

Veterans Affairs Canada's Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028



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Veterans Affairs Canada’s Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028

Note: As of the date of publication, this Accessibility Action Plan has been verified for accessibility. If you have any issues with this plan, please [contact us](#).

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1.0 General

1.1 Message from Veterans Affairs Canada's Deputy Minister and the Champion of Accessibility

We are happy to share Veterans Affairs Canada's Accessibility Action Plan 2025–2028 (the Plan). This plan includes an [accessibility results framework](#) which outlines our continued efforts to make our programs, services, benefits, policies, and workplace more accessible.

Our goal for [accessibility](#) is to create and sustain a barrier-free environment for both employees and the Veterans we serve. Our goal follows the principles of the [Accessible Canada Act](#), (the Act) and is aimed at removing accessibility [barriers](#) across our department. Reaching this goal requires engagement across the Department, especially from our [Accessibility Network](#), who help guide this work.

Like our earlier plan and progress reports, this updated plan was developed as described in [Nothing without us](#). Through consultation with persons with disabilities and lived experience, we are on our way to becoming barrier-free by 2040.

We want to sincerely thank Veterans and their families, our Accessibility Network, and employees who have taken the time to share their experiences and thoughts on accessibility. The Accessibility Network plays a vital role in offering thoughtful feedback and practical suggestions. This reinforces the collaboration needed to create an accessible workplace. We look forward to continuing to learn from the Network in the years to come. Your contributions are at the heart of this work, and your perspectives deepen our understanding of accessibility.

At Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), we have a long and proud history of serving Veterans who have made profound sacrifices in service to Canada. Many Veterans live with disabilities, and they deserve programs, services, and benefits that are accessible. With this in mind, we are renewing our commitment to creating a barrier-free department. We will continue working to improve accessibility across the Department, and we know it is a responsibility we all share.

Since launching our first [Accessibility Action Plan](#) in 2022, exciting progress has been made. For example, we:

- improved client communications by:
 - assessing all client-facing letters, and bringing 25% into conformance with [CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024](#)
 - establishing a [plain language](#) approval process for [disability](#) benefits letters, ensuring they are accessible and reflect a Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens
- built a diverse talent pool, which includes persons with disabilities to support inclusive recruitment and career development

- embedded accessibility into Information Technology (IT) modernization by design
- enhanced phone accessibility in Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) Operations
- made application steps more accessible for Bureau of Pensions Advocates' clients

Along the way we have listened, learned, and changed how we approach accessibility. We know accessibility is not a one-time goal, it is an ongoing process. By building accessibility into the foundation of our programs, services, benefits, policies, and workplaces, we are working towards an environment that is accessible by design.

In June 2025, we were honored to have an in-person visit with the [Government of Canada's \(GC\) Chief Accessibility Officer](#) St  phanie Cadieux. We had a productive conversation, and discussed our recent accomplishments listed above. We also talked about areas where accessibility remains a challenge. St  phanie Cadieux's positive feedback reinvigorated our sense of purpose. This strengthened our shared commitment to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers for Veterans, their families, and employees.

We will continue to support key accessibility initiatives such as the [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) and the [GC's Better Accommodation Project](#). These efforts highlight the importance of listening to persons with disabilities and those with lived experience and aim to create a barrier-free workplace.

Creating an accessible department requires a culture shift—one that considers accessibility in every part of work from policy design to service delivery. This change begins with awareness, education, and a willingness to grow. It means developing the knowledge, skills, and empathy needed to identify and prevent barriers before they arise.

We encourage everyone to take action by [exploring resources on accessibility](#). Learn how to create accessible documents, plan inclusive meetings and events, and most importantly, listen and learn from one another.

We invite you to read the Accessibility Action Plan 2025–2028 and share your thoughts. Together, we continue to work towards a future that is inclusive for all and accessible by design.

Sincerely,

Christine McDowell
Deputy Minister

Pierre Tessier
Champion of Accessibility

1.2 Message from the Accessibility Network

The Accessibility Network includes persons with disabilities and with lived experience. Members include employees from VAC and the [Veterans Review and Appeal Board](#) (VRAB), along with our two co-chairs. Together we guide the Department to become more accessible and inclusive.

Our participation in the Accessibility Network is deeply meaningful. Our meetings are hopeful, respectful, and rooted in a shared commitment to progress. Our leaders understand the message “Nothing Without Us,” especially our Champion of Accessibility, Assistant Deputy Minister Pierre Tessier. Pierre has actively participated in Network meetings, shared encouraging updates, and most importantly listened to our lived experiences.

We celebrate the achievements made through the implementation of VAC’s Accessibility Action Plan 2022-2025. Of the 53 actions identified in 2024, 34 have been completed and many of the remaining actions continue to progress. Any incomplete actions will be incorporated into the Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028.

We are hopeful to see the development of other positive initiatives that will help us become barrier-free by 2040. For example, we look forward to improvements in the support provided to people with disabilities, especially in alignment with [CAN-ASC-1.1:2024 \(REV-2025\)-Employment](#). Strengthening [accessibility support \(accommodation\)](#) is an area where meaningful change can occur. This ensures that all employees have equitable access to the tools, resources, and environments they need to thrive. These efforts enhance inclusion and reinforce our commitment to a workplace where everyone can contribute fully.

Our dedication is strong, and the opportunities to promote positive change are endless. We are committed to ensuring that accessibility remains protected and prioritized. However, the work to build an [accessibility-confident](#) workplace cannot be done by us alone. Accessibility is everyone’s responsibility, and we invite you to continue standing with us as allies.

We always welcome new members. This ensures the Network includes a variety of perspectives. In the coming years we will strengthen our collaboration with VAC’s other employee resource groups and recognize the diverse experiences of our workforce. If you are a VAC or VRAB employee and wish to join the Network as an ally or as a person with a disability, please reach out to VAC’s [Accessibility Readiness Team](#). Together we can create a future that is barrier-free and inclusive for our clients and colleagues.

1.3 Process for receiving and dealing with accessibility-related feedback

The *Accessible Canada Act* and the [Accessible Canada Regulations](#) require federally regulated entities, including VAC, to establish a process for receiving and dealing with accessibility-related feedback.

You can use our feedback process to provide your feedback on:

- barriers when dealing with VAC
- how we are implementing our Accessibility Action Plan (the Plan) and progress reports

Feedback can also be provided on:

- how we can remove the barriers that have been identified
- the Plan and progress reports
- our feedback process
- accessibility best practices or success stories related to accessibility at VAC

An accessibility barrier is anything that does not allow persons with disabilities to be included and take part in all areas of life and society. Barriers prevent persons with disabilities from participating in the same way as persons without disabilities. The Act identifies several types of accessibility barriers:

- physical
- architectural
- technological
- attitudinal
- information
- communications
- policy
- practice

How to provide your feedback

Feedback for Veterans Affairs Canada

You can send your feedback by email, phone, or mail using the contact information listed below. Please send your feedback to our Project Director, Accessibility Readiness Team. You can also send your feedback anonymously. We will acknowledge receipt of your feedback in the same way you sent us your feedback (for example, an email response to an email message), unless the feedback was provided anonymously.

Email:

[Accessibility at VAC](#)

Phone:

Toll-free: 1-866-522-2122

TDD/TTY: 1-833-921-0071

Mail:

Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services Branch

Veterans Affairs Canada

PO Box 7700

Charlottetown PE C1A 8M9

Attention: Project Director, Accessibility Readiness Team

Online:

Through the [anonymous feedback form](#) on the VAC website.

Feedback for the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA)

Please send your questions or feedback related to the accessibility of [BPA](#)'s service in one of the following ways:

Email:

[Bureau of Pensions Advocates](#)

Phone:

1-877-228-2250

Mail:

Bureau of Pensions Advocates Accessibility Feedback

P.O. Box 7700

Charlottetown, PE C1A 8M9

Attention: Project Officer, Implementation and Strategic Support

Online:

Through the [anonymous feedback form](#) on the VAC website.

Your feedback will be used to improve accessibility at VAC. We may address some feedback right away or use it to develop future accessibility plans and progress reports. We will include your feedback and how we used it in our future Accessibility Action Plans and progress reports.

Alternate formats

You can also contact us to ask for a copy of the following items in alternate formats by using the contact information above:

- our Accessibility Action Plan
- our feedback process description

- annual progress reports on the implementation of our Accessibility Action Plan and how feedback is being considered

Alternate formats include:

- print
- large print (increased font size and clarity)
- Braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers)
- audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud)
- electronic (an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology that is intended to assist persons with disabilities)

We will provide the format you ask for as soon as possible. Braille and audio formats may take up to 45 days. Print, large print and electronic formats may take up to 15 days.

1.4 Accessibility statement

VAC will identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers while supporting inclusion and fostering a respectful and equitable environment.

1.5 Executive summary

In alignment with the *Accessible Canada Act* and with the publication of our Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028, we continue our commitment to becoming a barrier-free organization by 2040.

Our [Accessibility Progress Report 2024](#) had identified 53 actions. Of those 53 actions, 24 had been marked as completed as of December 2024. Of the remaining 29 actions:

- 10 were completed in 2025
- 2 will be incorporated directly into this Plan
- 16 were modified or reworded for inclusion in this Plan
- one will not be carried forward given an alternative solution was found

We remain committed to listening to persons with disabilities and individuals with lived experience in accessibility. Their insights are vital in shaping inclusive approaches. We know that lived experience brings invaluable perspectives and we consider diverse [intersectional](#) identities, recognizing the richness of individual differences. This approach not only enhances equity but also ensures that accessibility is meaningful and empowering for all.

