

Elections Canada's

Accessibility Plan

2023 Progress Report



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

It is my great pleasure to share with you Elections Canada's first Accessibility Plan Progress Report. It describes how the agency is doing to promote the full and equal participation of Canadians with disabilities in the electoral process.

Since the publication of our Accessibility Plan in December 2022, staff across the agency have made it a priority to identify and remove existing accessibility barriers. We have also established an Office for Accessibility and Gender-Based Analysis Plus to support the agency in meeting our short- and long-term commitments.

While we have made significant progress in becoming more accessible as an agency, we recognize that there is still a lot of work ahead. For instance, the ability to independently verify a marked ballot remains a barrier for people who are blind or partially sighted, and, at times, returning officers must lease polling stations that do not meet all mandatory accessibility criteria.

I am confident that we are moving in the right direction. We will continue to seek input from Canadians with disabilities about the solutions that we can put in place to make our programs and services more accessible. In this regard, I would like to thank our Advisory Group for Disability Issues and others who contributed to this report for their advice on our accessibility priorities. I believe that, through our collaboration, we will continue to make significant improvements in the electoral process to serve all Canadians.

Stéphane Perrault
Chief Electoral Officer of Canada

GENERAL

To request a copy of Elections Canada's Accessibility Plan in print, large print, braille, audio format or another accessible format, to receive information about our feedback process or to send us feedback to improve our services, please contact:

Juan Melara-Pineda, Manager, Accessibility and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) at:

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You can also send us suggestions, questions and complaints, request help and report incidents using our [Contact Us](#) form. Other ways to contact us are listed below.

Telephone:

Toll-free in Canada and the United States: 1-800-463-6868

Toll-free in Mexico: 001-800-514-6868

From anywhere in the world: 1-613-993-2975

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing: TTY, toll-free in Canada and the United States: 1-800-361-8935

Fax:

Local: 1-613-954-8584

Toll-free in Canada and the United States: 1-888-524-1444

Overview

Methodology

This report covers the period from January 1, 2023, to July 31, 2023. As this is the first year of the Accessibility Plan, we gave consideration to how best to align our accessibility reporting requirements with other departmental reporting commitments. As a result, it was decided that the second progress report will cover the period from August 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. After that, reporting will follow the fiscal cycle, publishing in December of each calendar year.

During the first year of implementing the Accessibility Plan we established an Office for Accessibility and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus); information about this Office is provided below. The Office hired an Accessibility Advisor, who was responsible for supporting Elections Canada (EC) business owners as they reported on their progress toward meeting their 2024 commitments. To this end, the Accessibility team, supported by the Accessibility Steering Committee and Working Group, held several bilateral meetings with the business owners, identifying what work they were doing to meet their commitments, what lessons they had learned in the first year, what support they needed, how they could best report on feedback and consultations and where current gaps exist. From these conversations, each business was able to provide an update for this report.

Lessons Learned

The initial stages of implementing EC's Accessibility Plan held a steep learning curve. For businesses that provide public-facing services, there were generally established mechanisms for monitoring their progress on accessibility, and the support they needed was mostly to meet the internal deadlines necessary to approve a draft report, edit it for plain language and then translate it before consulting with the Advisory Group for Disability Issues (AGDI). Although most of the internal businesses identified that they were working toward their commitments, many had not yet set up structures to monitor their progress or to receive feedback and have consultations with people with disabilities. As a result, the businesses could not measure whether the changes they had made were in fact accessible and meeting their commitments in a meaningful way.

During this first year, the Working Group also identified that it is possible to modify some of the existing reporting forms to consider the commitments identified in the Accessibility Plan. The first year of reporting has identified a need for businesses to work outside their siloes and include diversity in all working groups, reviews to policy, changes in practice and educational opportunities. Through the commitments of the Accessibility Steering Committee and the Accessibility Working Group, conversations about best practices, current barriers and challenges, and systems change have created opportunities to work together and communicate changes in a meaningful way.

Overall, the first year required a great deal of agility, but the lessons learned are opportunities to make substantive change that will ensure that accessibility remains a measurable and foundational aspect of all businesses within Elections Canada (EC).

ACCESSIBILITY AT ELECTIONS CANADA

As an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to the Parliament of Canada, EC has a mandate to deliver federal elections, by-elections and referendums and to administer the financial provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA). We work to make sure that all eligible Canadians can exercise their democratic rights to vote and to be a candidate.

We are committed to making sure that our services are inclusive of, and accessible to, all Canadians; this includes EC employees and members of the public with disabilities. We are also committed to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the electoral process, and we can achieve this goal by removing all remaining barriers by 2040, as required by the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA).

EC is made up of close to 1,000 core employees, working mostly in the National Capital Region under a flexible, hybrid work model. During a general election or referendum, returning officers recruit more than 235,000 election workers; these positions are filled across the country.

A returning officer is appointed to administer the election in each electoral district. The CEA distinguishes between the role and powers of EC and those of returning officers. The latter are not employees of EC or the public service. Under the CEA, they find and lease buildings for local offices and polls, and they appoint and train local office staff and poll workers. While EC provides general oversight and can set policies, we do not control all aspects of how an election is delivered, and the CEA may limit our ability to address or remove certain barriers.

The commitments outlined in our first Accessibility Plan fall under four themes:

1. Creating an organization that is literate when it comes to accessibility
2. Developing services and processes that are accessible to, and inclusive of, employees with disabilities
3. Making sure that new products and services are user-friendly and accessible
4. Improving the accessibility of our programs and services for Canadians

CONSULTATIONS

The AGDI was convened for a virtual consultation on October 5, 2023. (The list of participants and people consulted is provided in [Appendix A](#).)¹ The objective was to consult the members on the draft progress report for the Accessibility Plan. EC shared the commitments and progress that it had made so far in support of the plan.

AGDI members were given five questions to consider when reviewing the draft; these are listed in [Appendix A](#). The members shared their feedback on the draft during the meeting, in emails after the meeting and during a one-on-one consultation after the meeting. This follow-up consultation was needed because of technology issues that had occurred during the virtual meeting. A lesson learned from this consultation was that, when conducting a virtual PowerPoint presentation, having simultaneous translation, sign languages and captioning can create challenges. Below is an overview of the feedback we heard which Elections Canada will take into consideration in the upcoming year in discussions with AGDI members and report on in the next progress report.



AGDI members were pleased that, with the establishment of an Accessibility Office, there are now dedicated resources to help implement the Accessibility Plan. They encouraged EC to include people with lived experience on the team.



