



ACCESSIBILITY PROGRESS REPORT

Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission

2024



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General

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You may request a copy of our Accessibility Plan, Progress Reports, or a description of our feedback process in: Print or large print; braille; audio format; or electronic format compatible with adaptive technology.

Message from the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of the CRTC, I am pleased to present the 2024 Accessibility Progress Report.

Over the past year, we have continued working towards the goals we set out in our 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan. We are making great progress in identifying and removing any barriers that remain in our organisation and have implemented new measures to improve participation in our processes for Canadians with disabilities.

This includes new direct engagement with disability communities, training sessions for managers to support inclusive hiring practices, and updating our technology to meet the latest accessibility standards.

Though we have made progress, we know we still have much more to do. As we continue our work, we welcome input from those who still face barriers.

We remain committed to creating a CRTC that is fully accessible and inclusive for all our employees and the Canadian public.

Vicky Eatrides

Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer



Summary

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal that regulates the Canadian communications sector in the public interest. The CRTC holds public consultations on telecommunications and broadcasting matters and makes decisions based on the public record.

The *Accessible Canada Act* requires the CRTC to publish accessibility plans and progress reports that describe the actions taken to implement our plans.

Successfully implementing our plan means identifying, removing and preventing barriers for persons with disabilities when the CRTC interacts with the public and its employees.

This is the second progress report for our 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan, for the period of October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. During this period, the CRTC implemented the following measures:

Promoting accessibility-specific training, resources, and awareness

- Accessibility and inclusion training is a top priority at the CRTC, with 86% of employees having completed it this year, an impressive increase from 25% last year.
- The CRTC offered employees a variety of learning opportunities on accessibility and mental health, including on bipolar disorder, neurodiversity, and Deaf culture.
- An additional 25 sessions touched on important topics such as the well-being and psychological health of people with disabilities and the CRTC's duty as an employer to inquire and accommodate.
- Our Senior Accessibility Advisor, a Deaf community member living with multiple disabilities, has been sharing important insights with the CRTC.

- The CRTC held plain language workshops, resulting in more accessible language to all employees and across all decisions, notices, and orders published on our website.
- We launched a blog series called 'Accessibility Unveiled' on visible and invisible disabilities at the CRTC. The first story covered implicit biases and attitudinal barriers.
- The first version of the evergreen GBA Plus guide was shared with all CRTC staff.

Promoting the hiring and retention of persons with disabilities

- Following amendments to the *Public Service Employment Act*, we continued to implement changes to address barriers in the staffing process through an action plan that included training for strategic advisors, staffing specialists, and hiring managers.
- The CRTC offered various sessions to managers on merit criteria, assessments, and bias to support inclusive hiring practices.
- Executives continue to have a commitment in their performance agreements to support the accessibility plan and improve the representation of persons with disabilities.

Improving workplace accommodations and minimizing environmental and physical barriers

- The CRTC is forming a committee of accessibility experts to review and streamline the accommodation process for employees.

- Internal meetings are now offered in separate French and English sessions whenever possible, improving accessibility and supporting cost-effective practices. CART services and sign language interpretation continue to be provided as needed.
- The CRTC consulted with employees on the hybrid work environment to identify barriers and ways to improve before returning to our permanent office space in 2025.
- We acknowledge the gap in knowledge and attitudinal barriers around invisible disabilities by providing inclusive monthly tools, training and resources.

Improving the accessibility of our network applications and website

- The Accessibility Center of Expertise for Information Technology developed and began implementing an action plan to ensure all inaccessible applications receive accessibility recommendations.
- The CRTC is actively exploring options to replace outdated technology with newer solutions that meet the latest accessibility standards.
- We implemented recommended web accessibility standards and updated our web pages to make them more accessible for screen reader users.

Increasing participation of persons with disabilities in CRTC processes

- The CRTC updated its intervention form to include a direct contact for personalized support or alternative submission methods.

- We engaged with disability communities through our new semi-annual accessibility newsletter.
- Two information sessions were held, including pilot sessions in plain language on how to participate in our consultations.
- A 10-week American Sign Language training course was provided to CRTC staff and Commissioners involved in public hearings.
- Notices of consultation on issues affecting the Deaf community were translated into sign language.

Providing information in ASL and LSQ

- The CRTC adopted a two-step approach to streamline the procurement of sign language translation services, aiming to improve delivery times and establish a centralized budget.
- A new search function and central repository have been introduced to our website, bringing all sign language content together in one convenient place.

Consultations

The CRTC engaged 18 organizations across Canada on the progress we are making toward our objectives. These organizations represent Canadians that experience a wide range of disabilities. Employees of the CRTC were also consulted about the hybrid work environment.