1.6 Introduction message

On 11 July 2019, the Act (Bill C-81) came into force. The Act seeks to make Canada [barrier-free by 1 January 2040](#).

The Act has a number of guiding principles, including that:

- Everyone must be treated with dignity
- Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in society
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures

The Act also requires federally regulated entities to develop an Accessibility Action Plan to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers under federal jurisdiction in the following 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

Everyone at VAC has a role to play in ensuring we are moving towards becoming accessible by design:

- Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister: responsible for overarching leadership and accountability in accessibility
- Assistant Deputy Ministers: implement accessibility initiatives within the branches
- Champion of Accessibility: provides leadership and support to persons with disabilities
- Accessibility Network: guides the Department as it works to become more accessible and inclusive
- Accessibility Readiness Team: creates and maintains an environment without accessibility barriers, by listening to people who have lived experiences to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers that affect both clients and employees
- Employees: learn more about accessibility and integrating it into their everyday work

In 2017, 22% of Canadians aged 15 years or older, had one or more disabilities. In 2022, this number had increased to 27%, representing an increase of approximately 1.8 million people¹. In 2022, the percentage of Veterans in Canada that had at least one disability was

¹ [StatsCan Plus The disability rate in Canada has increased in 2022](#)

even higher, at 46%². Given approximately 40% of the actions in our Accessibility Progress Report 2024 have the potential to directly improve the experience for Veterans and their families, we take this work seriously.

Improving accessibility at VAC goes beyond supporting Veterans. It is also about fostering an accessible workplace. For example, the number of our employees that identify as persons with disabilities remains below the workforce availability estimate. Workforce availability estimates are used as a benchmark to assess the representativeness of employment equity designated groups within the core public administration in accordance with the [Employment Equity Act](#)³.

We remain committed to closing this gap and will continue our efforts to increase the number of employees who identify as persons with disabilities. This will ensure our workplace continues to reflect the diversity of the Canadian population.

The 2024 Public Service Employee Survey revealed some key differences in the experiences of employees with disabilities at VAC. According to the survey, 16% of VAC employees with disabilities reported being victims of discrimination on the job over the past 12 months as opposed to just 3% of employees without a disability⁴.

When asked whether the Department implements activities and practices that support a diverse workforce, only 69% of employees with disabilities responded positively, lower than the 82% of employees without a disability⁵.

These differences show that there is still work to do. They show the importance of building accessibility into the foundation of our programs, services, benefits, policies and workplaces, working towards an environment that is inclusive and accessible by design.

Our commitment to accessibility goes beyond the legislative requirement of publishing a Plan. Accessibility is not just a goal, it is a foundational principle guiding our work. We have made meaningful progress, but there is still work to do. Continuing the 3-year cycle of Accessibility Action Plans and progress reports helps guide our planning and keeps us accountable. These efforts help us move closer to our goal of becoming barrier-free by 2040.

² [StatsCan Plus Honouring Canada's Veterans](#)

³ [Demographic Snapshot of the Federal Public Service: Glossary of Key Terms](#)

⁴ [2024 Public Service Employee Survey Results](#)

⁵ [2024 Public Service Employee Survey Results](#)

2.0 Areas described under section 5 of the Act

2.1 Employment

Desired outcomes

- Job seekers with disabilities see VAC as a workplace of choice
- Job seekers and public servants with disabilities have access to employment opportunities at VAC and can contribute to their full potential

Employment barriers

1. Under representation: persons with disabilities are under-represented in VAC's hiring, acting appointments and promotions and over-represented in departures
2. Complex accommodation process: the process for employees to obtain accommodations needed at work is complex. Managers do not feel equipped to recruit, develop and support persons with disabilities
3. Manager considerations: managers may not consider operational requirements and related accessibility barriers when hiring persons with disabilities

Actions to remove employment barriers

Table 1: Actions to remove employment barriers.

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 1: Under representation	Increase workforce representation of persons with disabilities to meet the workforce availability estimate.	Ongoing	All branches and divisions, monitored by Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services (CFOCS)	Employees
Barrier 1: Under representation	Promote VAC as an inclusive workplace for employees with disabilities.	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 1: Under representation	Review onboarding materials to ensure that they include links on how to	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
	obtain accessibility support.			
Barrier 2: Complex accommodation process	Promote mandatory duty to accommodate training annually.	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 2: Complex accommodation process	Promote the use of the accommodations guide, tools and resources being developed by the Better Accommodation Project.	2026	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 3: Manager considerations	Through education and awareness, equip managers to consider operational requirements and accessibility barriers when hiring persons with disabilities.	2025	CFOCS	Employees

2.2 The built environment

Desired outcome

- VAC's built environments are barrier-free

The built environment barriers

1. Commemorative displays: commemorative displays are not always accessible
2. Memorial site parking: memorial site parking is not always accessible
3. Installed safety equipment: certain installed safety equipment may have unintended negative effects on some people with disabilities

Actions to remove the built environment barriers

Table 2: Actions to remove the built environment barriers.

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 1: Commemorative displays	The Commemorative Display area in the Daniel J. MacDonald building will be accessible.	2027	Commemoration and Public Affairs (CPA)	Employees, Veterans and their families, Visitors
Barrier 1: Commemorative displays	CPA will carry out all quick impact projects coming from the accessibility assessments for the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial .	2027	CPA, CFOCS	Veterans and their families, Visitors
Barrier 2: Memorial site parking	Redevelop the Vimy Monument parking lot.	2026	CPA, CFOCS	Veterans and their families, Visitors
Barrier 3: Installed safety equipment	Review and assess recommendations from a 2025 consultant's accessibility assessment report.	2026	CFOCS	Employees, Veterans and their families

2.3 Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Desired outcome

- VAC's information and communication technology is usable by all

Information and communication technologies barriers

1. Web applications: barriers in web applications

2. Desktop software: barriers in desktop software
3. Mobile applications: barriers in mobile applications
4. Artificial intelligence: barriers in artificial intelligence (AI) systems
5. Digital documents: barriers in digital documents. This includes, but is not limited to Word and PDF documents
6. Transparency: transparency of accessibility status
7. Awareness: awareness of accessibility features and tools
8. Capacity and capability: capacity and capability to identify, remove and prevent barriers

Actions to remove ICT barriers

Table 3: Actions to remove ICT barriers.

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 1: Web applications	Modernize client service delivery systems.	Ongoing	CFOCS, Service Delivery (SD)	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 1: Web applications	Improve accessibility in enterprise reporting portals, dashboards, and reports.	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 1: Web applications	Improve accessibility in other existing web apps.	2028	CFOCS, SD	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 1: Web applications	Prevent new barriers in web applications, including citizen-developed applications . Make sure new and updated applications meet CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	Ongoing	CFOCS, SD	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 2: Desktop software	Add an accessibility checkpoint in the existing purchase process of new desktop software.	2026	CFOCS	Employees

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 2: Desktop software	Identify barriers in desktop software.	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 2: Desktop software	Improve browser accessibility.	2026	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 3: Mobile applications	Assess Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Coach Canada against CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	2028	CFOCS, SD	Veterans and their families
Barrier 3: Mobile applications	Prevent barriers in new mobile applications. Ensure they meet CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	2027	CFOCS	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 4: Artificial intelligence	Address accessibility in AI systems. This will be done by developing an agile policy for addressing accessibility and bias in the design, development, procurement, and use of AI systems.	2026	CFOCS	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 5: Digital documents	Prevent barriers in new public-facing documents.	2028	All branches and divisions	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 5: Digital documents	Prevent barriers in everyday documents like emails and other electronic documents.	Ongoing	All branches and divisions	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 6: Transparency	Include accessibility statements in digital products.	2027	CFOCS, CPA, SD	Employees, Veterans and their families

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 7: Awareness	Deliver accessibility training to showcase accessibility tools and assistive technologies.	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 7: Awareness	Raise awareness of Microsoft accessibility features and barriers in Microsoft tools.	2027	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 7: Awareness	Improve software upgrade communications. This will be done by highlighting changes that might affect accessibility settings and providing guidance on how to restore settings.	2026	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 8: Capacity and capability	Deliver web accessibility training to IT employees.	2027	CFOCS, SD	Employees
Barrier 8: Capacity and capability	Build a culture of document accessibility.	2028	All branches and divisions	Employees

2.4 Communication (other than information and communication technologies)

Desired outcomes

- VAC employees are equipped to design and deliver communications that are accessible
- Persons with disabilities are satisfied with the accessibility of VAC's communications

Communication (other than information and communication technologies) barriers

1. Complex language: complex language in executive services unit-client relations unit templates

2. Naming conventions: naming conventions for files at VAC are not consistent
3. Described video: described video is not available for silent videos at VAC's visitor centers

Actions to remove communications (other than information and communication technologies) barriers

Table 4: Actions to remove communications barriers.