Members asked whether Asign, the third party that EC has contracted for sign-language interpretation, has langue des signes québécoise interpreters on staff or whether it relies on subcontractors. EC clarified that the company hires contractors.



On assistive-voting technology, AGDI members reminded EC of the importance of testing the service it adopts to ensure that it is compatible with new and older versions of assistive-technology solutions.



Some members stressed the importance of language, whether that is reviewing translations or ensuring that documents are available in plain language. They expressed a desire to have “accessibility” included in team names, such as Inclusion, Diversity, Equity (Equality) and Accessibility (Access) instead of Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. They stressed that, when communicating information with the public, it was important that it be accurate, no matter which format it takes.

¹ See further consultations in Appendix B.



Members challenged EC to seek the AAA accessibility standard, rather than AA2.1, which is the standard mentioned in the Accessibility Plan. They suggested that EC look at including accessible functionality to ensure that software and applications are functional for all users, rather than adding functionality to them to accommodate individuals' disabilities.



AGDI members mentioned the importance of training staff to consider the different needs of people with disabilities, especially invisible disabilities. The members also stated that training on disabilities and accessibility should be led by people with lived experience.



AGDI members complimented the team on the accessibility of the documents provided as well as their layout: they were clear, accessible for screen readers and written in plain language. They also commented on the positive and tangible efforts being made by EC to meet the commitments set out in the Accessibility Plan, recognizing that the first commitments are targeted for 2024.



EC was advised to train its staff on how to welcome people with disabilities into the organization, in a way that goes beyond just raising awareness of the needs of people with disabilities. They further indicated that there are best practices for how to create a welcoming environment for people with disabilities, which EC could adopt.



On workplace accommodations, it was recommended that managers have ongoing discussions with their employees about accessibility because accessibility needs can change over time.



On recruitment, it was recommended that when EC staffs positions, it inform disability organizations so that they can spread the word about employment opportunities.



On IT enhancements, EC was advised to think more broadly about accessibility. For example, there is often an emphasis on ensuring that its software meets the technology needs of people who are blind and partially sighted, but not the needs of people with dexterity disabilities.



EC should consider the usability of its digital products. Too many buttons and too many tabs make it difficult for some people to navigate through websites.

Outside of the feedback on the progress report, the AGDI members described the barriers that still exist for electors with disabilities. These include services to homebound electors, the ability to independently verify their marked ballot and having to walk long distances in a building to get to the polling station. In addition, AGDI members further indicated that EC needs to ensure that poll workers receive adequate training so that they know what accessibility tools are available and how to use them when they serve electors with disabilities.

The members also raised questions about how EC is reaching vulnerable populations to promote civic education. They were eager to see how the changes made to accommodate accessibility and diversity during general elections will be implemented.

Discussion and dialogue on these and other topics of interest to AGDI members will continue at a December 2023 in-person AGDI consultation. This will be a two-day event, and what is heard in that meeting will be shared in next year's report.

FEEDBACK

Feedback channels and systems for programs that serve electors are in place and the agency has the ability to monitor and report on this feedback during a given period.

Unfortunately, employees are not as well served and are not provided with multiple channels to provide feedback and, in some cases, there are no feedback channels. In some instances, members of the public do not have clear feedback mechanisms. Feedback received in these areas is not always monitored or reported on.

In this first-year progress report, we have included a feedback section within the pillar where applicable; here, business lines report on the feedback they have received over this first reporting period. For business lines where gaps have been identified in their current systems, the Office for Accessibility and GBA Plus has initiated a working group to prioritize reviewing current feedback mechanisms and best practices for documenting, responding to, monitoring and reporting on feedback. This working group is tasked with creating a consistent system within EC that will meet the requirements of the ACA and ensure transparency in these processes moving forward.

Please note that, in this first progress report, some businesses present a combined report on consultation and feedback because this is how they have monitored the information. In the future, EC will work to separate the two priorities.

LEGISLATIVE BARRIERS

The accessibility barriers resulting from the CEA and identified by Elections Canada in the Accessibility Plan still exist as of the date of this progress report. Barriers that result from the CEA itself can only be removed by Parliament and not by Elections Canada. Some legislative barriers have been highlighted in past recommendations reports of the Chief Electoral Officer to Parliament as well as in specific recommendations made to Parliament. More specifically, the Chief Electoral Officer's latest recommendations report that followed the 43rd and 44th general elections, submitted to Parliament on June 7, 2022, includes recommendations that aim to improve the accessibility of the voting process by removing certain barriers to voting and increasing opportunities for all electors to exercise their right to vote. Parliament has not yet responded to this recommendations report. As Elections Canada works toward achieving its accessibility commitments provided for in the Accessibility Plan, it may form the basis for further recommendations for future legislative amendments. However, while the Chief Electoral Officer can make recommendations, only Parliament can decide whether or how to act on these recommendations.

PROGRESS ON OUR COMMITMENTS TO ACCESSIBILITY

Except as otherwise indicated, the information contained in this section is given as of July 31, 2023.

Promoting Literacy on Accessibility and Enabling Delivery of Accessible Products and Services

Objective

Promote literacy on accessibility across the organization to make sure that staff have the knowledge and tools they need to effectively identify, remove and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of employees and members of the public with disabilities.

Indicator

- Staff have access to the training, expertise, resources and tools they need to integrate accessibility into their processes.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

On June 15, Elections Canada (EC) approved ongoing funding to create an Accessibility Office.

We are in phase 1 of implementing the Accessibility Office. We have created four positions to support this work:

Manager | **Accessibility Advisor** | **Accessibility Digital Standards Advisor** | **Project Officer**

The office will be assessed in two years to ensure it is meeting its objectives. The positions should be filled by the end of the 2023–24 fiscal year.

We developed a new governance structure to help us coordinate improvements that involve multiple stakeholders. In fall 2023, we will launch a working group to review the process for feedback, complaints and requests for accommodations. New working groups will be set up for accessibility standards as these are developed.

