



Canada Post Accessibility Plan 2023-2025

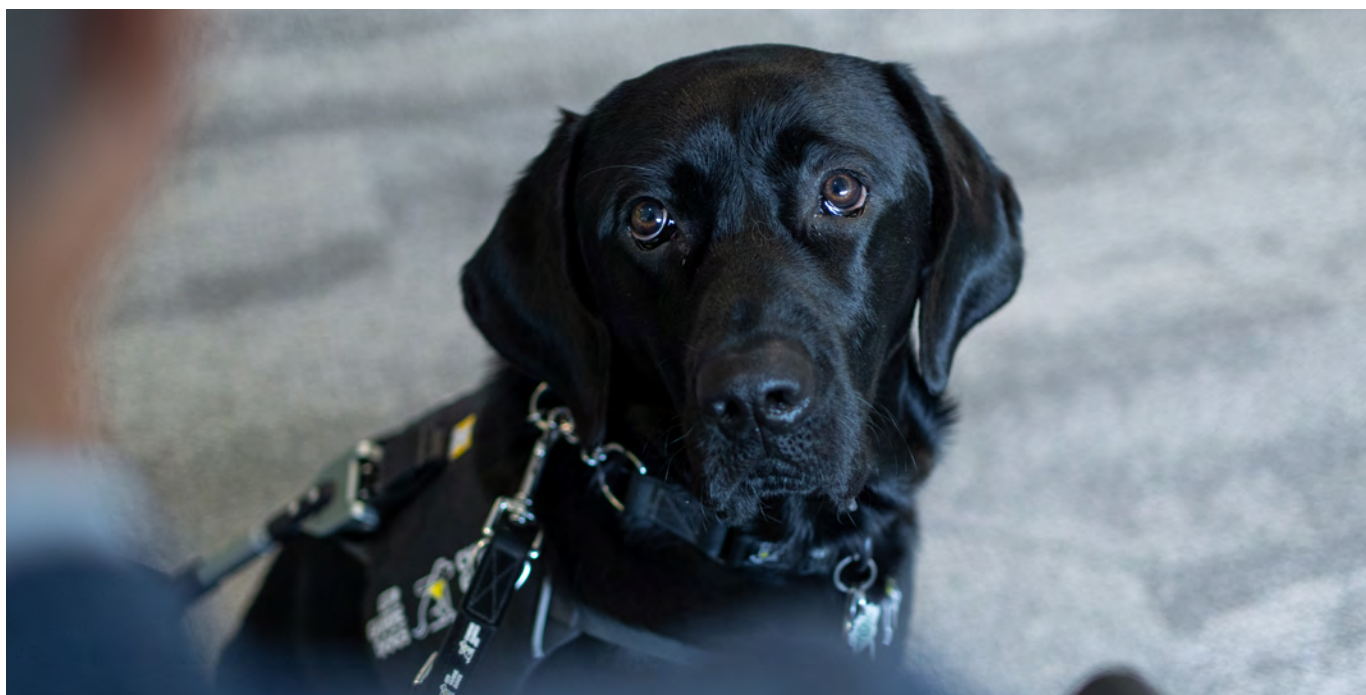


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General

Contact information

To request a copy of Canada Post's Accessibility Plan and/or [Feedback Process](#) in an alternate format, or to provide feedback on accessibility at Canada Post, please contact the Director of Accessibility:

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About Canada Post

Canada Post helps people connect and businesses reach their customers, which is essential in building a stronger Canada. Canada Post is a federal Crown corporation. It is responsible for the collection, the transmission and the delivery of letters, parcels, publications and funds. The postal system enables customers to send and receive mail within Canada and between Canada and 192 countries.

Canada Post has over 68,000 full and part-time employees; it serves 17 million addresses in urban, rural, and remote locations across Canada. It also operates the largest retail network in Canada with close to 6,000 post offices across the country. Under our purpose and transformation plan, A Stronger Canada – Delivered, we put Canadians at the heart of everything we do. Our transformation plan recognizes that Canadians want their postal service to view its responsibility to the country through a wider lens, beyond reliable and timely services. Accordingly, in addition to committing us to providing a service all Canadians can count on, our transformation plan commits us to social purpose in ways that reflect Canadians' shared values. It also commits us to doing right by our people, who deserve a workplace that is safe, fair and respectful.