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 1: Complex language	Improve templated letters for accessibility and plain language in executive services unit-client relations unit.	2026	Corporate Secretariat	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 2: Naming conventions	Privacy and Information Management (PIM) will promote and require the use of a common and accessible naming convention for files.	2027	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 3: Described video	Redevelop and ensure barrier-free interpretation for all displays at The Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial.	2027	CPA	Employees, Veterans and their families, Visitors
Barrier 3: Described video	Redevelop and ensure barrier-free interpretation for all displays at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.	2027	CPA	Employees, Veterans and their families, Visitors
Barrier 3: Described video	Ensure barrier-free interpretation for the commemorative displays at	2027	CPA	Employees, Veterans and their

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
	the Daniel J. MacDonald building.			families, Visitors

2.5 The procurement of goods, services and facilities

Desired outcome

- All goods and services procured by VAC are accessible

The procurement of goods, services and facilities barriers

1. Departmental awareness: need for a deeper Departmental awareness of accessibility applicable to procured goods and services

Actions to remove the procurement of goods, services and facilities barriers

Table 5: Actions to remove the procurement of goods, services and facilities barriers.

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 1: Departmental awareness	Promote awareness of accessibility in procurement.	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 1: Departmental awareness	Support VAC IT by confirming that the IT accessibility check is completed as part of the procurement process of new desktop software.	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 1: Departmental awareness	Share with clients any links to accessibility guidance materials or subject matter experts that are relevant to their procurement requests.	Ongoing	CFOCS	Employees

2.6 The design and delivery of programs and services

Desired outcomes

- VAC employees are equipped to design and deliver programs and services that are accessible
- Persons with disabilities are satisfied with the accessibility of VAC's programs and services

The design and delivery of programs and services barriers

1. Client feedback: Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) does not have direct client feedback on accessibility in its client satisfaction questionnaire
2. Disability Benefits application ([PEN 923](#)): Disability Benefits application (PEN 923 - Pain and Suffering Compensation/Disability Pension) steps are not clear, concise or easy to understand
3. Presentation materials: PIM presentation materials are not fully accessible
4. Delivery of programs and services: Service Delivery and Program Management (SDPM) employees would benefit from additional training and support to confidently deliver accessible programs and services
5. Digital documents for programs and services: digital documents that are not accessible pose a barrier to people with disabilities

Actions to remove the design and delivery of programs and services barriers

Table 6: Actions to remove the design and delivery of programs and services barriers.

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 1: Client feedback	BPA will add a link to the Accessibility Feedback page and/or feedback instructions on the cover letter that goes with the Client Satisfaction questionnaire.	2026	BPA	Veterans and their families
Barrier 2: Disability Benefits application (PEN 923)	Disability Benefits application (PEN 923) steps will be made clear, concise and easy to understand.	2025	SD	Veterans and their families
Barrier 3: Presentation materials	All PIM presentation materials will be reviewed and updated to ensure accessibility.	2027	CFOCS	Employees
Barrier 4: Delivery of programs and services	Online training, “Making Documents Accessible,” will be required for employees.	2026	SD	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 4: Delivery of programs and services	Accessibility tips and tricks will be promoted to employees on a regular basis.	Ongoing	SD	Employees, Veterans and their families
Barrier 4: Delivery of programs and services	Accessibility awareness will be part of onboarding new employees.	Ongoing	SD	Employees, Veterans and their families

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted group
Barrier 5: Digital documents for programs and services	New public-facing documents will be reviewed to ensure that they meet accessibility standards.	2028	SD	Veterans and their families
Barrier 5: Digital documents for programs and services	Implementation of the Learning Asset Maintenance effort by the National Learning Unit.	Ongoing	SD	Employees

2.7 Transportation

Following a careful review of policies, practices, programs, services, and benefits, no barriers were identified in this area.

2.8 Organizational culture

Desired outcome

- VAC employees understand what accessibility means and why it matters, and they are equipped to make the Department a more accessible and inclusive workplace and service provider

Tracking

As outlined in our Accessibility Action Plan 2022-2025 and subsequent progress reports, we are committed to addressing [ableism](#) and fostering a more inclusive and accessible [organizational culture](#).

We are working to shift mindsets to foster a culture that values the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, prevents barriers, and embeds accessibility by design. This work requires us to commit to continuous learning, adopt an intersectional approach, and integrate accessibility in all aspects of our work.

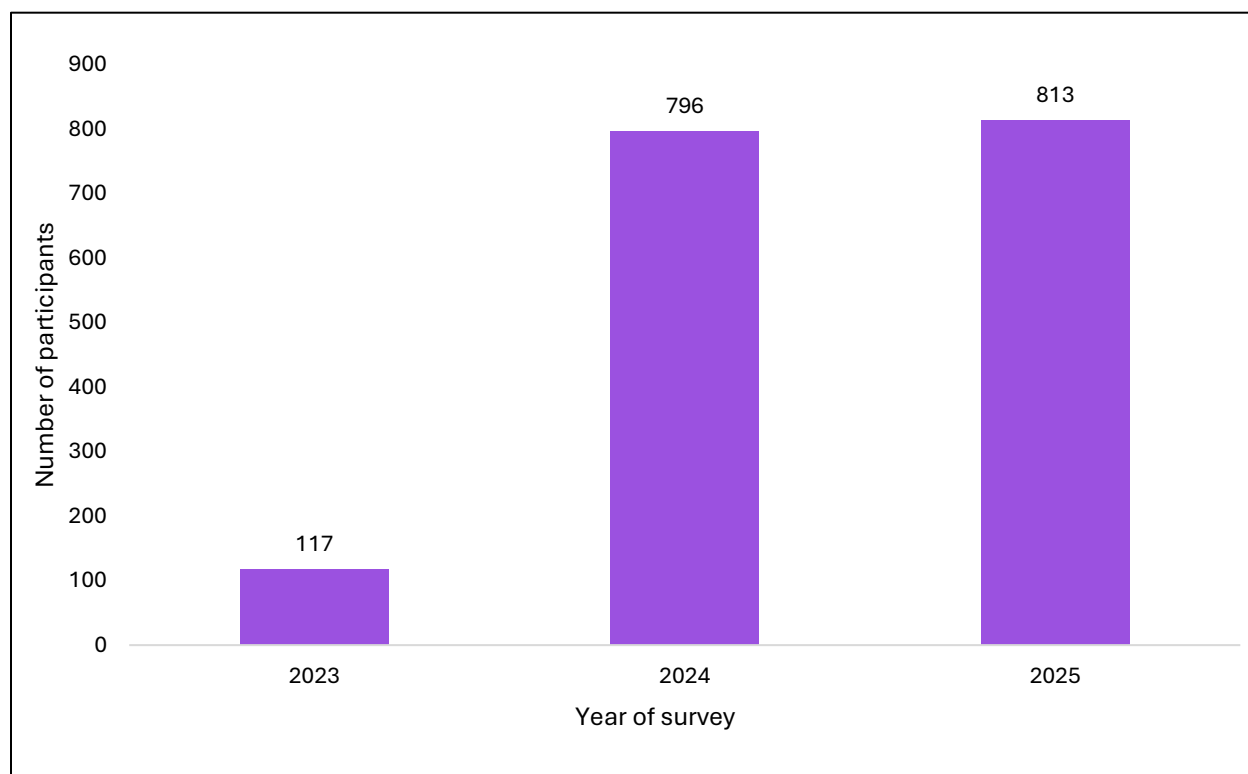
Progress towards the desired outcome will be measured by referencing data sources such as the [Public Service Employee Survey](#) and VAC's Employee Pulse Survey.

Progress on our accessibility culture shift in 2025

VAC's employee accessibility survey

Over the past 3 years, we have conducted an annual Employee Accessibility Survey to better understand how employees perceive accessibility and its role within our organization. The goal of this survey is to help us assess individual confidence in accessibility-related knowledge and the extent to which accessibility is embedded in our culture and daily practices. Participation results can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Employee Accessibility Survey participation 2023-2025.



Description of Figure 1: Employee Accessibility Survey participation 2023-2025.

- In 2023 there were 117 participants
- In 2024 there were 796 participants
- In 2025 there were 813 participants

Survey participation increased substantially, from 117 respondents in 2023 to 813 in 2025, a 595% increase. This steady growth reflects rising awareness and engagement around accessibility. More on the survey under [section 4](#).

Accessibility@VAC intranet site

In 2024-2025, the content on the Accessibility@VAC intranet site was regularly updated to provide employees with the most recent information, resources, and updates from the Accessibility Network.

The “Accessibility Storytellers” and “Accessibility Adopters” series continue to be a key feature of the site. The Accessibility Storytellers articles share the lived experiences and personal stories of persons with disabilities and their allies, offering valuable insights into accessibility. Meanwhile, the Accessibility Adopters articles recognize and celebrate employees and teams who actively incorporate accessibility into their daily work, highlighting practical steps and inspiring others to do the same.

The Accessibility Network

The most important group for accessibility consultation remains persons with disabilities. At VAC, the Accessibility Network (the Network) plays a foundational role in these types of consultations.

To expand the Network and strengthen its capacity to apply an intersectional lens, we have engaged in targeted recruitment efforts. This includes outreach to other employee resource groups, such as the Indigenous Employees Network, the Positive Space Initiative, and the Visible Minorities Network. We also invited participants from the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) to join. More about the Network under [section 4](#).

Accessibility events and presentations

In recognition of NAAW 2025, the Accessibility Network hosted a virtual Departmental event titled “Panel Discussion and Fireside Chat: Closing the Gap on Accessibility,” and attracted 631 employees from VAC and VRAB. This event prioritized the lived experience of persons with disabilities and the importance of accommodation.

For IDPD 2024, we celebrated with a Departmental event hosted by the Accessibility Network titled “Beyond Labels – A Call to Action to Shift Perceptions of Disability.” The event featured persons with disabilities and highlighted progress made in accessibility across the Department. It drew 609 employees from VAC and VRAB.