Highlights

Since the Accessibility Plan was published, the Accessibility Office has:

- published a list of training sessions that staff can take on Elections Canada’s internal Accessibility Information Hub
- given staff and managers specialized guidance on training options
- presented at EC’s 2023 all-staff meeting to tell staff about the agency’s accessibility commitments
- provided expertise to staff on the following themes and started tracking requests to help with future reporting:
 - the future of work and workplace transformation
 - workplace accommodations
 - employee onboarding
 - accessible design and communications
 - by-elections, ballot redesign, assistive technology, polling place suitability policy, etc.
- begun developing a policy on accessible web communications and alternative formats (this will include guidance on visuals, alt text and transcription)
- started monitoring closely the development of new standards, including the new [CAN-ASC-6.1 Information and Communication Technology Products and Services standard](#) (based on EN 301 549)
- continued building relationships by participating in the Persons with Disabilities Champions and Chairs Interdepartmental Committee and by co-chairing the Secretariat for Electoral Coordination Committee on voters with disabilities

✓ Employment

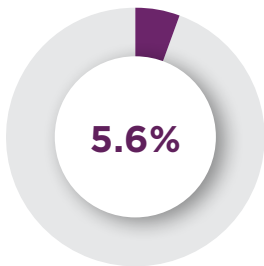
Objective

To address the gaps in representation at all levels of the agency and promote the hiring, retention and development of people with disabilities, Elections Canada will implement a strategy for Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI). It will also aim to reduce barriers in attitudes by creating an environment where employees feel welcome, included and safe.

Indicators

- Elections Canada closes the representation gap of employees with disabilities and there is an increase in self-identification rates.
- Staff have accessible tools and accommodations needed to conduct their work.

Progress toward 2024 commitments



As of March 31, 2023, **5.6% of staff identified as a person with a disability**, compared to 4.2% when we published our first Accessibility Plan in December 2022. This includes indeterminate employees and term employees of three months or more.

Human Resources faced some challenges during the first year of the Accessibility Plan. These included the return-to-office mandate, strike readiness, by-elections and readiness planning for the next general election. In spite of these challenges, Human Resources is launching several commitments in fall 2023:

- Elections Canada's EEDI recruitment strategy will launch in September 2023 to increase the representation of equity-seeking groups. The Accessibility Office is supporting Human Resources with testing and applying the tools for hiring managers.
- An employment systems review is planned for fall 2023. We are working on hiring a consulting firm to do this review. This exercise will help to identify barriers and measures to address them.
- The EEDI recruitment matrix, part of the EEDI recruitment strategy, will launch in September 2023. Supporting processes and tools are nearly complete.
- The Treasury Board Secretariat will soon launch a new application so public service employees can self-identify as a person with a disability. Elections Canada is working on an action plan for adopting this new application.
- Elections Canada will launch a leadership development program for middle managers in October 2023. This program strongly encourages the participation of employment equity members, and the learning curriculum includes a variety of training on diversity.

Highlights

Tools and resources for managers:

- We are reviewing assessment methods and tools to hire new candidates to identify biases and barriers. Managers must make reasonable efforts to eliminate barriers or mitigate their impact. Training, a guide and tools are available for hiring managers.
- Human Resources is finalizing a list of organizations that managers can contact to recruit employees from equity-seeking groups. The list will be sent to managers at the official launch of the EEDI recruitment strategy.
- A page on Elections Canada's intranet is available with information for hiring managers.

Adoption of public service accessibility tools:

- Elections Canada is monitoring the launch of the new self-identification tool for the public service.
- The Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities is being promoted on Elections Canada's EEDI recruitment intranet page.

Employee accommodations:

- Information has been published on Elections Canada's intranet about our duty to accommodate in the context of the Common Hybrid Work Model.
- Human Resources advisors are encouraging employees to use the Government of Canada's Accessibility Passport.
- A dedicated email and team were created to process accommodation requests. As of July 2023, we have received 102 of these requests. Eighteen employees have self-identified as a person with a disability.

Two internal speaker series sessions related to disability and accessibility:

- March 29: "From Allyship to Anti-Racism" (48 participants)
- June 14: "Destigmatizing Mental Health in the Workplace" (45 participants)

All speaker series events include people with disabilities.

The Built Environment

Objective

Through the strategy called Future of Work and Workplace Transformation, Elections Canada will address access barriers at workplaces and facilities of Elections Canada headquarters by adapting them based on up-to-date accessibility standards. We will also aim to improve the accessibility of Elections Canada workplaces and the on-site experience of people with disabilities by gathering evidence to make informed decisions. Facilities, through daily operations in collaboration with Occupational Health and Safety, Security Services, the property manager and owner, will monitor accessibility standards and continue to implement improvements.

Indicator

- Employees with disabilities are satisfied with our workplaces, based on employee surveys and complaints.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

In 2023, Elections Canada began to reimagine and reconfigure the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer's workplaces at 30 Victoria, 440 Coventry and 22 Eddy. The aim is to support the agency's flexible hybrid work model and align with the government-wide GCworkplace vision. One key objective was to get feedback on workplace accessibility.

Highlights

- We enhanced the workplace at Elections Canada headquarters (30 Victoria) by:
 - creating an area with reduced lighting
 - adding a new quiet zone
 - installing 27 more sit-stand desks, so there are now 74 at 30 Victoria and 1 at 440 Coventry (access is only for those who have been identified through the Occupational Health and Safety team as requiring it: this is managed through the new desk-booking tool)
 - setting up wellness rooms for quiet reflection (at least one on each floor)
 - buying 300 improved adjustable chairs for unassigned workpoints
 - communicating to all staff on January 16 about whom to contact in case of winter maintenance requests (with a reminder to note how the concern poses an accessibility issue)

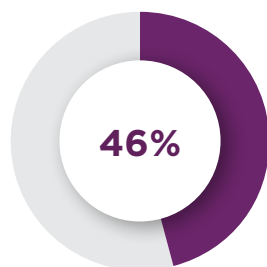
- We are updating the Onboarding Guide (Elections Canada Onboarding Information for New Staff) and including more information on accessibility.
- We have an Ambassadors Program for employees to be first aid attendants and primary building emergency officers: Workplace Ambassadors.
 - One ambassador is assigned per floor and has a dedicated workspace. Ambassadors can assist with workstation adjustments and ergonomics and can help with first aid and emergency response.

Feedback and consultations

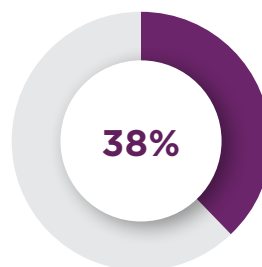
We started a Workplace Transformation Project working group with input from the Accessibility Office and Occupational Health and Safety.

We consulted the EEDI employee focus group and the Accessibility Office about how workplace design relates to wellness spaces.