Executive summary

The purpose of the *Accessible Canada Act* (the Act) is to create a barrier-free Canada by January 1, 2040, through the proactive identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility wherever Canadians interact with areas of federal jurisdiction. The Act came into force on July 11, 2019.

With a presence in many communities across the country, Canada Post has a responsibility to provide accessible programs and services that Canadians can rely on.

Recognizing and meeting that responsibility is aligned with our transformation plan, *A Stronger Canada – Delivered*. The plan expresses our desire to be a leader in making this country stronger and more inclusive.

To further our commitment to our customers and employees, and to work towards achieving the goal of the *Accessible Canada Act*, we created this Accessibility Plan.

We consulted with Canadians and specifically people with disabilities to ensure that our accessibility plan meets their needs. We listened to what Canadians told us and our Plan includes their input.

We learned that Canadians encounter barriers when they are not able to access post offices and mailboxes or when they are unable to communicate with us, use our services, access information, or apply to work for us.

The Accessibility Plan outlines our achievements so far, and the actions Canada Post will take between 2023 and 2025. We will identify, remove and prevent barriers in employment; the built environment; information and communication technologies; communication; the procurement of goods, services and facilities; and the design and delivery of programs and services.

We will review the Plan every year and update it every three years. We will publish progress reports in the years in between and will incorporate feedback we receive on our Plan and on any matter of accessibility at Canada Post.

Accessibility statement

Some 6.2 million Canadians, or roughly one in five, live with at least one disability. As the population ages, the number of people with disabilities will increase. We are committed to being more accessible and inclusive for our customers and employees – it is one way we intend to take the lead on social issues.

In 2018, Canada Post created an Accessibility team that works with other business lines by providing guidance and leading accessibility initiatives while integrating accessibility into decision-making across the company, including policy and program development.

Our goal is to be an inclusive Crown corporation and a recognized leader in accessibility. We want to ensure that everyone can access our programs and services and attract and retain top talent that reflects Canada's diverse population.

Accessibility strategy

In 2019, we began to develop an [Accessibility Strategy](#) that aligns with the focus areas of the *Accessible Canada Act*. Our goal was to adopt a proactive approach to identifying, removing and preventing barriers and to integrate accessibility improvements across our offerings to customers and employees. The strategy's four guiding pillars are:

- Creating a diverse and inclusive workforce culture
- Delighting our customers
- Building accessible barrier-free spaces
- Seeking inclusive business opportunities

The Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Committee of the Board of Directors approved the strategy in April 2020. It was launched publicly on May 31, 2021, during National AccessAbility Week (NAAW). Planning and execution are underway.

Accessibility Policy

We are developing an accessibility policy that will apply to the four focus areas of the Accessibility Strategy. This policy will help ensure accessibility is applied consistently. Our goal is to have a Board-approved accessibility policy by 2024.

Canada Post's Accessibility Advisory Panel

In 2018, Canada Post established an [Accessibility Advisory Panel](#). This external body of experts and advocates in disability and aging issues includes individuals with lived experience from across Canada. Members are selected based on their expertise and experience in policy development and community engagement and outreach, having regard for their lived experiences. The panel provides input and advice on our Accessibility Strategy and various aspects of our programs and services.

Budget and resources

In 2018, Canada Post established a 10-year Accessibility investment plan to fund a mix of capital and program projects to enhance accessibility under each pillar of the [Accessibility Strategy](#) (listed above).

Projects include capital investments to make post offices and buildings accessible. Program enhancements include digital accessibility and the development of policies, practices, and programs to ensure that the Corporation is removing barriers for employees and customers and promoting inclusive business practices. The investment plan is reviewed annually to ensure we are earmarking sufficient funds to integrate accessibility across the company.