After both events, a short survey was sent to participants to collect feedback. Of the 1240 participants for both events, we received a total of 70 survey responses for both events. These responses were overwhelmingly positive, with over 98% of respondents indicating that overall, they were ‘satisfied’, or ‘very satisfied’ with the events.

The survey also produced 34 written pieces of feedback. One particularly impactful comment captured the essence of many responses:

This session gave me a much better understanding of the impacts [on] co-workers when the tools and products we use at VAC are not accessible. It

broadened my perspective and has inspired me to make sure the work documents and systems I help improve are accessible from the start. It really helped me to understand the importance of this.

These activities, and other accessibility initiatives, such as National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, were promoted through emails to all employees from the Champion of Accessibility, MS Teams postings, articles in VAC's internal online newsletter Carillon, and the Friday Highlights e-newsletter.

Strengthening accessibility knowledge

In 2025, we took part in several initiatives to deepen our understanding of accessibility.

One key step was enrolling as a contributing organization with the Canadian Accessibility Network. This partnership provides VAC employees with access to valuable resources and learning opportunities.

We also participated in various communities of practice alongside other government departments to exchange best practices and share our progress. These are focused in the Government of Canada and include the:

- Interdepartmental Accessibility Network
- Interdepartmental Accessibility Community of Practice
- Plain Language Community of Practice
- Interdepartmental Network of Disability and Accessibility Chairs
- Persons with Disabilities Champion and Chairs Committee

We will continue to support an accessible organizational culture by:

- collaborating with the Accessibility Network on new and ongoing initiatives
- promoting and expanding the use of accessible templates
- arranging speaking opportunities, panels, and presentations about accessibility
- promoting the internal document "Accessibility Confidence at VAC: A Playbook"
- learning more about and planning accessible meetings and events
- celebrating accessibility events to increase education and awareness
- learning accessibility best practices from other organizations and communities of practice

3.0 Training

Training remains an essential part of increasing accessibility awareness in the Department. As part of our Accessibility Action Plan 2022-2025, VAC introduced mandatory accessibility courses from the [Canada School of Public Service](#). In 2025, VAC's Accessibility Readiness Team initiated a promotion campaign aimed at increasing the completion rate of mandatory accessibility courses. The campaign proved to be effective,

leading to a rise in completion rates across the Department. While this shows progress, we remain dedicated to advancing this work.

While the introduction and ongoing promotion of these mandatory courses is a great starting point, we know that accessibility is everyone's responsibility. In line with this, we also continue to promote various learning opportunities for employees on important topics such as:

- creating accessible documents
- the GC workplace Accessibility Passport
- plain language in alignment with [CAN-ASC-3.1:2025-Plain Language](#)
- embracing digital accessibility
- planning accessible events

Additionally, last year we promoted special learning events such as:

- National Disability Employment Awareness month speaker series hosted by Health Canada's Persons with Disabilities Network
- the [Inclusive Design for Employment Access](#) speaker series session entitled Episodic disability: an intersectional perspective on accommodation & belonging
- Best practices in accessibility, workplace adjustments and job accommodation delivered by [Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology \(AAACT\)](#)
- events and workshops put on by the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace
- the Canadian Accessibility Network and its Communities of Practice

We will continue to promote accessibility learning through various channels such as the onboarding process, our Accessibility@VAC intranet page, emails to all employees and MS Teams Posts.

4.0 Consultations

Persons with disabilities were consulted in the preparation of this Accessibility Action Plan.

4.1 Who we consulted

The Accessibility Network

As highlighted in section 1.2, [Message from the Accessibility Network](#), and section 2.8, [organizational culture](#), the Network enables the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers by providing input based on the lived experience of persons with disabilities. Their expertise is sought on a regular basis on initiatives in the Department. In 2025, the Accessibility Network was consulted on several initiatives, including:

- the 2024 and 2025 Employee Accessibility Survey reports

- feedback to the Office of Public Service Accessibility on second language learning, testing, and exclusion barriers
- VAC's [Accessibility Progress Report 2024](#)
- VAC's internal People and Culture Strategy
- VAC's prospective Disability Management Group
- VAC's draft Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Persons with Disabilities
- VAC's draft Diverse Assessment Board Workshop
- developing a list for future initiatives within the Accessibility Network
- My Software Accessibility internal service
- VAC's Accessibility Action Plan 2025 - 2028

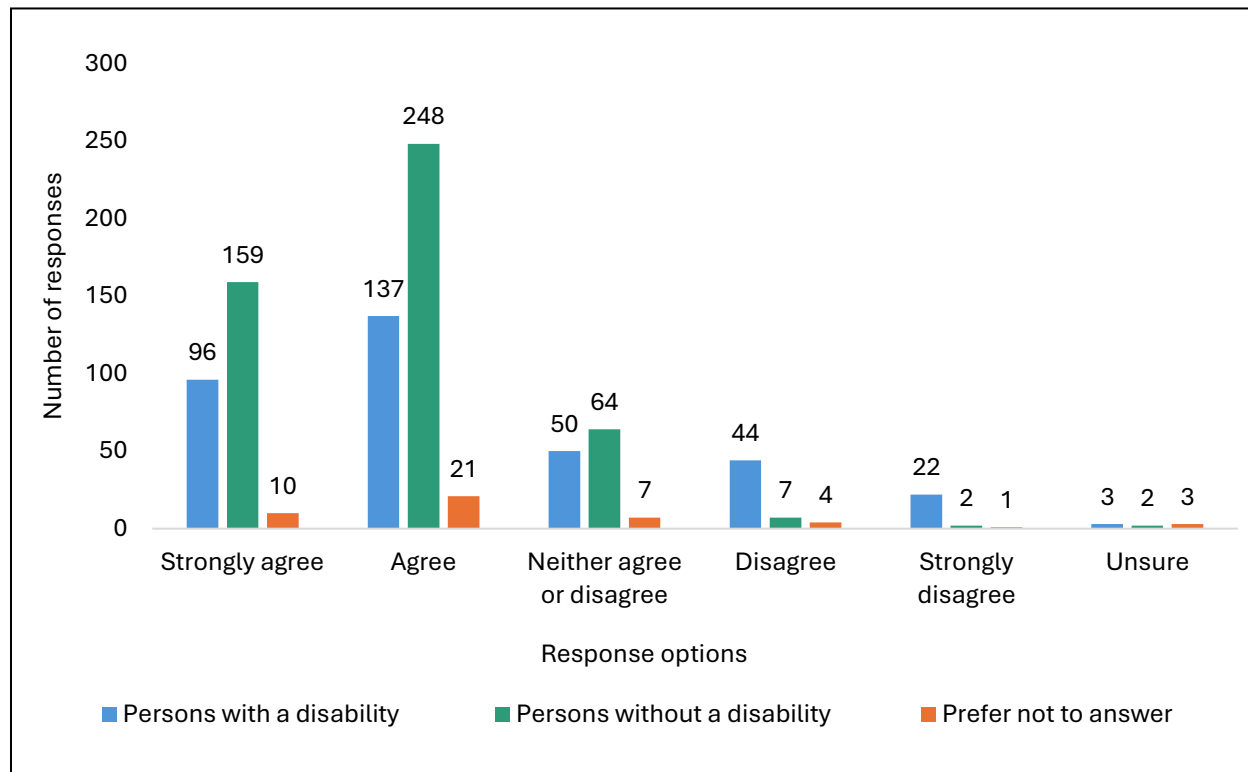
VAC employees

Through the VAC Employee Accessibility Survey 2025 employees were asked to measure how they felt about accessibility and identify areas that could increase or promote accessibility-confidence. This is the third year of conducting this survey, concluding the original 3-year commitment. Consistent with our 2024 results, when asked how they feel VAC is doing in a number of areas, between 80 – 90% of respondents feel progress is being made. The areas identified included:

- initiatives to increase awareness and empathy around persons with disabilities and the barriers they face
- the use of plain language
- offering/promoting accessibility-related learning events, trainings, tools, and resources
- initiatives to ensure that accessibility is modeled through all levels of the Department

To better understand the lived experience of employees with disabilities in relation to accessibility, this year we added the question, “Are you a person with a disability” to the survey with the following responses: yes, no, prefer not to answer. This data has allowed us to identify important differences between the experiences of persons with disabilities and those without. For example, Figure 2 looks at how comfortable employees are talking with people in their work unit about issues related to accessibility.