We did a Future of Work Pulse Survey in June 2023: **596 employees** completed the survey. Questions covered transportation, ergonomics and workplace accessibility. As part of the survey, staff could identify as a person with a disability. Here are some key findings:



Employees with a disability were more concerned about ergonomics in the workplace compared to other staff. Of those self-identifying as having a disability, **46% said they were concerned or extremely concerned** (compared to 37% of those without a disability).



Employees with a disability were **less likely to say they had the tools, materials and equipment they need to carry out their duties effectively (38%)** compared to those without a disability (48%).

Elections Canada's landlord is doing an accessibility review using the latest accessibility code and best practices and is proposing improvements; for example, increasing the distance between the planned kitchen island and counter to align with new accessibility standards.

Planned activities to respond to feedback provided

Reporting accessibility issues:

- At least once a year, we will remind staff how to report accessibility issues.
- We will set up an intake process for accessibility requests that staff make to the workplace ambassadors and the Facilities Management inboxes and will report on the yearly count and the overall themes.
- As part of the unassigned and shared workplace model, we will work with Occupational Health and Safety and Duty to Accommodate teams to set up more areas on site that respond to the needs of employees with disabilities and better strategies to respond quickly to employee requests.

Doing planned consultations and accessibility assessments:

- We will consult people with disabilities on future workplace enhancements and make a plan to address accessibility issues with the built environment that cannot be easily fixed.
- We will review and consider the GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility:² Final Report in English (gcconnex.gc.ca) and GCworkplace Accessibility Community of Practice and Interest (gcconnex.gc.ca).
- We will do an accessibility review of planned workplace enhancements against the updated code and standards. This is part of the preliminary design for planned enhancements in the staff kitchen and break room. The design team is aligning the updates to the built environment with updated code when feasible.

² This series is offered by Public Services and Procurement Canada.

Information and Communication Technologies

Objective

Elections Canada will cast a lens that is based on accessibility by design and new digital products and services and, where doable, will implement accessibility enhancements for existing digital products.

We will continue to:

- Enable, where possible, approved accessibility features that are aligned with the accessibility standards currently available on IT systems and solutions;
- Continually assess and test our IT services and solutions to meet accessibility standards;
- Make assistive technology available to employees with disabilities who request accommodation;
- Leverage the process of procurement and contracting to deliver the most accessible IT solutions possible.

Indicators

- Employees with disabilities have access to improved accessible IT equipment, software and toolkits to do their job.
- More IT products meet or exceed accessibility standards.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

- All laptops and tablets have been re-configured to use centralized cloud-based Microsoft services. Centralizing these services provides a more collaborative and accessible experience for EC staff at headquarters and in the field.
- The following accessibility features have been enabled to all users:
 - Cognitive Services (speech to text, speech translation) in Windows 10 and Teams
 - Communication and collaboration tools in MS Office 365 and Teams
 - Accessibility features in Windows 10 and MS Office 365
 - Audio/video conference calls in Teams
 - Screen-sharing in Teams
 - Instant messaging in Teams

The only service that has been disabled for privacy concerns is the ability to record meetings in Teams. The Information Management team is investigating the issue so it can be enabled in the future.

Highlights

- We drafted a new standard (Elections Canada Digital Services Design Standard, 2023) for digital services design, which has a strong accessibility component and piloted the application of this standard.
- We enabled several agency projects with technological solutions that favour improved accessibility, including electronic registration, the portal, end-user computer tools and the electronic list of electors.
- We completed a project to augment the accessibility features available to all employees of Elections Canada, including key election administrators, through improved end-user desktop tools.
- We continued to provide assistive technology to employees, when requested. We have received 1 request for software (Jaws) over the 2022–23 fiscal year and it was installed within 2 days. Service standards vary on the requirement due to purchasing, if necessary.
- We conducted a mandatory rollout of end-user design training to technical staff for any new software or apparatus required by staff with specific needs.
- We provided end-user training on the new desktop tools to all end users, using resources provided by the Government of Canada.
- We performed user acceptance testing on all new services and incorporated feedback into these new services. In other words, any new software or apparatus requiring software for personnel with or without disabilities is required to go through user acceptance testing prior to production implementation.

Feedback and consultations

We consulted several groups during the project. We received, discussed and implemented feedback from all groups when possible.

To gather feedback, we used Microsoft Forms and Polls.

Next steps

- Enable functionality and services that are not part of the minimum viable product.
- Analyze the ticketing system and IT Service Management framework to offer new and improved services. This will use automation as part of the ServiceSimple project.

✓ **Communications (Other Than Information and Communication Technologies)**

Objective

During federal elections, the fully accessible website of Elections Canada informs electors on when, where and the ways to register and vote. We provide information in plain language in various accessible formats such as large print, braille, audio and American Sign Language and Langue des signes québécoise (ASL/LSQ) video.

Moving forward, Elections Canada will make sure that internal communications with employees and corporate communications between general elections with members of the public and political participants meet the current accessibility and plain language standards; and it will develop products that are accessible and easy to use.

Indicators

- Communication products, services and channels meet or exceed communication standards for accessibility.
- Information in alternative formats is available to electors who need it.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

To ensure that Canadians can exercise their democratic right to vote, Elections Canada conducts a Voter Information Campaign before and during federal elections to provide Canadians with all the information they need on when, where and the ways to register and vote in a federal election. The multimedia campaign includes a fully accessible website and multiple communication products in plain language. The Voter Information Campaign is tested via focus groups that include electors with disabilities and some products are available in accessible formats (web, audio, braille and large print). We are now expanding the number of campaigns and products that will be available in alternate formats to better respond to the diverse communication needs of Canadians.

As an agency, we are also working to make sure that our internal communications with employees and corporate communications between general elections with members of the public and political participants meet the current accessibility and plain language standards and to make them easy to use.