Feedback

The Commission received 22 emails from the public through its accessibility feedback process. Most were related to the accessibility of the communications services that the CRTC regulates, rather than to the CRTC itself. We also received 106 accessibility-related requests through other means that were handled by our Client Services team. Six of those requests related to the accessibility of the CRTC.

Internally, one email was received and actioned regarding the accommodation process.

What we learned

We heard that you would like us to:

- **continue improving the accessibility of our website and share accessibility updates with employees and disability communities;**
- **streamline the participation process for our consultations and other public proceedings;**
- **ensure that all internal applications are accessible;**
- **continue to build awareness of disability in the workplace and improve our accommodation procedure; and**
- **hire more people with disabilities, especially in management roles.**

Challenges

The CRTC is actively addressing barriers to accessibility and inclusion, with a focus on improving sign language services. While challenges exist, particularly around federal procurement regulations, the CRTC is working on establishing a corporate contract to streamline the process.

Consultations highlighted the importance of incorporating measurable data in our accessibility plans. In response, the CRTC is gathering information to develop more effective indicators, ensuring clearer and more measurable progress in the next plan.

The way forward

With guidance from its experts and the disability communities, the CRTC has greatly expanded its focus on accessibility over the past year. The CRTC developed strategies and tools that address both universal and specific accessibility needs in all areas. The perspectives of individuals with lived experiences of disability remain central to our work. Together, we are ensuring all Canadians have access to a world-class communications system, building a future where no one is left behind.

Introduction

The **Accessible Canada Act** (the Act) came into force in 2019. It aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities in Canada. Out of its seven priority areas, five are particularly relevant to the CRTC as an organization and employer:

- employment;
- the built environment;
- information and communication technologies;
- communication other than information and communication technologies; and
- the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.

The Act requires all organizations under federal responsibility, including the CRTC, to prepare and publish accessibility plans. These plans outline policies, programs, practices, and services that aid in identifying, removing and preventing barriers in accordance with **the seven key principles of the Act**.

Accessibility plans must be updated every three years. Organizations are also required to prepare and publish progress reports that describe the actions taken to implement the accessibility plans. They must include information on:

- accessibility feedback received by the organization and how they took the feedback into consideration; and
- consultations the organization held with persons with disabilities when preparing their reports.

This is the second progress report for our **2023-2025 Accessibility Plan**, covering the period from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. For a comprehensive view of our progress, please also consult the **2023 Accessibility Progress Report**.

Accessibility at the CRTC

The CRTC is the regulator for the Canadian communications sector and oversees more than 2,000 broadcasters, including television and radio services, as well as telecommunications providers, such as Internet, telephone, and mobile companies. The CRTC is committed to meeting the objective of being free of barriers in federally regulated areas by 2040.

This past year, the CRTC focused on incorporating accessibility and inclusion into all aspects of its work, from regulatory activities to internal operations. We provided mandatory accessibility training, launched our first accessibility newsletter, hosted workshops on Deaf culture and offered ASL classes.

We also raised awareness about the importance of representation and self-identification. In March 2024, 7.94% of the CRTC workforce identified as a person with a disability. This number increased to 9.80% by October 2024, exceeding the estimated workforce availability of 2023. The CRTC is also removing barriers in its hiring process and creating opportunities for persons with disabilities to fully participate, thrive, and bring their unique strengths to the organization.

Guided by the principle of “Nothing Without Us”, the CRTC is committed to engaging with individuals with disabilities in its decision-making processes. In the past year, we began examining the accessibility of streaming services by launching consultations on closed captioning and described video.

Accessibility is everyone’s responsibility, and the 2024 Accessibility Progress Report highlights the collective efforts of CRTC teams, individuals, and the invaluable contributions of persons with disabilities, whose lived experiences are helping shape our internal policies and guidelines, bringing us closer to becoming an accessibility-confident organization.

Areas in section 5 of the Act

Employment

This priority area will help ensure that all persons have the same employment-related opportunities to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities.