Figure 2: Responses to the statement “I am comfortable talking with people in my work unit about issues related to accessibility.” (880 total responses)



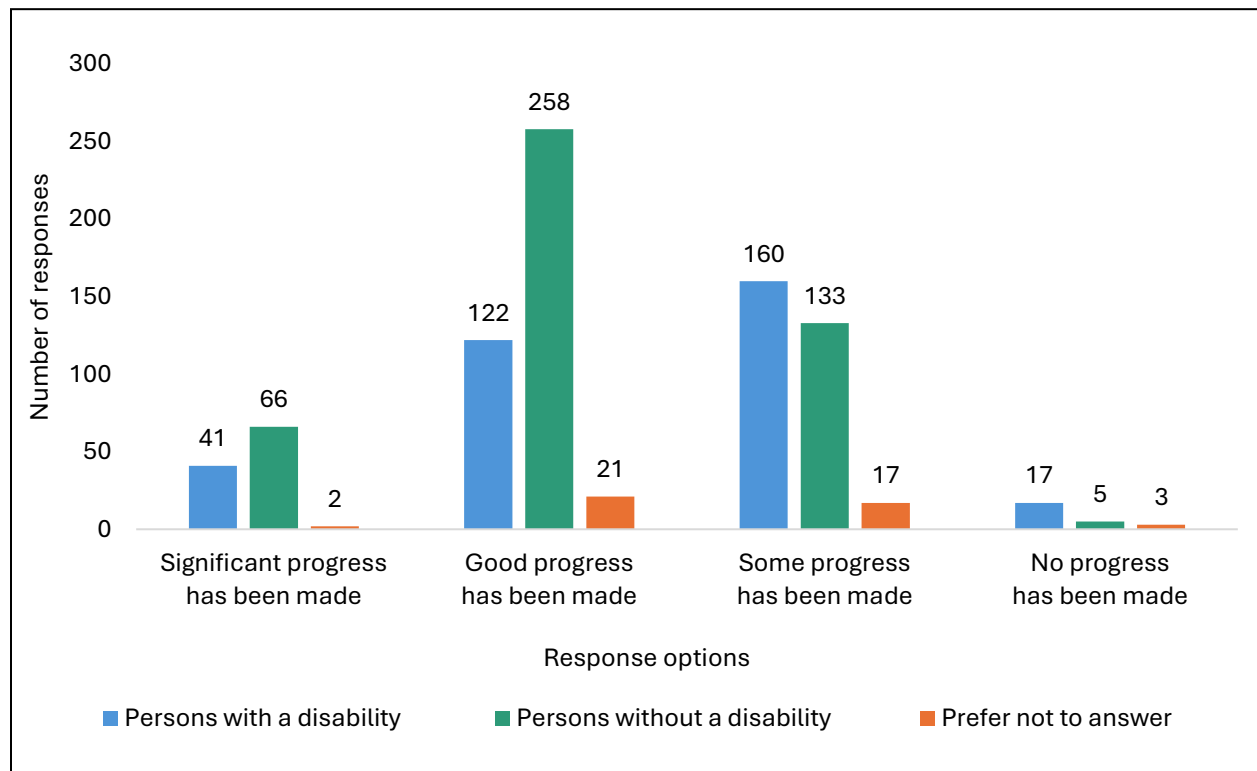
Description of Figure 2: Responses to the statement “I am comfortable talking with people in my work unit about issues related to accessibility.” (880 total responses)

- Strongly agree: 96 persons with a disability, 159 persons without a disability, 10 prefer not to answer.
- Agree: 137 persons with a disability, 248 persons without a disability, 21 prefer not to answer.
- Neither agree nor disagree: 50 persons with a disability, 64 persons without a disability, 7 prefer not to answer.
- Disagree: 44 persons with a disability, 7 persons without a disability, 4 prefer not to answer.
- Strongly disagree: 22 persons with a disability, 2 persons without a disability, 1 prefer not to answer.
- Unsure: 3 persons with a disability, 2 persons without a disability, 3 prefer not to answer.

While most respondents reported feeling comfortable discussing accessibility in their work unit, participants with a disability were much more likely to express discomfort. Nearly 20% of employees with a disability selected *disagree* or *strongly disagree*, compared to fewer than 2% of employees without a disability. In other words, employees with a

disability were about 10 times as likely to feel uncomfortable, highlighting the need to address barriers to open conversations about accessibility. This gap may be shaped by lived experiences as well as ongoing stigma related to disability and the process of requesting accommodations. A similar gap is found in the awareness and empathy around persons with disabilities and the barriers they face (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Responses to the statement “Initiatives to increase awareness and empathy around persons with disabilities and the barriers they face (panels, storytelling initiatives, Accessibility Confidence at VAC: A Playbook, Carillon articles, etc.)” (845 total responses)



Description of Figure 3: Responses to the statement “Initiatives to increase awareness and empathy around persons with disabilities and the barriers they face (panels, storytelling initiatives, Accessibility Confidence at VAC: A Playbook, Carillon articles, etc.)” (845 total responses)

- Significant progress has been made: 41 persons with a disability, 66 persons without a disability, 2 prefer not to answer.
- Good progress has been made: 122 persons with a disability, 258 persons without a disability, 21 prefer not to answer.
- Some progress has been made: 160 persons with a disability, 133 persons without a disability, 17 prefer not to answer.
- No progress has been made: 17 persons with a disability, 5 persons without a disability, 3 prefer not to answer.

As seen in Figure 3, among survey respondents who identified as persons with disabilities, 48% said that significant or good progress has been made on initiatives to build awareness and empathy around disability and the barriers people face. By comparison, 70% of respondents without a disability said the same, suggesting that people with lived experience of disability are less likely to feel these initiatives are making strong progress. This validates the need to continue our efforts.

4.2 How we consulted

We place a strong emphasis on consulting people about accessibility in ways that are meaningful, inclusive, and accessible. To meet this commitment, we ensured that our consultations were accessible by:

- inviting participants to identify their accommodation needs and addressing these in advance
- using accessible meeting and survey platforms
- providing Communication Access Realtime Translation services (instantaneous translation of what is being said into print so that it can be read)
- providing both American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) interpretation
- providing opportunities for participants to provide feedback in writing or verbally, live during meetings or later
- having technical support available for those who need it

4.3 What we heard

Through consultations, unique learnings from the lived experiences of persons with disabilities have been identified. For instance, we heard that:

- there is still stigma for persons with disabilities that may deter some individuals from self-identifying
- there may be more we can do to support and equip employees and managers in regard to disability and accessibility
- it can be difficult for employees to speak with their managers about needing accommodations. The promotion and use of the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport can assist with these conversations
- there is still room for improvement in using plain language in all areas of work

As stated under [organizational culture](#) in section 2.8, the most important people for accessibility consultation remain persons with disabilities. We are committed to including these perspectives in our accessibility planning by:

- frequently engaging and updating the Accessibility Network on initiatives in the Department
- collecting data on the lived experience of persons with disabilities to better understand their lived experience and accessibility needs

- exploring opportunities to hear and learn from Veterans with disabilities
- working with other VAC employee resource groups to ensure initiatives take into consideration the lived experience of diverse groups of people

5.0 Feedback

With the publication of VAC's first Accessibility Action Plan in 2022, the Department created an accessibility-related feedback mechanism, providing 4 ways that people could provide their feedback: mail, email, telephone, and an anonymous online form. This is seen in the section [Process for receiving and dealing with accessibility-related feedback](#). People can use this mechanism to share feedback on:

- barriers when dealing with VAC
- how we are implementing the Plan and progress reports
- how we can remove the barriers that have been identified
- the Plan and progress reports
- our feedback process
- accessibility best practices or success stories related to accessibility at VAC

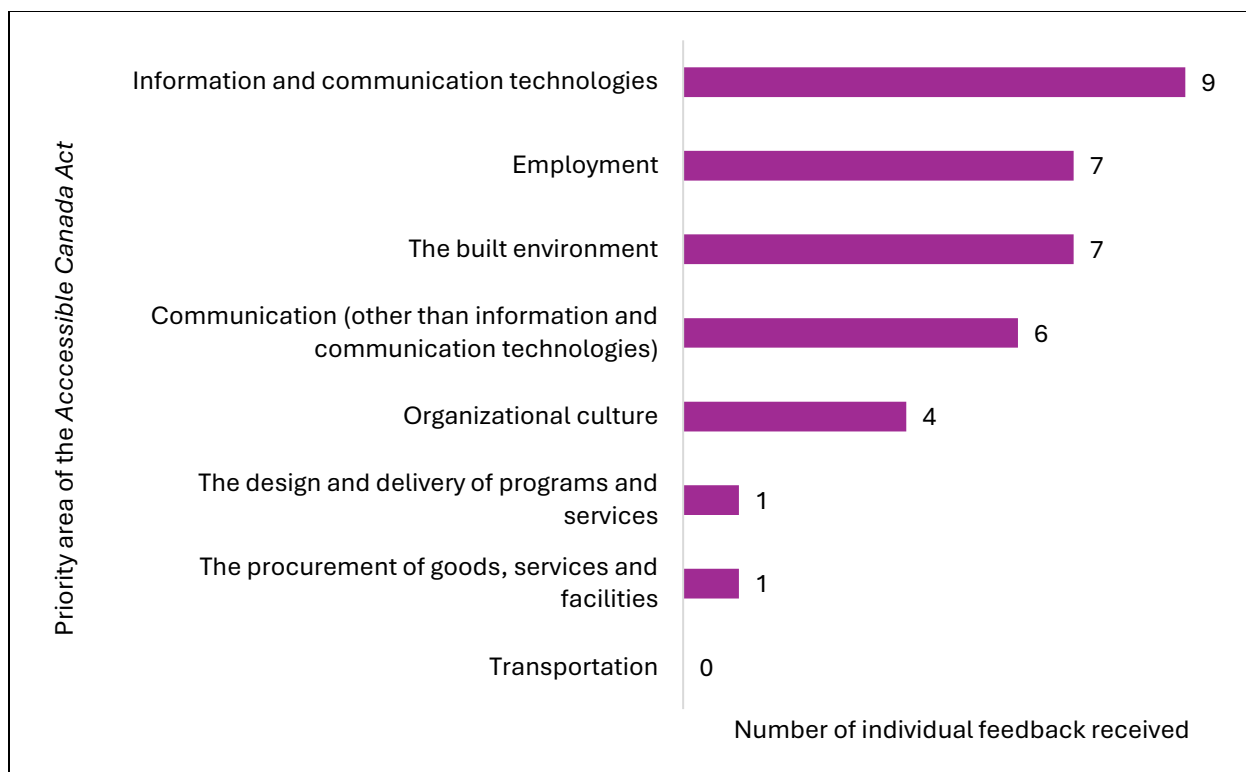
Through this mechanism, we receive feedback from Veterans and their families, VAC employees, persons with disabilities, and other members of the public. This feedback gives us valuable insight from different perspectives and is essential in helping us identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers.