Highlights

External communications:

- Elections Canada has contracted a supplier to produce more videos in ASL/LSQ. We have renewed this contract for the 2023–24 fiscal year.
- Since April 2023, EC has a contracted supplier for professional Canadian voiceover talent to produce more high-quality videos than written text to accommodate more audiences. These videos tend to be clear, easy to understand and accessible.
- Most videos that EC produces include video descriptions, captioning or transcripts. Since 2022, video transcription is done through an external supplier.
- As part of the video production process, our Linguistic Services team reviews scripts and text that appears on screen, which includes a plain language review.
- In some cases, videos are produced to complement print products to help users understand the information.
- We are making a plan to ensure that employees know about the communication tools and services that are available to make their products and content accessible by design. These include plain language review, accessible design and web publication, and products in alternate formats (ASL, LSQ, video description). This information will be in the Accessibility section of the intranet in fall 2023. It will be promoted through EC’s internal newsletter and through client engagement.
- Elections Canada has updated its website:
 - Our corporate website meets the WCAG 2.0 standard. We are transitioning to the WCAG 2.1 Level AA standard. All products published on the Elections Canada website will be required to meet (or exceed) the WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility standard.
 - A contract for website user testing services will be put in place in 2023–24.
- We make significant efforts to ensure that all communications products for internal and external audiences meet the new TBS Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible. Our strategic communications advisors, designers and videographers make sure these products meet accessibility requirements.
- We offer products that are developed for national outreach and shared via our Stakeholder Mobilization Program during a general election in large print and braille. For more than five years, Point by Point has produced the braille products.
- In summer 2022, 44 key employees with EC’s Public Affairs and Civic Education branch completed a full-day training on producing accessible communications products as part of a pilot. The training was helpful, but some gaps on specific digital platforms remain. Twenty Elections Canada employees took part in a similar training session in summer 2023 that was specific to Microsoft 365.
- EC is assessing whether existing accessibility training meets its needs. The team will complete the review before the end of the 2023–24 fiscal year.

Internal communications:

- We did an audit of the intranet to identify content that uses inaccessible formats (such as PDF and Excel) and suggested how to correct this issue.
- We hired simultaneous translation and closed-captioning services to ensure the agency's annual all-staff meeting is accessible.
- We included accessibility as a criterion in the Intranet Revamp Project to ensure that new content is posted and made available on the intranet in an accessible way.
- We included accessibility requirements when advising clients on which format to use for sharing their content on Elections Canada's intranet.

Next steps

- Develop a custom training module for employees.
- Review handbooks and web pages (likely for general election 46).

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Objective

Elections Canada will engage people with disabilities with respect to barriers in the procurement process and guide business owners at Elections Canada and external suppliers on integrating accessibility considerations and standards into the procurement of goods and services.

Indicator

- Accessibility assessments are completed and new procurement requests comply with accessibility standards.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

- We modified Elections Canada's *Procurement Request Form* in August 2022 to ensure that all procurement requests consider accessibility and to track how many of them include accessible design.
- Since then, 5% of procurements have included accessibility standards in their definition of requirements.
- We are recording all justifications for not including accessibility standards in procurements. This will give us a reporting baseline, identify areas for improvement and tell us where more education may be needed.
- We also found that:
 - 0.7% said an “accessible solution exists but is not available”
 - 23% said “no applicable accessible criteria”
 - 71% said “no accessible criteria, other”: two thirds of these were due to using an existing contract or standing offer
- Elections Canada actively monitors accessible procurement material on the GCpedia Accessibility Hub and is part of Agents of Change for Accessible Procurement, the interdepartmental community of practice. The material exchanged is part of Elections Canada's process of updating its policy and process documents. Elections Canada is also doing a procurement modernization project. A business case has been drafted for [social procurement](#), including accessible processes and other procurement considerations.

✓ Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Elections Canada continues to make progress toward making our programs and services more accessible, even though we have had to deliver five by-elections in the past year, including overlapping ones, under a minority government. We continue to solicit feedback from persons with disabilities about barriers to voting and registration. Where there is no feedback mechanism, we are increasing our capacity to solicit feedback from end users.

Registration and Voting Services

Objective

- Elections Canada will continue to make registration and the voting experience more accessible for electors, following design principles that are inclusive and universal, as permitted by the *Canada Elections Act*.

Indicator

- Electors are satisfied with the accessibility of registration and voting.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

Voting services

- We launched the assistive voting technology procurement process on June 5, 2023, but did not get any bids. An alternative procurement strategy was launched on July 27, 2023. User testing and a way to give feedback will be in place once we receive a successful bid and testing is confirmed in a by-election.
- EC plans to engage provincial partners and electoral management bodies to assess options for remote video interpretation services. A Research, Development and Exploration report will be prepared at the end of the environmental scan.
- Training and operations manuals went through a plain language exercise in 2019. Revisions and new manuals are given a plain language review.

Online voter registration service

- Regular external accessibility testing of the code is done to ensure that electronic registration (E-Reg) meets WCAG requirements.
- Accessibility is assessed through testing and feedback in an optional survey at the end of a session.

- The online registration service is undergoing a total user interface overhaul using the Treasury Board’s Secretariat Accessibility Web Experience Toolkit. These changes will be in production by October 2023.
- Online messages are being improved after feedback from the Advisory Group for Disability Issues in April 2023. We are also considering feedback in future enhancements.

Voter information card

- We consulted the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) about best practices for making the paper voter information card more accessible. The CNIB’s suggestion to clip the top right corner of the voter information card is not possible for Elections Canada. We are investigating how to deliver an electronic voter information card, but this project will not begin before 2025.

Example of feedback on the voter information card:



The visualization was very easy to navigate and a leading example of accessibility. One of the things I found most helpful was the fact that you could choose how much information you wanted in the table at once. This made it so that there wasn’t a large amount of information to keep track of simultaneously, so much easier to appreciate the numbers without the cognitive load. I also appreciated being able to update the chart with radio buttons and checkboxes, as with Power BI there was an entire set of commands to learn. Thanks for sharing this and great to connect with you again.



Feedback and consultations

- In April 2023, AGDI members were able to try the changes made to the Online Voter Registration Service. We reviewed their feedback and implemented their suggestions where possible or appropriate.
- From January 2022 to June 2023, we received 6,215 comments. Of those, 20 relate to the accessibility of the Online Voter Registration Service:
 - two positive comments about the use of plain language throughout the application
 - two negative comments about the website: one person said the application was terrible for visually impaired people, and a sighted person said they believed that the Captcha would be difficult for a non-sighted person and that the code should be automatically read aloud (note that there is an option for an audio Captcha next to the box where users input the text)
 - four neutral comments on implementing a green checkmark or red X in the results message: this was done in the new version, which will go into production in October 2023

- eight comments on the voting process itself: three people appreciated the option to register online to vote by mail, which is easier for people with disabilities
- three comments on the font size used in the application (note that there is a zoom option in the web browser)

Services to Political Entities

Objective

Elections Canada will make information about campaign expenses for accessibility and disability more readily available to political participants; it will also aim to reduce barriers to information that prevent people with disabilities from participating in the electoral process as candidates. While political entities are responsible for the accessibility of political campaigns, Elections Canada will continue to encourage them to run accessible campaigns.