Measures to promote accessibility-specific training or resources

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
and develop a learning plan for all employees, managers, and functional specialists (employees working directly with the public) by August 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility and inclusion training has been identified as a top priority for the CRTC in 2024-2025 and will remain part of the mandatory training list for 2025-2026.• A new checklist tool is now available for CRTC employees, helping them easily track their learning priorities and monitor their progress.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>Mandatory training related to accessibility will be included in all staff learning plans for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and future years.</p> <p>Consistent with these learning plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 70% of employees will have completed the mandatory training by March 31, 2024. ii. 90% of employees will have completed the mandatory training by June 30, 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February 2024, the CRTC launched a campaign to boost employee participation in accessibility and inclusion training. The response was overwhelmingly positive. 78% of CRTC staff completed the training by March 31, and 86% by June 30—a significant leap from the 25% participation rate reported last year. • As of September 18, 2024, the overall completion rate stands at 82%. The 4% decrease from June to September is due to staff turnover. • The CRTC will continue to monitor training completion rates and ensure that all new employees are given the opportunity to complete the training.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will host two internal presentations per year dedicated to exploring accessibility issues, beginning in the 2023–2024 fiscal year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A testimonial on bipolar disorder was offered in October 2023. • A session on neurodiversity was offered in December 2023. • The CRTC offered four sessions on Deaf culture, effective communication with persons who are Deaf and use sign language in March and April 2024. • During National AccessAbility Week in May 2024, the CRTC offered a workshop on how to use Microsoft 365's accessibility features. • Our mental health and well-being program team held 25 sessions covering accessibility-related topics such as our duty to inquire about accommodation needs and the psychological health and safety of persons with disabilities. • The CRTC will continue to offer learning opportunities that meet the needs of employees and the organization while supporting mental health and well-being.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will continue to advertise courses by the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) on accessibility and disability available to its employees, while exploring other learning opportunities that may benefit the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC encouraged employee participation in various learning opportunities on accessibility and disability throughout the year, including the following sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility by the CSPS; ○ Brave Conversations and Bold Actions when Building Accessible and Inclusive Workplaces, also by the CSPS; ○ My Experience as a Person Born with Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus by the IT Accessibility Office; and ○ Diversity Within Disability by Statistics Canada. • Monthly facilitated discussions were offered on the 13 psychosocial factors of psychological health and safety in the workplace, based on the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. • The CRTC will continue to share resources with employees as they become available.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>As an additional resource for accessibility and persons with disabilities, the CRTC will create and staff an accessibility expert position by June 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since May 2023, our Senior Accessibility Advisor, a proud Deaf community member with lived experience of multiple disabilities, has provided fresh perspectives and valuable insights to the CRTC. • Two additional persons with an accessibility and diversity lens have also been hired in the Secretary General's Office. • The CRTC's Legal Sector has staffed the position of Senior Legal Counsel, Accessibility.

Measures to promote the hiring and retention of persons with disabilities

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will develop a corporate plan that addresses the changes to the <i>Public Service Employment Act</i> no later than one month after those changes coming into effect and will monitor its implementation while staying informed on accessibility resources available through central agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the <i>Public Service Employment Act</i> aimed at addressing barriers in the staffing process came into effect on July 1, 2023. • The CRTC communicated and implemented these changes immediately through an action plan that included training sessions for strategic advisors and staffing specialists ahead of updates to the Act. • As part of that plan, the CRTC provided multiple training sessions to hiring managers, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ four internal information sessions and three Q&A sessions from the Public Service Commission in October and November 2023; ○ six sessions on effective merit criteria and candidate assessment. Though not directly related to the changes in the Act, they addressed issues affecting persons with disabilities; and

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a new workshop on conducting bias and barrier assessments in evaluation processes has been available since September 2024. Several sessions are scheduled over the coming year. • The CRTC has fully developed and implemented the action plan.
<p>The CRTC will launch a call for proposals for an Employment System Review by March 2023 aimed at decreasing barriers in the hiring process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite previous delays caused by funding limitations and a procurement backlog, this project remained a priority, with funds officially committed in September 2024. • The statement of work was reviewed, updated, and is expected to be submitted for contract approval by the end of 2024.
<p>The CRTC will include language to encourage the hiring of persons with disabilities as an objective within the performance management agreements for all executives for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every executive continues to have a commitment in their performance agreements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ support the objectives and the implementation of the Accessibility Plan; and ○ improve the representation of persons with disabilities within their team at all levels.

Measures to improve the clarity of the process to request workplace accommodations

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will evaluate its policies with the goal of creating a more centralized and clearer approach to workplace accommodations and accessibility in consultation with employees with disabilities. To this end, procedures and guidelines, including roles and responsibilities and monitoring for the accommodations process will be developed no later than December 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC is in the final stages of selecting sector experts to form a working group responsible for reviewing and streamlining the accommodation process. • An employee transition form is being developed to reduce barriers for new hires and departing employees. It will be tested for accessibility before its official launch. • This remains a top accessibility priority for the CRTC. The working group tasked with reviewing the accommodation process will address this in depth as part of their work.
<p>The CRTC commits to making it clear that a medical note is no longer required to request the vast majority of workplace accommodations such as for ergonomics (e.g., furniture, keyboards, mice) and adaptive technology compatible with GOC systems (e.g., screen readers for blind employees, noise-cancelling headphones or software to accommodate neurodiverse employees, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information stating that a medical note is not required for most equipment-related accommodations has been added to the CRTC's hybrid workplace guidance and supporting documents for the accommodation process.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC commits to providing ergonomic evaluations and equipment for its employees' primary place of work. This policy will be fully implemented by June 2023, and will include an explanation of the steps required to request an evaluation on the CRTC's intranet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The procedure for requesting ergonomics evaluations or equipment is available on the CRTC intranet. • The CRTC offered four ergonomics information sessions to all employees in October and November 2023, complete with additional resources to support the participants beyond the sessions.