We review and address accessibility-related feedback individually. Once reviewed, and with the consent of the individual who provided it, feedback is shared with the subject matter experts within the appropriate area of the Department.

From 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025, we received 59 pieces of feedback through our [anonymous feedback form](#) and our [e-mail address](#). Although available, we did not receive any feedback by telephone or through mail.

Upon review of each piece of feedback, it was determined that 24 went beyond the scope of our work to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers. The remaining 35 pieces of feedback are related to multiple priority areas (Figure 4).

Figure 4 : Feedback received by priority area from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025. (35 total pieces of feedback)



Description of Figure 4: Feedback received by priority area from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025. (35 total pieces of feedback)

Priority area

- Information and communication technologies: 9
- Employment: 7
- The built environment: 7
- Communication (other than information and communication technologies): 6
- Organizational culture: 4
- The design and delivery of programs and services: 1
- The procurement of goods, services and facilities: 1
- Transportation: 0

From the feedback received, some key themes emerged.

Built environment

We received feedback recommending more sensory-friendly spaces in our offices, adaptable to a variety of individual needs. We also heard concerns about the accessibility of doors and workspaces in certain locations. This feedback included constructive suggestions, which have been shared with the appropriate subject matter experts within the Department for consideration and action.

Information and communication technology

Feedback pointed to:

- challenges with emails from different areas of the Department that were not accessible
- difficulties navigating client systems such as [MyVAC Account](#)
- a need to better promote and explain existing technologies that support different accessibility needs

Feedback received through our feedback mechanism plays an important role in ensuring our efforts to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers reflect the real needs of Veterans, their families, and employees. We remain committed to actively promoting this feedback mechanism, monitoring it closely, and responding to each submission in a timely and thoughtful manner.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 What we have learned

We have completed the first cycle of accessibility reporting, which included the Accessibility Action Plan 2022-2025 and the progress reports 2023 and 2024. This reporting cycle showed that we have made meaningful progress in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers across the Department.

With the publication of this new Accessibility Action Plan, we are renewing our commitment to listen to the voices of persons with disabilities. We have learned that listening is the most important step to having a department that will become accessible by design.

Accessibility is not the final destination, nor is it a separate part of the process. It cannot simply be added at the end. Instead, it must be intentionally built in from the beginning, with ongoing input from people with lived experience. There is no one-size-fits-all fix that guarantees complete accessibility.

6.2 Looking forward

We are proud of the progress we have made, but we know challenges remain, especially in the context of the changing environment in which we operate. Accessibility is not a one-time goal and is not just about compliance. It is an ongoing commitment to inclusion, respect, and equity. We are working towards an environment where everyone, including Veterans and employees, can fully participate and thrive. By embedding accessibility into every part of our work, listening to lived experiences, and holding ourselves accountable, we are building a stronger and more inclusive organization.

7.0 Glossary

For more definitions, please refer to the [Glossary of the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#) and the *Accessible Canada Act*.

Ableism - a view or attitude that treats people without disabilities as “normal” and those with disabilities as “abnormal,” “inferior,” or “other.” Ableism can be both intentional and unintentional (Source: [Inclusive language considerations](#)).

Accessibility - the degree to which a product, service, program or environment is available to be accessed or used by all (Source [Glossary: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#)).

Accessibility-confident at VAC - VAC employees understand what accessibility means and why it matters and are equipped to make the Department a more accessible and inclusive service provider and employer.

Accessibility Network - provides the opportunity for employees with a disability, as well as their allies, to help identify accessibility barriers within the Department, and to provide feedback on the plans under development for a more accessibility-confident VAC. This group provides feedback and input based on their lived experiences and helps guide VAC towards being a more accessibility-confident department.

Accessibility statements- disclose known barriers and what we are doing to remove them. They can provide a starting point for exploring or requesting accommodations.

Accessibility support (accommodation) - adjustment to rules, policies, workplace cultures, and physical environments to ensure that they do not have a negative effect on a person with a disability within the employment life cycle (Source: [Accessibility Standards Canada](#)).

Barrier - includes 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 (Source: [Accessible Canada Act](#)).

CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024 Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services (EN 301 549:2021,IDT) - standard for Digital Accessibility that the Government of Canada is adopting for ICT. The industry standard for web accessibility is W3C WCAG ([World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)). CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024 includes WCAG plus accessibility standards for all other digital products, including mobile phones, electronic documents, software, and hardware.

CAN/ASC-1.1:2024 (REV-2025)-Employment – standard for employment that the Government of Canada is adopting. The Standard covers diverse types of employment

contracts and work-related activities and sets out essential requirements for an accessibility strategy that organizations must adopt to create inclusive and accessible employment systems.

CAN-ASC-3.1:2025 - Plain Language – standard for plain language that the Government of Canada is adopting. The Standard presents the benefits of plain language, as well recommendations to help organizations create accessible, clear and efficient communication.

Citizen-developed applications – applications built by non-IT VAC employees to solve a business problem. This is typically done using a low-code platform like Microsoft SharePoint or PowerApps.

Disability - 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 (Source: [Accessible Canada Act](#)).

Duty to Accommodate - employers have a Duty to Accommodate employees to avoid discrimination based on the eleven grounds identified in [section 2 of the Canadian Human Rights Act](#). Employers must accommodate employees who fall into the groups protected by the CHRA up to the point of undue hardship (Source: VAC’s internal Employment Equity and Diversity Action Plan 2017-2022).

Intersectionality – recognizing that people have multiple and diverse identity factors that interconnect to shape their perspectives, ideologies and experiences. (Source: [VAC’s Policy on Gender-Based Analysis Plus](#)).

Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport - helps federal public service employees get the tools, supports, and measures they need to perform at their best and succeed in the workplace. It facilitates recruitment, retention, and career advancement for persons with disabilities. (Source: [Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport](#)).

Organizational culture - the learned shared values, beliefs, and assumptions of members of an organization. Values, norms, and symbols are all key aspects of an organization’s culture (Source: [Audit of organizational Culture, Internal Audit and Evaluation Sector](#)).

Plain language - according to the [International Plain Language Federation](#), “Communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended readers can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information.” (Source: [Plain language, accessibility, and inclusive communications](#)).

Appendix A

Accessibility results framework

Many actions listed in Veterans Affairs Canada's Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028 will be aligned with a performance indicator allowing us to better track our progress. These performance indicators can be found in the tables below, organized by priority area of the *Accessible Canada Act*.

Employment

Table 7: Accessibility results framework for employment barriers.

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
Barrier 1: Under representation	Increase workforce representation of persons with disabilities to meet the workforce availability estimate.	Workforce representation percentage.	Persons with disabilities are adequately represented in VAC workforce.	CFOCS
Barrier 1: Under representation	Promote VAC as an inclusive workplace for employees with disabilities.	Number of promotional material/products sent per year.	More people view VAC as an inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities.	CFOCS
Barrier 1: Under representation	Review onboarding materials to ensure that they include links on how to obtain accessibility support.	Percentage of onboarding materials that include links on how to obtain accessibility support.	New employees are able to receive ability support in a clear and timely way.	CFOCS
Barrier 2: Complex	Promote mandatory duty	Number of times mandatory duty	Managers are aware the	CFOCS

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
accommodation process	to accommodate training annually.	to accommodate training is promoted annually.	training is mandatory and have easy access to it.	
Barrier 2: Complex accommodation process	Promote the use of the accommodations guide, tools and resources being developed by the Better Accommodation Project.	Number of times these tools are promoted annually.	Managers have a high awareness of the Better Accommodation Project tools and know where to find them.	CFOCS
Barrier 3: Manager considerations	Through education and awareness, equip managers to consider operational requirements and accessibility barriers when hiring persons with disabilities.		Managers are considering operational requirements and accessibility barriers when hiring persons with disabilities.	CFOCS

The built environment

Table 8: Accessibility results framework for the built environment barriers.

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
Barrier 1: Commemorative displays	The Commemorative Display area in the Daniel J. MacDonald building will be accessible.		People can experience the accessible commemorative display at the Daniel J. MacDonald.	CPA
Barrier 1: Commemorative displays	CPA will carry out all quick impact projects coming from the accessibility assessments for the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial.	Number of quick impact projects that have been completed.	People can experience the accessible Canadian National Vimy Memorial and Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial.	CPA, CFOCS
Barrier 2: Memorial site parking	Redevelop the Vimy Monument parking lot.	Project delivered and completed.	The parking lot at the Vimy Monument is accessible.	CPA, CFOCS
Barrier 3: Installed safety equipment	Review and assess recommendations from a 2025 consultant's accessibility assessment report.	Number of recommendations from the assessment report reviewed and assessed.	Persons with disabilities do not have accessibility barriers from the installed safety equipment.	CFOCS

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Table 9: Accessibility results framework for ICT barriers.