Indicators

- Political entities are satisfied with the accessibility of political financing products and services.
- Political entities are aware of the tools that Elections Canada uses to make campaigns more accessible.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

- We asked official agents for feedback on barriers that candidates face in complying with political financing rules. For the first time, the survey asked about accessibility in relation to systems and software and in general.
 - The final report on the survey was published in September 2023: [Survey of Official Agents following the 44th General Election - Elections Canada](#). Accessibility feedback included comments that it is difficult to find information on our website, the process is too complex, the technology is cumbersome to use and the software is not necessarily user-friendly.
- Political entities are responsible for making their campaigns accessible. Currently, there is little uptake of accessibility and disability expenses among political entities.
- As such, we are looking for more opportunities to make information more available to them about accessibility and disability expenses. We are also looking to compare expense details from the last two general elections to help with future comparisons.
- We will also continue to provide information to political entities through the Advisory Committee of Political Parties about accessible campaigns and related expenses. The topic will also be discussed with the Advisory Group for Disability Issues in a future meeting.

- Furthermore, Elections Canada will do a program evaluation to find out why political entities are not making use of accessibility and disability expenses. We are working on questions about program evaluation and identifying stakeholders. In the future, we may consider recommending amendments to the legislation to address this issue.
- We are committed to developing a management action plan following the program evaluation and consulting on possible solutions to recommendations identified.

Highlights

- The political financing regime is complex and nuanced. We need to be precise when communicating about it in a regulatory environment. As part of the Political Financing Branch Strategic Communications plan, the branch is committed to ensuring that it provides a consistent, cohesive and coordinated approach to its communications with political entities.
- Within the plan, we have identified a need to develop accessible, plain language communications tools that support political entities in complying with their obligations.
- A new (interim) web page was launched on July 10. It uses plain language and infographics.
- The Political Entities web page redesign was launched: [Political Entities – Elections Canada](#).
- The Redistribution web page was launched: [Redistribution of Electoral Districts – Elections Canada](#).
- The new web pages provide clearer, plain language and accessible information for the general public and political entities.
- As we outlined in the Political Financing strategic communications plan, we updated all the pages on tools for entities in March 2023.

Civic Education Program

Objective

Elections Canada will make sure that the resources and services of the civic education program that are provided to educators follow universal and inclusive design principles.

Indicators

- Civic education resources meet accessibility standards.
- Students and educators are satisfied with the accessibility of products and services.

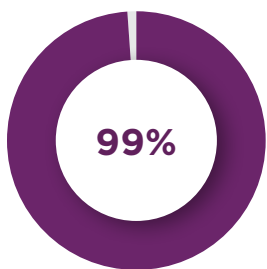
Progress toward 2024 commitments

In September 2022, the Civic Education team told AGDI members about the program offerings EC has for teachers and students. In April 2023, the team asked for support from AGDI members in recruiting new Advisory Circle of Educators (ACOE) members.

As of July 2023, the ACOE's new members include:

- one member with a disability
- four members with extensive experience working with students with disabilities (including teachers who have done classroom audits for accessibility, had students in their classrooms with a variety of disabilities and have done advocacy for learners with disabilities within the school and school board)

Twice a year, we send a survey to all educators who ordered physical kits from Elections Canada. It does not include educators who only use the resources online. The team is exploring better ways to reach both online users and those who order physical kits.



In the June 2023 survey, we asked educators about their satisfaction with EC's civic education resources: **99% said they were satisfied** with EC's resources (87% were very satisfied, and 12% were somewhat satisfied).

“

We desperately need more inspiration on designing rich, meaningful learning experiences. Your session did exactly that and was so valuable to our school.

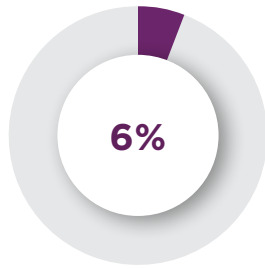
- A Yukon teacher

”

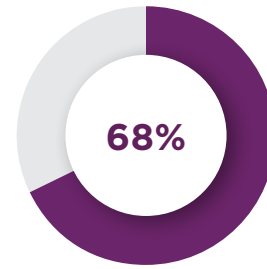
For the first time, the June 2023 survey included three new questions on accessibility:

1. Question 17: Are you a person with a disability?
2. Question 18: To what extent do our educational resources meet the needs of students with a disability?
3. Question 19: Please explain what doesn't work and what could be done differently.

The responses to these questions gave Elections Canada initial findings and other helpful questions to explore in the coming years. We do not know if more educators with disabilities are accessing our online resources (which are available in more accessible and flexible formats) or if we are not connecting with educators with disabilities because of inaccessible resources or outreach issues. The Civic Education team will conduct a full audit of outreach and products in 2024 to explore this issue further. We will also work with our Advisory Circle of Educators to gain helpful insights and guidance.



Three respondents identified as people with a disability, representing **6%** of survey participants.



68% of respondents said that EC's educational resources met the needs of students with a disability "somewhat" (42%) or "greatly" (26%). Thirty-two percent (32%) answered "Not applicable."

A few respondents said they were unsure what could be done differently. Some noted changes that could be made to support whole-classroom learning, such as catering to larger groups, or supporting specific learners, such as adapting the language to struggling readers and having more hands-on activities. Some respondents also noted specific supports, such as "having large-font options for students with sight issues" and auditory options such as online or voice-to-text capabilities.

We created a new survey for professional development workshops for teachers and classroom demonstrations for students. The survey included a question on whether our workshop met participants' accessibility needs. We began using this new survey in August 2023.

We take the following steps to ensure our resources and services are accessible. The full audit next year will help us improve our service offering.

- Our classroom resources had an accessibility audit four years ago. This is likely out of date now and could be improved upon.
- Our branding colour scheme was updated in 2022 to ensure that all contrast colours met accessibility standards. All resources have now been updated as of June 2023.
- All our resources are available in multiple formats: a paper version to order, and online versions (html and pdf). Braille versions for Student Vote Canada are available on request.
- All our videos are on YouTube and include closed captioning. Transcripts are included for all videos.
- Our website had an accessibility review in June 2022 to make sure it is WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant. Images and social media posts include alt text, and tables and graphs have accompanying accessible html formats.
- We have language learner versions of our three most popular resources. These are lower literacy options with the same content as the original versions.

Next steps

Next fiscal year, we will work with an external subject-matter expert to do a full audit of all our resources and program offerings to evaluate for accessibility. This will include our professional learning workshops for teachers, our classroom resources for both teachers and students, our website and our offerings through [Connected North](#) and [Student Vote Canada](#).