Measures to improve the culture of meetings

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will continue flexible work arrangement policies, to the extent possible, and implement workplace norms that include standard meeting-free hours, breaks between meetings, and/or breaks during longer meetings. A reference guide will be created to support making meetings more accessible by June 2023.</p> <p>This will include a list of service providers who can offer meeting accommodations such as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services, language and interpretation services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC offers flexible work arrangements, including telework, to the extent possible. • Our internal survey on the hybrid work environment included questions about employees' preferences for early departures from meeting rooms to help us implement shortened meeting times effectively. • The CRTC made a major update to its accessibility intranet page in May 2024 by adding new tools, including a guide for making meetings more accessible. • The Accessibility Team created a list of CART service providers that is available upon request. • The CRTC now offers separate French and English sessions for internal meetings whenever possible, improving accessibility and supporting cost-effective practices. • Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services, language interpretation and sign language interpretation continue to be provided as needed.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="841 447 1398 699">• The CRTC is in the process of updating its guidelines for accessible meetings, which will include more detailed procedures specific to the CRTC, strategies for shortening meetings and other important considerations to improve accessibility.

The built environment

This priority area will ensure that people entering the CRTC’s offices, including employees and stakeholders with disabilities, have barrier-free access.

Measures to reduce the existing, persistent environmental and physical barriers

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>In working with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) on the redesign of its offices, which will begin in winter 2023, the CRTC will take sensory factors and built environment barriers into account. While the renovations are taking place, the CRTC will ensure that the temporary swing space used by its employees also takes into account sensory factors and action accommodation requests in a timely manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In May 2024, the CRTC extended the automatic door opening time by 5 seconds to ensure that everyone, regardless of mobility or pace, can pass through comfortably. • In September 2024, the CRTC sent a survey to all employees to gather feedback on the hybrid work environment. The goal was to identify any challenges and areas of improvement as the organization prepares to move back to its permanent space in 2025. The survey included multiple questions about accessibility. A summary of findings can be found in the <u>Internal consultation</u> section below.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>To help reduce the possibility of negative experiences for its employees, the CRTC will continually review the built environment to ensure that it meets all accessibility best practices. The CRTC will also proactively prioritize, plan and work with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) to improve the accessibility of its physical space beyond the minimum standard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC continues to work with PSPC, accessibility experts, and other consultants to identify, remove, and prevent physical and environmental barriers in our permanent office space by implementing additional accessibility features, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a new universal washroom; ○ wider hallways; and ○ expanded offices to accommodate wheelchair turning radius requirements.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

This priority area is focused on ensuring that the CRTC’s internal and external technological tools are accessible. This will help employees and the public have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities, and help persons with disabilities become involved in the development of the CRTC’s regulatory policies.

Measures to improve the accessibility of the CRTC’s internal network applications and its website

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will create a center of expertise for accessibility within its IT team and develop an inventory of existing inaccessible tools by 31 March 2024.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Accessibility Center of Expertise within the IT team has created a detailed inventory of all inaccessible tools and applications.
<p>By 31 December 2024, the CRTC will develop a work plan to make inaccessible tools accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC created and implemented a work plan in addition to conducting accessibility reviews for internal and external tools and applications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 100% of development tools have been fully assessed. ○ 28% of internal applications have been assessed. ○ 66% of external applications have been assessed. • In addition to reviewing our applications, the CRTC is actively exploring options to replace outdated technology with newer solutions that meet accessibility standards.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will create a page on its internal website to hold information related to the accessibility features of various ICT tools and how employees can request accommodations related to these tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accessibility section has been introduced to the CRTC’s intranet page. It includes the Accessibility Plan, various resources, including guidance on accessibility features of ICT tools, an accessibility toolkit, and a list of accessibility training available to all employees. • The section includes a link to the feedback form that employees can use to report any accessibility barriers or issues they encounter. • The CRTC will continue to update the page as new resources become available.
<p>The CRTC is currently in the process of redeveloping its internal sites and applications. The CRTC is committed to continuing this process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Accessibility Center of Expertise thoroughly reviews each new internal and external application to ensure it complies with the web accessibility standards recommended by the Government of Canada. • The CRTC will review these applications before each release to make sure they meet all accessibility requirements.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>To ensure that testing for accessibility is truly all-encompassing, the CRTC will leverage the new Accessibility Center of Expertise and reach out to other government departments to expand its knowledge of diverse types of disabilities. Further, the IT team will solicit volunteers among employees, specifically those with accessibility needs, to help with accessibility testing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers continue to submit their applications to the Accessibility Center of Expertise for validation prior to production. • The Accessibility Center of Expertise offers essential adjustments and recommendations to ensure that each application is accessible to all users. • The Accessibility Center of Expertise has reached out to other employees living with disabilities to better understand their needs. • The accessibility experts will continue to participate in interdepartmental meetings dedicated to accessibility and engage in continuous training to stay up to date on the latest web standards and best practices.
<p>The CRTC is currently updating its Application Support System (APP), an internal file management program used by most employees.</p> <p>Accessibility considerations will be key in the design and implementation of any replacement systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC is reviewing its APP to ensure that all of its applications are accessible.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will create an inventory of tools, resources, and training opportunities, such as training with the <u>Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) program</u>, and promote it to staff by March 2025.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inventory of available tools was shared with all employees during National AccessAbility Week in May 2024, along with training sessions delivered by the AAACT. • The CRTC will actively share updates on new tools as they become available.
<p>The CRTC now has built-in accessibility testing at multiple stages of web development, which it is committed to maintaining. This accessibility testing ensures that the CRTC's public website will be compliant with the new Standard on ICT Accessibility. As various web, creative and client services products are updated, the CRTC will take the opportunity to build-in accessibility through the exploration of new ways to test and consult on various accessibility needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC improved the accessibility and readability of hundreds of pages on its website, including the <u>2023-24 CRTC Annual Report on the National Do Not Call List</u>, making them more accessible for screen reader users. • The CRTC continues to improve its <u>Accessibility Hub</u>, which helps Canadians access regulatory information about accessibility, by minimizing the number of clicks required.