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
Barrier 1: Web applications	Modernize client service delivery systems.	Number of systems that have been modernized.	An increased number of client service delivery systems are modernized and accessible.	CFOCS, SD
Barrier 1: Web applications	Improve accessibility in enterprise reporting portals, dashboards and reports.	Number of portals, dashboards and reports reviewed and compliant with accessibility requirements.	Enterprise reporting portals are accessible.	CFOCS
Barrier 1: Web applications	Improve accessibility in other existing web apps.	Number of barriers identified and removed.	The web apps are maximized for accessibility.	CFOCS, SD
Barrier 1: Web applications	Prevent new barriers in web applications, including citizen-developed applications. Make sure new and updated applications meet CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	Number of projects and products that meet CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	New web applications are accessible.	CFOCS, SD
Barrier 2: Desktop software	Add an accessibility checkpoint in the existing purchase	Percentage of new internal desktop software with an	New desktop software are verified for accessibility	CFOCS

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
	process of new desktop software.	accessibility conformance report or acceptable alternative.	status prior to being purchased.	
Barrier 2: Desktop software	Identify barriers in desktop software.	Number of desktop software reviewed for barriers.	Existing desktop software have been assessed for accessibility barriers.	CFOCS
Barrier 2: Desktop software	Improve browser accessibility.	Number of accessibility browser extensions made available and communicated.	Browser extensions are assessed and made available for persons with disabilities.	CFOCS
Barrier 3: Mobile applications	Assess Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Coach Canada against CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	Percentage of assessment completed.	PTSD Coach Canada is assessed for accessibility.	CFOCS, SD
Barrier 3: Mobile applications	Prevent barriers in new mobile applications. Ensure they meet CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.		New mobile applications are accessible.	CFOCS
Barrier 4: Artificial intelligence	Address accessibility in AI systems. This will	Progress of documentation	A policy on AI accessibility that reflects	CFOCS

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
	be done by developing an agile policy for addressing accessibility and bias in the design, development, procurement, and use of AI systems.	towards a final policy.	effective standards.	
Barrier 5: Digital documents	Prevent barriers in new public-facing documents.	Number of digital documents that meet CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	Public facing documents published after 2028 are barrier-free.	All branches and divisions
Barrier 5: Digital documents	Prevent barriers in everyday documents like emails and other electronic documents.		Everyday documents used within VAC, like emails and other electronic documents are barrier-free.	All branches and divisions
Barrier 6: Transparency	Include accessibility statements in digital products.	Number of digital products covered by an accessibility statement.	The accessibility status for digital products is transparent for users.	CFOCS, CPA, SD
Barrier 7: Awareness	Deliver accessibility training to showcase accessibility tools	Number of accessibility training sessions delivered annually.	Increase in comfort of using accessibility tools and	CFOCS

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
	and assistive technologies.		technologies by employees.	
Barrier 7: Awareness	Raise awareness of Microsoft accessibility features and barriers in Microsoft tools.	Number of accessibility issues reported and accessibility guides available and shared.	Employees use accessibility features in Microsoft tools.	CFOCS
Barrier 7: Awareness	Improve software upgrade communication. This will be done by highlighting changes that might affect accessibility settings and providing guidance on how to restore settings.	Number of software upgrade communication that include instructions for adjusting accessibility settings if needed.	Employees are informed about how upgrades may impact accessibility and know how to restore their settings.	CFOCS
Barrier 8: Capacity and capability	Deliver web accessibility training to IT employees.	Percentage of IT employees that have had web accessibility training to cover digital accessibility fundamentals.	IT employees know how to apply digital accessibility fundamentals.	CFOCS, SD
Barrier 8: Capacity and capability	Build a culture of document accessibility.	Number of accessible documents found through	The department culture is that documents are accessible.	All branches and divisions

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
		random spot checks.		

Communication (other than information and communication technologies)

Table 10: Accessibility results framework for communication (other than ICT) barriers.

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
Barrier 1: Complex language	Improve templated executive services unit-client relations unit letters for accessibility and plain language.	Percentage of templated letters improved for accessibility and plain language.	Templated executive services unit-client relations unit letters are plain and accessible for Veterans and their families.	Corporate secretariat
Barrier 2: Naming conventions	PIM will promote and require the use of a common and accessible naming convention for files.	A finalized policy/functional direction document outlining a common and accessible naming convention for files.	The department will have common and accessible naming conventions for files.	CFOCS
Barrier 3: Described video	Redevelop and ensure barrier-free interpretation for all displays at The Beaumont-Hamel	Number of displays at The Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial that	All displays at the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial have	CPA

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
	Newfoundland Memorial.	have barrier-free interpretation available.	barrier-free interpretation.	
Barrier 3: Described video	Redevelop and ensure barrier-free interpretation for all displays at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.	Number of displays at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial that have barrier-free interpretation available.	All displays at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial have barrier-free interpretation available.	CPA
Barrier 3: Described video	Ensure barrier-free interpretation for the commemorative displays at the Daniel J. MacDonald building.	Number of commemorative displays at the Daniel J. MacDonald building that have barrier-free interpretation available.	The commemorative display at the Daniel J. MacDonald building is has barrier-free interpretation available.	CPA

The procurement of goods, services and facilities

Table 11: Accessibility results framework for the procurement of goods, services and facilities barriers.

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
Barrier 1: Departmental awareness	Promote awareness of accessibility in procurement.	Number of times awareness of accessibility was promoted in procurement.	Accessibility is considered at the beginning and throughout the	CFOCS

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
			procurement process.	
Barrier 1: Departmental awareness	Support VAC IT by confirming that the IT accessibility check is completed as part of the procurement process of new desktop software.	Percentage of new desktop software requests processed by the Procurement Unit that include confirmation that the IT Accessibility check was completed.	When obtaining a new software, accessibility will be considered at the outset.	CFOCS
Barrier 1: Departmental awareness	Share with clients any links to accessibility guidance materials or subject matter experts that are relevant to their procurement requests.	Number of times accessibility considerations are made and guidance materials are shared with clients for procurement requests.	Clients will be well informed and equipped on accessibility requirements at the outset of the procurement process.	CFOCS

The design and delivery of programs and services

Table 12: Accessibility results framework for the design and delivery of programs and services barriers.

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
Barrier 1: Client feedback	BPA will add a link to the Accessibility		BPA clients will have enhanced access to	BPA

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
	Feedback page and/or feedback instructions on the cover letter that goes with the Client Satisfaction questionnaire.		providing accessibility feedback.	
Barrier 2: Disability Benefits application (PEN 923)	Disability Benefits application (PEN 923) steps will be made clear, concise and easy to understand.	Percentage of Disability Benefit clients who submitted an application in the last 12 months that indicate that the application process was easy.	It will be easier for Veterans to understand the Disability Benefits application (PEN 923) process.	SD
Barrier 3: Presentation materials	All PIM presentation materials will be reviewed and updated to ensure accessibility.	Number of PIM presentation materials that have been reviewed and made accessible.	PIM presentation materials will be accessible.	CFOCS
Barrier 4: Delivery of programs and services	Online training "Making Documents Accessible" will be required for employees.	Completion rate of the Making Documents Accessible (Canada School of Public Service) training by employees.	Employees will be trained and better equipped to make accessible documents.	SD

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Desired outcome	Responsible
Barrier 4: Delivery of programs and services	Accessibility tips and tricks will be promoted to employees on a regular basis.	Number of times accessibility tips and tricks are promoted to employees.	An increase in accessibility knowledge for employees.	SD
Barrier 4: Delivery of programs and services	Accessibility awareness will be part of onboarding new employees.		New employees are aware of the importance of accessibility and are familiar with the accessibility tools available to them.	SD
Barrier 5: Digital documents for programs and services	New public-facing documents will be reviewed to ensure that they meet accessibility standards.	Number of new public documents that have been reviewed to meet Accessibility Standards.	All new SDPM public-facing documents meet Accessibility Standards.	SD
Barrier 5: Digital documents for programs and services	Implementation of the Learning Asset Maintenance effort by the National Learning Unit.	Number of active (not archived) training resources that have been updated or built to include accessibility features.	Learning assets are updated, replaced, or archived/removed as needed.	SD

Appendix B

Veterans Affairs Canada terminology and other government departments and services

For information on VAC's terminology, please refer to the [Organization](#) and [Resources](#) pages on the Veterans Affairs Canada website. For more information on other government departments and services, please refer to the Government of Canada list of [departments and agencies](#).

[Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology program](#) (AAACT) – a Shared Services Canada program that provides services and solutions to help the public service serve all Canadians, including those with disabilities. AAAC provides expertise in accessible digital content ensuring GC products and services are available to everyone. They offer training, tools, and testing services to help departments create accessible digital content (for example, documents, presentations, and web content) that is inclusive by design.

[Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial](#) – located in northern France, this memorial stands as an important symbol of remembrance and a lasting tribute to all Newfoundlanders who served during the First World War. A great bronze caribou – the emblem of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment – forms the heart of the memorial.

[Bureau of Pensions Advocates](#) (BPA) – provides free advice, assistance and representation for individuals dissatisfied with decisions rendered by VAC with respect to their claims for entitlement to disability benefits, or any assessment awarded for their claimed conditions. The Bureau's advocates are dedicated exclusively to assisting clients in the redress process.

[Canadian National Vimy Memorial](#) – honours all Canadians who served during the First World War. It bears the names of those who died in France with no known grave and is located at the site of Canada's victory during the Battle of Vimy Ridge in northern France.

[Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services](#) (CFOCS) – the branch responsible for supporting VAC to meet Government of Canada requirements in areas such as financial stewardship, corporate reporting and key accountabilities. The branch also provides internal corporate services including human resources, finance, information technology, information management, security and administration, procurement and contracting, integrated planning, and access to information and privacy activities.

Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN) – an aging integrated system that supports VAC employees in delivering Departmental benefits and services.

Commemoration and Public Affairs (CPA) – the branch responsible for commemorating the achievements and sacrifices of those who served and continue to serve Canada in times of war, military conflict and peace. It also engages meaningfully with stakeholders and provides accessible, timely, accurate, clear, and objective communications services and products to Veterans, their families, VAC employees and Canadians in both official languages.

Corporate Secretariat – the division that supports the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Office of the Minister of Veterans Affairs, and Departmental senior management by coordinating Ministerial briefings, monitoring and supporting the Departmental governance committees, Parliamentary and Cabinet activities, as well as managing Ministerial correspondence and the Client Relations Unit.

My VAC Account – a public-facing client portal that enables Veterans to apply for benefits, send secure messages, and track applications online with VAC.

Service Delivery (SD) – the branch responsible for delivering benefits and services and for providing social and economic support that respond to the needs of Veterans, our other clients and their families.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) – provides Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP members, and their families, with timely, respectful hearings and fair, plain-language decisions.

Appendix C

Actions remaining from VAC's Accessibility Progress Report 2024

Any progress made in 2025 that is not addressed in this appendix will be carried over and covered in the Veterans Affairs Canada's Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028.

Employment barriers

2.1.1 Persons with disabilities are under-represented in VAC's hiring, acting appointments, and promotions, and are over-represented in departures.

2.1.2: The process for employees to obtain accommodations or tools and resources needed at work is complex. This also impacts managers, who do not feel equipped to recruit, develop and support persons with disabilities.

2.1.3: Managers may not consider operational requirements and related accessibility barriers when hiring persons with disabilities.

Table 13: Status of incomplete action items to remove employment barriers in VAC's Accessibility Progress Report 2024.

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.1.1 Action 1: VAC is committed to building a diverse workforce that is representative of the Canadian population.	CFOCS	Reworded and incorporated into under-representation.	Ongoing
2.1.1 Action 4 (Part 1): Promote VAC as an inclusive workplace for employees with disabilities.	CFOCS	Reworded and incorporated into under-representation.	Ongoing
2.1.1 Action 4 (Part 2): Launch a self-identification campaign and review language used in recruitment communications to ensure it is accessible and inclusive.	CFOCS	Completed	Not applicable
2.1.2 Action 1: Finalize the business case (including resource requirements, roles, processes, tools, and partnerships) for a Disability Management Unit at VAC.	CFOCS	Completed	Not applicable
2.1.2 Action 2: Create a Duty to Accommodate checklist for managers which includes links to resources, policies, practices and guidelines.	CFOCS	Reworded and incorporated into complex accommodation process.	2026
2.1.3 Action 1 (Part 1): Equip managers to consider operational requirements and accessibility barriers when hiring persons with disabilities through education and awareness.	CFOCS	Incorporated into manager considerations.	2025

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.1.3 Action 1 (Part 2): Provide hiring managers a list of software and the accessibility status of each.	CFOCS	Completed. This resulted in the creation of My Software Accessibility.	Not applicable

The built environment barriers

2.2.4 Safety equipment installed to protect employees may have an aggravating effect on some people with disabilities.

2.2.6 There are known accessibility barriers at VAC's numerous commemorative sites in Canada and overseas. However, due to their historical value, modifications to these sites' structures and features must be carefully considered in order to balance protection and preservation concerns.

Table 14: Status of incomplete action items to remove the built environment barriers in VAC's Accessibility Progress Report 2024.

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.2.4 Action 1: Engage third-party specialists to assess the impact of employee safety equipment on persons with disabilities and identify options for more accessible equipment.	CFOCS	Completed	Not applicable
2.2.6 Action 1: Engage appropriate expert(s) to assess accessibility requirements at VAC's commemorative sites.	CPA, CFOCS	Completed	Not applicable

Information and communication technologies (ICT) barriers

2.3.1 VAC's [Client Service Delivery Network](#) (CSDN), an integrated system that supports VAC employees in delivering Departmental benefits and services, is not accessible.

2.3.2: Some web-based applications are not fully accessible. For instance, [My VAC Account](#) is not fully compliant with CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.

2.3.3(b): Client-facing forms are not fully accessible. Client-facing forms converted to PDF in VAC's systems can have accessibility issues.

2.3.3 (c): Scanned client documents are not fully accessible.

2.3.4: Data analytics dashboards and reports are not fully accessible.

2.3.5: Not all public-facing mobile applications are fully accessible (for example, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Coach Canada and Veterans Matter mobile applications).

2.3.6: Some of VAC's internal legacy desktop software (for example, software provided by third-party vendors) is not fully accessible.

2.3.7: SharePoint and PowerApps products enable more people outside of IT to develop tools that support their business processes. They are, in fact, ICT products and need to conform to CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.

2.3.10: The current procurement process for new software and hardware does not include a standard accessibility evaluation.

2.3.11: There is currently no technical training provided regarding the accessibility features on VAC systems, applications and devices.

2.3.13: Providing in-home support for tasks such as equipment set-up has not been possible for numerous reasons (e.g., capacity, location, and health and safety risks).

2.3.14: VAC's Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) Request Processing Software – AccessPro Case Management is not fully accessible. In turn, response packages provided to requestors are not accessible.

Table 15: Status of incomplete action items to remove ICT barriers in VAC's Accessibility Progress Report 2024.

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.3.1 Action 3: Modernize Disability and Financial Benefits currently in CSDN, beginning with allowances (includes accessibility conformance).	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into web applications.	Ongoing

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.3.2 Action 1: Bring my VAC account into compliance with CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into web applications.	2028
2.3.2 Action 2: Bring actively maintained web applications into compliance with CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024 and apply the standard to any new features added to these applications.	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into web applications.	2028
2.3.2 Action 3: Bring 25% of other web applications (for example, applications that are stable and not being updated with new functionality at this time) into compliance with CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into web applications.	2028
2.3.3b Action 1: Determine the nature and scope of accessibility barriers in client-facing forms and determine a method to bring these into conformance with CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into digital documents.	2028
2.3.3b Action 2: Conduct accessibility assessments on client-facing forms against CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into digital documents.	2028
2.3.3b Action 3: Bring client-facing forms into conformance with CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024.	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into digital documents.	2028
2.3.3c Action 2: Determine options to bring scanned client documents into an accessible state.	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into digital documents.	2028

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.3.4 Action 1: Identify and remove accessibility barriers in 50% of data analytics dashboards and reports.	CFOCS, SD	Reworded and incorporated into web applications.	Ongoing
2.3.5 Action 1: Perform accessibility assessments and fix issues in the public-facing PTSD Coach Canada application.	CFOCS, SD, Health Services	Reworded and incorporated into mobile applications. Carrying forward the full assessment only.	2028
2.3.6 Action 1: Conduct accessibility audits to identify fixes on internal desktop software and take action as appropriate (upgrade or replace).	CFOCS	Reworded and incorporated into desktop software.	Ongoing
2.3.7 Action 1: Provide VAC-wide governance to require and guide people developing tools in SharePoint and PowerApps to include accessibility from the start and adhere to CAN/ASC-EN 301 549:2024 as much as these platforms currently allow.	CFOCS	Completed	Not applicable
2.3.10 Action 1: Develop a standard accessibility evaluation and incorporate this into the procurement process for new software and hardware.	CFOCS, Shared Services Canada	Reworded and incorporated into desktop software.	2026
2.3.11 Action 1: Create a plan to provide technical training regarding the accessibility features on VAC systems, applications and devices. Build training into our planning.	CFOCS	Completed	Not applicable

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.3.13 Action 1: Identify options to provide in-home set-up of IT equipment for persons with disabilities.	CFOCS	Not to be included in the AAP 2025-2028. Each case will be handled individually.	Not applicable
2.3.14 Action 1: Purchase and implement new ATIP request processing software that is accessible.	CFOCS	Completed	Not applicable

Communication barriers

2.4.1 In-person and virtual events are not always barrier-free.

2.4.2 Described video is not available for silent videos at VAC's visitor centres at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial. Subtitles need to be added to audio visual displays at these visitor centres.

Table 16: Status of incomplete action items to remove communications barriers in VAC's Accessibility Progress Report 2024.

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.4.1 Action 1: Develop accessibility-related references and tools for VAC-led commemorative events in Canada and abroad.	CPA	Completed	Not applicable
2.4.2 Action 1: Add described video (audio) to silent videos in visitor centres. Add subtitles to audio visual displays in visitor centres.	CPA	Reworded and incorporated into described video.	2027

The procurement of goods, services and facilities barriers

2.5.1 Some VAC staff are not familiar with accessibility best practices and requirements for procurement and contracting.

Table 17: Status of incomplete action items to remove the procurement of goods, services and facilities barriers in VAC’s Accessibility Progress Report 2024.

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.5.1 Action 1: Incorporate accessibility-related considerations into procurement information sessions.	CFOCS	Completed	Not applicable

The design and delivery of programs and services barriers

2.6.3 Disability Benefits application (PEN 923) steps are not clear, concise, or easy to understand.

Table 18: Status of incomplete action items to remove the design and delivery of programs and services barriers in VAC’s Accessibility Progress Report 2024.

Action	Responsible	Completed or incorporated	New completion date
2.6.3 Action 1: Make the application steps (for disability benefits) clear, concise, and easy to understand and provide better support material.	SD, CPA	Application - Reworded and incorporated into Disability Benefits applications (PEN 923). Support material – completed.	2025