We will work with our Advisory Circle of Educators on how to explore further if our resources are meeting the accessibility needs of teachers and students. This might include using their networks to connect to new groups of teachers and schools or doing focus groups in classrooms or teacher associations to gather more information.

Later this year, we will make narrated audio files of the student activity cards for two of our classroom resources. This will create more drama and interest in the activity content rather than a student relying on the screen reader to provide the information.

In the fall of 2023, as we begin our conference and workshop season, we will include questions to the organizers about how participants can ask for accessibility support for a workshop we give. If a participant has asked for support and the conference cannot afford it, we will offer to pay for and arrange the required services. Also, we will ask that all our online workshops have captions provided for participants.

Moving forward, Civic Education will ask third-party workshop and conference providers to ask if participants have any accessibility needs. If the organization cannot cover this cost, we will cover it. Just as every online workshop we do should include captions, we can ask that our partners for workshops and conferences do the same. The Civic Education team has a Zoom account to provide more options for accessibility (some features are not available on Google or MS Teams).

In planning for in-person classroom demonstrations or workshops, we will ask if there are any accessibility needs. If there are, we will organize this for the workshop.

For post-workshop surveys, we will ask if we met participants' accessibility needs during the workshop. If not, how can we do better next time?

Stakeholder Mobilization Program

Objective

Elections Canada will make sure that the resources and services of its external stakeholder mobilization program (Inspire Democracy)—which seeks to address barriers to electoral participation among Indigenous electors, people with disabilities, youth and new Canadians—follow universal and inclusive design principles that are based on the needs of end users.

Indicators

- Inspire Democracy resources meet accessibility requirements.
- Stakeholders are satisfied with the accessibility of products and services.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

- Third-party experts did an accessible language review of three revamped toolkits: “Running in a Federal Election,” “Working at a Federal Election” and “Registering and Voting in a Federal Election.” These will be published on the Inspire Democracy website in January 2024.
- Accessibility of the Inspire Democracy toolkits will be increased with the addition of high-quality video equivalents in English, French, ASL and LSQ by March 2024.
- The Inspire Democracy network includes 44 contracted and approximately 800 non-contracted stakeholders. We have 12 contractors in the Electors with Disabilities portfolio.
- We created two new positions in June 2023: Senior Outreach Officer, Persons with Disabilities stream, and Outreach Officer, Persons with Disabilities stream.

Feedback and consultations

- Some stakeholders and all contracted stakeholders must provide quantitative feedback on toolkits as measured in the Survey of Stakeholders and Inspire Democracy Contractor Final Reports.
- Consultations on the toolkit workshops will be held in January 2024 with selected contracted stakeholders.
- Feedback from the last general election suggested that we need more robust questions about how accessible Inspire Democracy products and workshops are.
- We will also actively ask contracted stakeholders to make their events and workshops more accessible by including accessibility features at events conducted for Elections Canada.

Election Delivery Through Field Operations in Electoral Districts

Objective

One key priority for Elections Canada is to improve the accessibility of federal elections for election administrators (returning officers, assistant returning officers, field liaison officers and additional assistant returning officers) and other local election workers (people working in local Elections Canada offices and poll workers during an election). Unlike employees at Elections Canada headquarters, they are not members of the public service and are hired for the duration of an election or, in the case of poll workers, for one or a few days. We have a long-term vision of identifying and addressing barriers that will enable the recruitment, hiring and training of persons with disabilities at the local level. We are also committed to making sure that these local election workers are equipped to meet the needs of electors and employees with disabilities.

Indicators

- Elections Canada closes the representation gap for field staff with disabilities and there is an increase in self-identification rates.
- Field staff have access to accessible tools and accommodations to do their work.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

Develop tools for election administrators, local staff and poll workers to self-identify as a member of an equity-seeking group, and begin collecting data on equity-seeking groups:

- Since March 2023, filling out a self-identification form is a standard voluntary practice for field liaison officers and returning officers.
- Information on field liaison officers, returning officers and assistant returning officers will be available in December 2023.
- It is difficult to collect information on poll workers because of the lack of technology and capacity issues. Until these are resolved, we are looking at collecting information through surveys.
- A consultant has been identified to conduct an employment systems review of our policies and practices to identify systematic and attitudinal barriers for Elections Canada field staff, with the goal of identifying gaps in representation and providing a basis for addressing barriers.
- We are developing a policy on diversity and inclusion in the recruitment of election officers and office staff to positively influence recruitment practices to attain a representative workforce. The policy will be effective by December 2023. Key messages from this policy will be reflected in instructions and operational guides for the next general election.
- We are deploying additional training materials to election administrators in support of a diverse and inclusive environment:
 - A range of training content has been grouped under the topic “Serving Your Community.” This was featured in both Election Administrator Training Part 1 (March 2023) and Election Administrator Training Part 2 (August 2023).
 - Content includes the following courses offered through the Canada School of Public Service: Moving from Bias to Inclusion (INC123), Reflecting on Cultural Bias: Indigenous Perspectives (IRA101), The Uncomfortable Truth: A Brief History of the Relationship Between Indigenous Peoples and the Government of Canada (IRA102) and Workplace Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Action (INC124).
 - All content in the “Serving Your Community” section is part of the mandatory learning path for election administrators, including field liaison officers, returning officers and assistant returning officers.
 - As part of this mandatory learning, Elections Canada tracks and verifies that every election administrator has completed these materials.

- We are developing messaging to field staff to further promote the use of diverse training methods to meet the needs of individual poll workers in more flexible ways.
 - Election administrator training materials on the poll worker training program and the options available have been updated. This will promote the idea that they are flexible for meeting the needs of individual learners.
 - This messaging will be reinforced in materials for training officers.

Improving accessibility to the virtual training centre is a medium- to long-term priority. While we have planned an accessibility review, no progress will be made on it until 2024. The broad goals of this review are to better understand and quantify issues with current content and the current platform; this will inform future updates to or replacement of the platform. The system may be replaced entirely when a suitable system is identified that can integrate recruitment, training and pay functionality.

Feedback

All election administrator training courses collect anonymous feedback through a survey on the user's experience. No questions ask about accessibility directly, but a free text field is provided so the user can identify specific issues and suggest improvements. Responses in the free text fields must be reviewed manually, and subjective analysis must be done between course launches as well as after the election.

