is the Office of the Correctional Investigator's first progress report.

As with most new initiatives asked of micro agencies with limited capacity, the primary challenge faced by the organization revolved around maintaining the necessary momentum throughout the first year, which was omnipresent with the introduction of the Government's Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada. This was partially due to the number of employees who self-identified as having a disability. Of its 45 Full-time Equivalents, only 1 or 2.2% came forward in this regard.

Although minor progress on the implementation of Accessibility measures occurred, the small number of employees who chose to self-identify, coupled with the late appointment of the Accessibility Champion in the second half of the reporting period, affected the overall implementation of the initiative. Finally, employee turnover, current workloads in both Internal Services and with the Champion herself, all added to the challenges of ensuring that Accessibility remain at the forefront for staff and the organization as a whole. This situation resulted in less progress in achieving the Office's objectives outlined in its 2023 Accessibility Plan.

## B. Organizational Context

The Office of the Correctional Investigator ("the Office") is a micro agency of 45 FTE with one program dedicated to investigations of complaints directed to the Correctional Service of Canada by federally sentenced individuals or those supervised in the community, and carries out systemic investigations of issues that affect large numbers of this population. The Office reviews all Correctional Services of Canada investigations of deaths in custody and serious bodily injury cases to ensure Correctional Service of Canada compliance with law and policy. The Office also conducts reviews of all use of force incidents. The Office's investigative activities support a safe, lawful and humane federal correctional practice to ensure that federal correctional decisions and practices comply with human rights, law, policy, and are fair.

As a separate agency of the Federal Public Administration, the organization is listed in Schedule I.1 and in Schedule 5 for all matters related to Human Resources Management of the *Financial Administration Act (FAA)*.

## C. Priority areas identified by the *Accessible Canada Act*

The Office of the Correctional Investigator contributed toward the Government of Canada's Accessibility Strategy and its goals, in the following areas:

### 1. Employment

OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION in YEAR 1
<p>Build accessibility awareness and capacity within the organization.</p> <p><b>Office of Primary Interest:</b> Corporate Services, Accessibility Champion and Management</p>	<p>The Office identified an Accessibility Champion in the second half of the reporting period in order to engage with interdepartmental networks, employees and support the implementation of this plan, as well as further the goals of the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i>.</p> <p>Provided Government of Canada-focused training to its mandatory training plan for all employees for 2023-24.</p> <p>Engaged persons with disabilities and all staff to solidify a culture of continuous improvement that supports diversity and inclusion. This included quarterly discussions at the management table on progress achieved in relation to diversity, inclusion and accessibility commitments.</p> <p>Promoted self-identification through available tools, to ensure that representation within the Office is accurately portrayed.</p> <p>Continued to support flexible work arrangements that address the diverse needs of all employees, while aligning with Government of Canada obligations and organizational requirements. Managers reviewed and adjusted flexible work arrangement agreements on a regular basis to strengthen dialogue and ensure that appropriate accommodations are in place and are working.</p>
<p>Provide services and tools needed to support persons with disabilities as well as management.</p> <p><b>Office of Primary Interest:</b> Corporate Services, Accessibility Champion and Management</p>	<p>Adjusted the recruitment approach, where required, while ensuring employee health and safety.</p> <p>Reviewed and updated Human Resources recruitment/staffing procedures to offer hiring managers guidance, training and tools in support of staffing and accommodating persons with disabilities.</p>

## 2. Built environment

OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION in YEAR 1
<p>Collaborate with Public Services and Procurement Canada as well as Facility Management to review safety and resource plans with the mindset of "inclusive by design and accessible by default".</p> <p><b>Office of Primary Interest: Corporate Services, Management</b></p>	<p>Completed a review of the emergency and evacuation plan with accessibility considerations, and ensuring that all employees are aware of the procedures to follow, including whom to communicate with should additional support be required.</p>

## 3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION in YEAR 1
<p>Assess Information Management and Information Technology environment in order to identify challenges relevant to accessibility barriers.</p> <p><b>Office of Primary Interest: Corporate Services and Management</b></p>	<p>Formalized a hybrid workplace approach in line with the recommendations stemming from the IM/IT assessment which considered challenges faced by employees with disabilities.</p> <p>Reviewed and negotiated new MOUs with service providers to modernize the IT environment and offer better technological accommodation tools and applications.</p>

## 4. Communications other than ICT

OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION in YEAR 1
<p>Public feedback mechanism.</p> <p><b>Office of Primary Interest: Corporate Services</b></p>	<p>Leveraged established channels with stakeholders in order to contribute to the Office's continued improvement of accessible external communication. Examples include:</p> <p>Consulted with employees and assessed the need to adjust internal communications to meet accessibility improvements.</p>

## 5. The procurement of goods, services and facilities

OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION in YEAR 1
Consider barriers to accessibility in the procurement and facilities space.  <b>Office of Primary Interest: Corporate Services and Management</b>	When required, liaised with the Accessible Procurement Resource Centre at Public Services and Procurement Canada for guidance on how to meet obligations regarding the consideration of accessibility factors in procurement. When required, liaised with the Accessible Procurement Resource Centre at Public Services and Procurement Canada for guidance on how to meet obligations regarding the consideration of accessibility factors in procurement.