Communication, other than ICT

This priority area will help ensure that all persons are treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities, and that all persons have meaningful options and the freedom to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities. It will also ensure that CRTC decisions and policies take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments, and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons.

Measures to increase participation of persons with disabilities and remove barriers in CRTC proceedings

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will develop a plan for the creation of a discussion group of stakeholders connected to communities of persons with various disabilities. As part of this project, the CRTC will identify a list of potential stakeholders, and review how it can promote the participation of these participants by 31 March 2024.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC has established a new outreach team. A key focus of their mandate is to engage with disability communities. • A list of stakeholders was created and continues to grow through the <u>Accessibility Newsletter subscription page</u>, consultations and social media engagement. • The <u>Accessibility Exchange</u>, a new platform that connects persons with disabilities to federally regulated entities, was launched. The CRTC is in the process of evaluating how effectively the platform can help it engage with a diverse range of disability communities.

The CRTC will develop outreach strategies to promote awareness of the CRTC mandate and how its proceedings work by December 31, 2023. These outreach strategies will be geared at engaging groups reflecting various disabilities on upcoming or current major Commission proceedings.

- The CRTC has started using a new email marketing tool to reach Canadians more effectively and gather valuable insights.
- The list of subscribers representing persons with disabilities and accessibility advocates is growing through promotion of the subscription page on social platforms.
- The CRTC has partnered with **Accessibility Standards Canada** to share information across its networks.
- In September 2024, the CRTC announced the launch of its new semi-annual accessibility newsletter, which aims to:
 - provide a platform for engagement with individuals from disability communities;
 - share updates on our accessibility progress;
 - provide important information for key CRTC consultations. For instance, we recently shared the deadlines for our proceedings dealing with closed captioning and described video; and
 - promote content in ASL and LSQ as it becomes available.
- The CRTC is also developing an outreach strategy to raise awareness about its role, with a focus on reaching persons with disabilities.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>To make consultation processes more accessible, the CRTC commits to make available a live and pre-recorded generic information session for the consultation process and pilot consultation-specific information sessions in plain language by 31 March 2024.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC held information sessions for two consultations in February and May 2024. Both sessions received positive feedback from participants. • The CRTC is working on a broader CRTC outreach strategy that will explore the use of videos and other accessible formats to reach specific audiences in a meaningful and inclusive way.
<p>The CRTC is developing an Accessibility Accommodation policy. Its purpose is to make requests for accessibility accommodations by a member of the public in a Commission proceeding transparent and predictable. The new Accessibility Accommodation policy is anticipated to be finalized and published on the CRTC website in 2023, including in ASL and LSQ.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accessibility accommodation guidelines have been drafted, incorporating valuable insights gathered from consultations with accessibility stakeholders. • Alternate formats of the guidelines are being prepared, including ASL and LSQ. • Once all formats are ready, the guidelines will be available on the CRTC website.
<p>The CRTC will develop a corporate-wide Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) guide by September 2023 to assist analysts in considering how diversity and intersectionality can be integrated in policy development as well as in the CRTC's engagement with Canadians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In September 2023, the first version of the evergreen GBA Plus guide was shared with all staff. It is also available on the CRTC's intranet page.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will also create a checklist of requirements for public hearing spaces (i.e., spaces that the CRTC rents to hold its public hearings) that will be used as a tool to help ensure the accessibility of these spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accessibility checklist, finalized in November 2022, is continually updated to reflect the latest accessibility requirements and technological advancements.