Transportation

Objective

Elections Canada does not generally provide transportation for electors when they vote. However, we do and will continue to work with organizations that represent people with disabilities in order to engage with public transit authorities. Doing this aims to reduce barriers to voting in person by providing accessible and reliable transportation on voting days.

Indicator

- There is an increase in the number of engaged transit authorities that are reducing transportation barriers to voting.

Progress toward 2024 commitments

- For the next general election, we will update the current list of transit authorities and continue our outreach.

GLOSSARY

Barrier

A barrier is anything 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.

By-election

Election held in an electoral district to fill an empty seat in the House of Commons at any time other than during a general election.

Canada Elections Act

The [law that outlines the rules for holding and participating in federal elections](#) in Canada.

Candidate

Person who wants to be elected as a member of Parliament for a specific electoral district.

Chief Electoral Officer

Person who reports to Parliament and is responsible for the administration of elections, referendums and important aspects of the electoral system. This person is appointed for a 10-year non-renewable term by the House of Commons.

General election

An election held simultaneously in every electoral district in Canada.

Election worker

Someone who works for Elections Canada during a federal election.

Electoral district

A place or territorial area that is represented by a member in the House of Commons.

Employment systems review

An in-depth analysis of employment practices, policies and processes to identify systemic and attitudinal barriers faced by designated group members.

Expense

Money that candidates spend. See the [Political Financing Handbook for Candidates and Official Agents](#) for more information.

Official agent

The official agent is responsible for administering the campaign's financial transactions and reporting those transactions to Elections Canada as required by the *Canada Elections Act*. The candidate may have only one official agent at a time.

Political entity

A person or organization whose election-related activities are regulated under the CEA. There are six political entities that are covered by the political financing regime of the CEA: parties, associations, candidates, nomination contestants, leadership contestants and registered third parties.

Political financing

The rules for raising and spending money and using resources for an election campaign.

Political party

Groups that support particular candidates in an election. They usually share similar values, priorities and a vision for Canada.

Polling station

A public building where people go to vote in a federal election. It's often a school or a community centre.

Poll worker

Poll workers work primarily at polling places, that is, where electors go to vote. During an election, poll workers are on the front line and make it possible for electors to vote in an orderly fashion.

Referendum

A vote when a group of voters are invited to vote on a proposal or question.

Returning officer

The person responsible for the delivery and control of federal elections, by-elections and referendums in their electoral district.

Voter information card

A card that Elections Canada sends during an election campaign to every elector whose name appears on the preliminary lists of electors. It tells electors when and where they can cast their ballot.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consultations with the Advisory Group for Disability Issues

October 15, 2023

Consulted Parties: [Members of the Advisory Group for Disability Issues](#)

Questions for AGDI Members During First-Year Progress Report Consultation

- 1.** What stands out for you in the progress report? It can be positive or negative.
- 2.** Have you or people in your community faced new barriers since the plan was published?
- 3.** How satisfied are you with the progress that Elections Canada is making toward the 2024 priorities? Does our progress match what you expect of Elections Canada?
- 4.** If we had to reprioritize to accommodate an election, what would be your top three priorities?
- 5.** What comments (positive or negative) would you like us to take back to each team at Elections Canada?

Appendix B: Consultation with Returning Officers and Field Liaison Officers

November 15, 2023

Working Group Participants

- Returning Officer, Avalon (10001)
- Returning Officer, Egmont (11003)
- Returning Officer, Joliette (24031)
- Returning Officer, Lac-Saint-Louis (24036)
- Returning Officer, Regina—Qu’Appelle (47008)
- Returning Officer, Bow River (48003)
- Returning Officer, Red Deer—Mountain View (48029)
- Returning Officer, Vancouver South (59040)
- Field Liaison Officer, Southern Ontario 2 (891)

Questions

1. What stands out for you in the progress report (positive or negative)?
2. Have you or people in your community faced new barriers since the Accessibility Plan was published?
3. How satisfied are you with the progress that Elections Canada is making towards the 2024 priorities? Does the progress match what you expect of Elections Canada?
4. If Elections Canada had to reprioritize to accommodate an election, what should be our top three priorities for accessibility?
5. What comments (positive or negative) would you like us to take back to the teams at Elections Canada?

Summary

On November 15, 2023, members of the Office for Accessibility and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) met with the Accessibility Plan Field Working Group (WG) for the second time. The WG had first been consulted during the development of the Accessibility Plan in 2022.

Overall, the WG members were pleased with the progress being made across the seven pillars at Elections Canada headquarters. Many of their comments concerned their own area, which falls under Pillar 6.5, “Election Delivery Through Field Operations in Electoral Districts.”

The members wanted to see Elections Canada providing more tangible ways to support workers with disabilities during elections. Many comments were directed at the need for more training to address bias in hiring; for example, the May 2024 in-person meeting of all returning officers (ROs) and field liaison officers (FLOs) would provide just such an opportunity.

The members also wanted to see more training on the tools being used to support electors with disabilities during elections and by-elections.

Many of the members represent rural and smaller communities, and many of their comments concerned the challenges in these locations, especially in relation to meeting the 15 accessibility requirements. The members suggested that EC:

- Explore procuring ramps in smaller communities.
- Streamline processes for quicker approval in areas with limited options for securing optimal leases.
- Promote voting opportunities in less accessible communities.
- Address liability concerns in relation to ramps and assisting voters in unpredictable weather. Members also stressed that more mentorship is needed for ROs and FLOs to increase their confidence in hiring workers with disabilities.

In relation to field staff and operations in the field, the members suggested that EC:

- Prioritize accommodation solutions for poll workers and staff over diagnoses.
- Provide mentorship to better support neurodiverse workers.
- Encourage local Elections Canada offices to connect with disability organizations.
- Support the need for privacy and the obligations related to disability disclosure and accommodation requests.

In addition, the members:

- Shared examples of having success letting workers with disabilities offer creative solutions to meet their needs.
- Expressed concern for those with compromised immune systems in ongoing COVID conditions and suggested that workers be prepared to mask if an elector is masked. Questions arose about continued access to masks, shields and hand sanitizer.
- Had concerns about the accessibility of recent laptops and potential issues with procuring less accessible items.
- Asked whether there were ergonomic items available for use during elections (e.g. chairs and footrests).

For the next general election, the members suggested that EC prioritize:

- More training on how to support electors with disabilities.
- More training on how to hire and accommodate workers with disabilities.
- Increasing diversity at the pre-event stage.
- Supporting ROs in what they need to ensure that most polling sites meet the 15 criteria for accessibility.
- Encouraging and supporting all ROs to hire community resource officers.