## 6. The design and delivery of programs and services

OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION in YEAR 1
Support the prevention of barriers in relation to third-party design and delivery of programs and services.  <b>Office of Primary Interest: Policy and Research, Operations, supported by Corporate Services</b>	Consulted with service providers as required.  Included accessibility considerations and questions in stakeholder consultations.

## 7. Transportation

OBJECTIVE	CONTRIBUTION in YEAR 1
Identify barriers to persons with disabilities in the Investigative function.  <b>Office of Primary Interest: Accessibility Champion, Operations and Policy and Research</b>	The Accessibility Champion worked with the operations and policy and research groups to assess accessibility barriers as well as a mitigation approach to support persons with disabilities in the role of investigators.

## D. Consultations

The Office of the Correctional Investigator remains committed to involving persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of its Accessibility Plan as well as subsequent Progress Reports. However, as indicated earlier, only 1 or 2.2% of the complement self-identified as having disabilities limiting the collection of unique and valuable perspectives and experiences.

Due to reality highlighted above, the Office developed this first Progress Report by primarily consulting with the Accessibility Champion who is particularly sensitive and knowledgeable of the organization's successes and areas for improvement. The Office expects to expand its consultations for the development of the next Progress Report to include newly self-identified employees as well as the experiences of other micro agencies with similar mandates for comparative purposes.



## E. Feedback

The *Accessible Canada Act* requires organizations to establish a departmental process for receiving and dealing with feedback regarding the implementation of the accessibility plan. The Office has established channels for employee feedback through its exit and stay interview processes.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator's Accessibility Champion was responsible for monitoring and evaluating all feedback and report regularly to the organization's management table to ensure its consideration in future plans, when possible.

For questions, feedback or suggestions regarding this Progress Report, please contact the Office by:

- calling OCI 1-877-885-8848
- sending your feedback by mail to the attention of the Correctional Investigator  
Office of the Correctional Investigator Canada, PO Box+ 3421, Station D, Ottawa,  
Ontario K1P 6L4Canada
- sending your feedback by fax to 613-990-0563
- sending an email to: [org@oci-bec.gc.ca](mailto:org@oci-bec.gc.ca)
- scheduling a stay interview with the Small Department and Agencies Ombuds (for employees only)

The Office's Accessibility Champion will assess and respond to all feedback and questions in a timely manner. Feedback aimed at improving the organization's approach to Accessibility will be tabled for discussion at the senior management table.

## F. Lessons Learned

As stated earlier, the primary challenge for the Office in the reporting period as well as going forward will continue to be the lack of representation within its complement, of self-identified persons with a disability. This will affect the organization's ability to develop plans and progress reports and will require external consultations to obtain perspectives not available in-house. Notwithstanding, the organization will continue its recruitment and staffing efforts in targeting individuals with a disability with a view to including them into the planning and reporting of Accessibility measures.

## G. Training

As stated in the 2023-25 Accessibility Plan, the Office of the Correctional Investigator, under the leadership of Corporate Services, scheduled and provided Government of Canada-focused training to its mandatory training plan for all employees for 2023-24. This will also be the case in Year 2 of the implementation.

Through formal and informal mechanisms, including info-lunches and sidebar conversations, the Office engaged the small number of employees with disabilities and all staff to solidify a culture of continuous improvement that supports diversity and inclusion. These opportunities for

dialogue also included quarterly discussions at the management table on progress achieved in relation to diversity, inclusion and accessibility commitments.

The Office also promoted self-identification opportunities through available tools with a view to ensuring accurate representation within the Office.

## H. Glossary

### **Access to Justice**

means a people-centered approach to justice that puts consideration of the individual at the heart of Canada's rule of law, by providing access to information, programs and policies.

### **Accessibility, Accommodations and Adaptive Computer Technology -**

The Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program of Shared Services Canada provides a wide range of services, on a cost-recovery basis, to help integrate employees with disabilities, injuries and ergonomic requirements and who require access to systems, programs, information, computers and computer resources.

### **Barrier**

“means anything—including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice—that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.”

### **Disability**

“means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.”

### **Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport**

The Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport helps address the obstacles federal public service employees and applicants with disabilities face in obtaining the tools, supports and measures to perform at their best and succeed in the workplace. It facilitates recruitment, retention, and career advancement for persons with disabilities. The Accessibility Passport facilitates employee mobility between GC organizations. It is meant to follow each employee and it is an evergreen document that can be updated throughout a career.

**“Nothing about us without us”**

“Nothing about us without us” is a guiding principle used across the Government of Canada to communicate the message that no policy should be decided by a representative without the full and direct participation of the members of the group affected by that policy.

### **Self-Identification Modernization Project**

In September 2020, the Treasury Board Secretariat launched the Self-Identification (self-ID) Modernization Project to increase the accuracy, depth and breadth of the data across government. The project explored ways to reduce stigma associated with self-identification for all employment equity groups. Following extensive research and consultations, a new questionnaire was co-designed with employees from various diversity networks.

## **Endnotes**

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<sup>i</sup> Accessible Canada Act, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/a-0.6/>

<sup>ii</sup> Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada, [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service/accessibility-strategy)