Measures to improve the organization’s use of plain language

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will continue to monitor the work of <u>Accessibility Standards Canada</u> towards the development of a Plain Language Standard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC has been working with an institution of higher education and research as well as other government organizations to support the use of plain language. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These interactions have led to improved plain language in all decisions, notices, and orders published on the CRTC website. • The CRTC continues to promote the use of plain language internally while awaiting the implementation of the CAN/ASC-3.1 Plain Language Standard.

<p>The CRTC will offer its employees annual plain-writing workshops, beginning in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain language workshops tailored specifically to employees who create content for the public took place between June and September 2024. • The CRTC began incorporating plain language principles when developing and reviewing corporate messaging, policies, and procedure documents. • In October 2023, for International Plain Language Day, the CRTC provided employees with a variety of writing resources. • The CRTC is actively monitoring messaging from the Government of Canada Plain Language Interdepartmental Community of Practice and will continue to apply new knowledge as it becomes available.
<p>The CRTC will continue to ensure that plain language standards are incorporated into web communications and will use feedback processes to gather additional perspectives on accessibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web content continues to be created according to the Canada.ca Content Style Guide, which has plain language at its core. • The CRTC continues to use a readability tool to check the reading level of English content, aiming for grade 8 level or below for content that is intended for a general audience.

Measures to increase the amount of information provided in ASL and LSQ

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will create a centralized budget to facilitate the organization’s contracting for services that increase accessibility. For example, to fund the production of more videos in ASL and LSQ, to hire interpreters, to provide CART services during meetings, and for other accessible services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A centralized budget is in place under the Secretary General’s Office for all accessibility-related needs, including ASL and LSQ interpretation, and CART services.
<p>Some of the CRTC’s key consumer policies and information are already available in ASL and LSQ.</p> <p>As a further step, the CRTC intends to engage with communities whose first language is sign language to assess their priorities and needs. This feedback would then inform a future, measured approach to enhance the availability of content in ASL and LSQ.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC consulted with members of the Deaf community on how sign language content is presented on its website. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The CRTC is continuing to treat ASL and LSQ as standalone languages, using distinct buttons and colors to make the content easier to locate. ○ A <u>central repository with a new search function</u> has been introduced, bringing all sign language content together in one convenient place. • Notices of consultation on issues affecting the Deaf community were translated into sign language.

The procurement of goods, services and facilities

This priority area will help ensure that all persons have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities.

Measures to promote accessibility of goods, services and facilities procured by the CRTC

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>In order to ensure digital technologies are accessible, the CRTC will clarify its understanding of the accessibility standards used by Shared Services Canada and build this information into its individual procurement strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clarification process is ongoing, with the Procurement team joining the Interdepartmental Procurement Community of Practice, attending information sessions, and monitoring training portals for new courses on accessibility requirements.
<p>The CRTC will ensure that all procurement specialists are trained in all matters related to accessibility and look to other government agencies and departments for best practices on considerations related to procurement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Procurement team has continued gathering resources and participating in training and information sessions offered by other government agencies. • Collaborative conversations have also started with other departments to promote the accessibility of goods, services, and facilities for the CRTC.

Accessibility Plan Action Step	2024 Update
<p>The CRTC will establish a contract with a new interpretation service provider by March 2023 to ensure that ASL and LSQ video production will continue. These services will be accessible by all sectors within the CRTC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRTC has adopted a two-step approach to streamline the procurement of sign language translation services. • A pilot project using task authorizations was conducted to streamline these services. If successful, a centralized budget will enable all CRTC sectors to access sign language services through a long-term contract.

The design and delivery of programs and services

The CRTC is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal, and does not deliver government programs or provide government services.

The CRTC interacts with the public through public proceedings and its consumer support line. As these action areas focus on communicating with Canadians and use ICT tools, they have been listed under **Information and communication technologies** and **Communications, other than ICTs**.

Transportation

The CRTC is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal, and does not offer transportation services.

Areas designated under regulations

The Governor in Council can designate additional areas in which barriers are to be identified and prevented under section 5 of the Act. As of the writing of this report, it has not done so. If additional areas are designated in the future, the CRTC will address these in later accessibility plans and progress reports.

Other initiatives

The CRTC is implementing additional commitments that are not included in the 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan to improve the experience of persons with disabilities.

Measures to improve disability, accessibility and mental-health awareness

Initiative	2024 Update
Connecting and understanding the perspectives of our colleagues with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CRTC launched a new blog series named Accessibility Unveiled during National AccessAbility Week in May 2024.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This series aims to demystify visible and invisible disabilities through storytelling. The first post addressed implicit biases and attitudinal barriers.

Addressing the gap in knowledge and attitudinal barriers around mental health disabilities, cognitive disabilities and other invisible disabilities, including neurodiversity.

- The Senior Accessibility Advisor and Mental Health and Wellness Advisor continue to meet monthly to bridge the gap between accessibility and mental health by:
 - building awareness and developing a culture that protects psychological health;
 - providing tools, training and resources that are inclusive to all disabilities; and
 - sharing knowledge and information on our duty to inquire and accommodate.

Measures to improve the experience of persons with disabilities in CRTC proceedings

Initiative	2024 Update
<p>Providing sign language training to CRTC Staff and Commissioners involved in public hearings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 10-week ASL training course took place from August to October 2024, with one-hour sessions each week. This program was designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ help CRTC staff and Commissioners communicate more effectively with people who use sign language; ○ create inclusive spaces where different perspectives can collaborate effectively; and ○ deepen our understanding of Deaf culture and its realities.
<p>Updating the intervention form to improve the user experience and streamline the submission process for those who participate in CRTC proceedings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of this update, the CRTC has added a note for participants who need assistance or encounter difficulties while submitting comments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The note includes direct contact information, enabling the CRTC to provide personalized support or alternative methods for submitting interventions to ensure everyone can participate.

Consultations

External consultation

The CRTC reached out to 18 organizations across Canada that advocate for people with a wide range of disabilities, including people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, people who are neurodivergent, and people with physical disabilities. The CRTC sought input on the progress made over the past year regarding its Accessibility Plan. Four organizations responded and agreed to participate in the consultations.

Number of
organizations
reached

Number of organizations
who participated in the
consultation

18

4

Consultation format

In October 2024, the CRTC ran a virtual consultation by inviting organizations to complete a questionnaire through the Microsoft Forms platform. The CRTC communicated with the organizations via email, providing a link to the questionnaire and assuring them that all responses would remain fully confidential. Participants could choose to identify themselves if they wished to receive follow-up communication.

Input on the accessibility of the CRTC in 2024

Key areas of the consultation focused on the experience of obstacles when interacting with the CRTC and the accessibility of our corporate website.

One organization found it somewhat easy to access information or participate in CRTC proceedings over the past year.

Three others found it somewhat or extremely difficult. They encountered accessibility barriers when:

- participating in public hearings and accessing related information; and
- navigating through our Accessibility Hub.

A participant noted that it was overall very easy to navigate our website with a screen reader, a tool they rely on heavily.

The priorities most frequently identified to guide the CRTC's future accessibility efforts were:

- enhancing consumer support for people with disabilities;
- removing barriers from the consultation process; and
- improving website accessibility.

To improve accessibility at the CRTC, organizations highlighted the following key opportunities for improvement:

- continuing to take action to produce more sign language content and videos with subtitles;
- collecting more feedback from users regarding the accessibility of our platforms and processes; and
- continuing to use plain language through our online platforms.

Suggestions to improve navigation and accessibility included:

- adding a main menu option specifically for participating in public hearings;
- conducting user testing to improve navigation and help users find specific items on the Accessibility Hub;
- hiring a Deaf individual to support members of the public with hearing disabilities; and
- implementing video chat support.

Conclusion on external consultation

This virtual consultation provided first-hand knowledge into how organizations representing persons with disabilities perceive accessibility at the CRTC. While we have made positive changes, we recognize there is still more work to do. The CRTC has taken these recommendations into consideration, and they will play an important role in shaping our next steps to ensure we continue heading in the right direction.

Internal consultation

Consultation format

In September 2024, the CRTC sent a survey to all employees regarding the hybrid work environment. The goal was to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement as we approach the move from our temporary office space back to our permanent office space, scheduled for 2025. The survey included questions related to accessibility.

A total of 421 employees responded, representing a 62% participation rate.

Number of employees who participated	Employee participation rate
421	62%

Observations regarding the accessibility of our current hybrid work environment

One in five employees noted experiencing physical or technical challenges in the workplace or expressed concerns about accessibility. Among the barriers mentioned were:

- high brightness levels;
- noise and distractions in open areas;
- ambient temperature;
- challenges with the office booking system; and
- strong fragrances in common areas.

Some employees expressed concerns about workplace accommodations and how these would be addressed once we move. The importance of accessible, gender-neutral washrooms and access to lockers was also highlighted.

Furthermore, 34% of respondents believe there are specific measures that could be taken to make the work environment at the CRTC more inclusive. Suggestions put forward included:

- organizing workspaces by teams;
- designating a room as a prayer space;
- soundproofing meeting rooms;
- proactive communication on accessible measures;
- installing automatic doors for accessing meeting rooms; and
- implementing an accessible emergency communication system.

Positive observations highlighted features that are working well in our temporary office space, such as:

- flexible work zones
- private rooms for calls
- large spaces for eating and gathering

Conclusion on internal consultation

The feedback we received provided valuable insights into both the strengths of our temporary office space and areas where improvements are needed. We have carefully reviewed these observations and are taking steps to address areas of concern, including developing an accessible emergency communication system.

The data collected will guide our continued efforts to create a hybrid work environment that is as positive, accessible, and functional as possible in our future facilities.

Employees with disabilities will have the opportunity to visit the new space before the transition, and their feedback will be taken into account when the CRTC moves back to its permanent offices.

Feedback

Employees and members of the public can use mail, email, telephone and Video Relay Service (VRS), online webform and live chat, or a teletypewriter service to provide feedback on any accessibility barriers that they may have encountered while interacting with the CRTC or during the implementation of the Accessibility Plan.

**External feedback
received by email**

**Internal feedback
received by email**

22

1

Between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024, 22 public comments were recorded through the accessible@crtc.gc.ca email. According to one comment, a Government of Canada analysis commended our Accessibility Plan initiative of including the hiring of persons with disabilities as a goal in executive performance agreements. Their analysis also highlights our initiative as a best practice. None of the other interactions were in relation to the accessibility of the CRTC or its Accessibility Plan.

Members of the public often contact the CRTC about issues with communications services they subscribe to, often using the first contact method they find on our website. Following its "no wrong door" policy, the CRTC directs all accessibility-related inquiries about communications services to its consumer support line and forwards issues regulated by other agencies accordingly.

Accessibility requests received by our consumer support line

108

Our support line received a total of 108 accessibility requests over the past year, with only 6 relating to the accessibility of our internal services.

Among the internal feedback received, users reported MyCRTC account login issues, difficulties uploading their Accessibility Plan to our portal, and a website bug, all of which were promptly addressed.

Internally, one email was received concerning an accommodation request. The CRTC handled this request in accordance with existing procedures and shared resources with those concerned.

The CRTC did not receive any additional feedback through other means of communication, including the phone line with VRS.

What we learned

By reviewing our progress as well as insights from feedback and our consultations, the CRTC has identified key areas for continued improvement and barriers to address in the coming years:

- **Improving the accessibility of our website**
We heard that the CRTC could improve its website by making pages less text-heavy and using more plain language. The Accessibility Hub could also be optimized.
- **Streamlining the participation process in public proceedings**
We heard that there is a need for easier access to information and simpler ways to participate in public proceedings.
- **Building awareness of disability in the workplace**
We heard that our colleagues are encouraging continued educational initiatives to help break down attitudinal barriers for persons with disabilities in our workplace.
- **Making inaccessible applications accessible**
We heard that Canadians value accessible applications that enhance productivity while minimizing barriers.
- **Improving workplace accommodation procedures**
We heard that the CRTC can make its current processes more visible, clearer, and easier, especially in light of our upcoming return to our permanent office.
- **Hiring more individuals with disabilities**
We heard that representation, especially in management roles, is key to reflecting the diversity of the Canadian population.
- **Sharing accessibility initiatives**
We heard that CRTC employees and disability communities would like to stay informed about new accessibility initiatives and to have regular opportunities to provide feedback.

Challenges

As the CRTC continues to take steps to identify, eliminate, and prevent barriers, it has gained valuable insights while addressing challenges in carrying out this plan.

Contracting sign language interpretation and translation services follows specific governmental procurement rules for audio-visual services. To enhance efficiency, the CRTC is actively collaborating with its governmental partners to streamline the process. To address potential delays associated with on-demand contracting, the CRTC has initiated steps to establish a corporate contract. This approach will simplify the process and reduce the time, effort, and resources needed to produce sign language content. Additionally, the CRTC remains mindful of its use of these services to support the sustainability of the interpreter and translator system.

During last year's consultations, the CRTC received thoughtful and constructive feedback. While our Accessibility Plan reflected strong intentions, it highlighted an opportunity to incorporate measurable data. As accessibility reporting under the Act is evolving, the CRTC is actively working to implement the tools needed to track progress effectively—a shared effort across the government. The Office of Public Service Accessibility recently provided helpful resources, guidance, and examples on using SMART indicators to gather meaningful data. The CRTC is eager to integrate this information, ensuring clearer and more measurable progress in the next iteration of the plan.

The way forward

With the guidance of our Accessibility Champion, Senior Accessibility Advisor, Mental

The CRTC is focused on the future, aiming for its next initiatives to be impactful and enduring. We want to make meaningful changes that benefit everyone, and it goes without saying that these changes would not be possible without the contributions of individuals with lived experiences of disability. Together, we're ensuring that all Canadians can access a world-class communications system and build a future where no one is left behind.

As the CRTC continues its accessibility efforts, you are invited to submit feedback through