Accessibility Plan scope

This Accessibility Plan outlines Canada Post’s policies, programs, practices, and actions we are taking to identify, remove and prevent barriers in six focus 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

Social model of disability and inclusive language

The social model of disability is a perspective that distinguishes between impairment (functional limitation) and disability. The social model says that disability is caused by barriers in society rather than by a person’s impairment. The social model focuses on the removal of barriers to enable full and equal participation by people with impairments.

To emphasize that disability is caused by barriers, the social model uses *identity-first language*, such as ‘disabled people’ to refer to a diverse group of people with impairments who share the experience of disadvantage and discrimination.

This is different from *person-first language*, such as ‘people with disabilities’, which uses the term disability to also mean impairment. Person first language is used to emphasize the person before the disability.

It is important that we recognize the difference between person-first language and identity-first language and acknowledge that preferences vary within the disability community. While we adopt a social model approach to identifying, removing and preventing barriers, we mainly use person-first language in this Accessibility Plan as it is widely accepted and used in Canada.



Consultations with people with disabilities

In the spirit of “nothing about us without us,” we conducted a series of consultations with people with disabilities and the public to help us develop this Accessibility Plan. The consultations helped us to identify existing barriers and prioritize actions to remove and prevent barriers based on participants’ feedback.

Accessibility Advisory Panel

On November 25, 2021, Canada Post consulted with the Accessibility Advisory Panel during a virtual meeting. A draft outline of Canada Post's Accessibility Plan and a draft survey was shared with panel members one month before the meeting to give them time to review the materials and provide thoughtful feedback.

Consultations took the form of a round table discussion and breakout groups to identify existing barriers at Canada Post under the six focus areas of the *Accessible Canada Act* that pertain to Canada Post. Panel members provided input on the actions identified in our outline of the Plan and provided recommendations for making our survey more accessible.

Persons with Disabilities Employee Resource Group

We held two virtual consultation sessions with Canada Post's Persons with Disabilities Employee Resource Group (PWD ERG) on November 30 and December 12, 2021. The PWD ERG provides a forum and safe space for employees to share their lived experiences and discuss opportunities for improving disability inclusion at Canada Post. During the pilot stage, membership included 12 employees from across Canada and from all bargaining groups.

We shared the Accessibility Plan outline with PWD ERG members and held a round table discussion about the barriers that employees with disabilities experience at Canada Post and how we could improve the design and delivery of programs and services.

Accessibility survey

To consult more widely with people with disabilities across Canada and the public, a 10-minute survey was distributed through:

- Canada Post's social media platforms (LinkedIn and Twitter)
- email (with a link to complete the survey online) sent to Canada Post's Accessibility Advisory Panel members to share with their organizations and networks;
- mail (with options to complete the survey by mail, telephone and online) sent to 2,500 clients enrolled in Canada Post's Delivery Accommodation Program;
- links sent to external stakeholders through outreach initiatives; and
- an online panel of people with disabilities arranged through the research and marketing firm Phase 5.

The links that were emailed included information on whom to contact to obtain alternative formats of the survey. The survey was administered in English and French. The survey was open for 5 weeks between January 25 and February 28, 2022. Following its launch, accessibility issues with the online survey were identified. In response, a version that was more responsive to screen readers was made available.

Organizations consulted

Through external partners, including our accessibility advisory panel members, we invited the following organizations to complete and share our accessibility survey:

- British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)
- C.A.R.P.
- CNIB
- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
- March of Dimes
- MS Society of Canada
- National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)
- Neil Squire Society
- People First of Canada
- Carleton University's Research, Education, Accessibility and Design (READ) Initiative
- Rick Hansen Foundation

Survey design

The survey included a list of actions that Canada Post can take for each of the six focus areas of the *Accessible Canada Act* that apply to: 1) employment; 2) the built environment; 3) information and communication technologies; 4) communication, other than information and communication technologies; 5) the procurement of goods, services, and facilities; and 6) the design and delivery of programs and services.

For each focus area, participants were asked to rate how important they felt each action was to increase accessibility. We also asked participants for suggestions on how Canada Post could improve accessibility.

Demographic of participants



The survey was completed by
1,226
Canadians aged 18 and over.

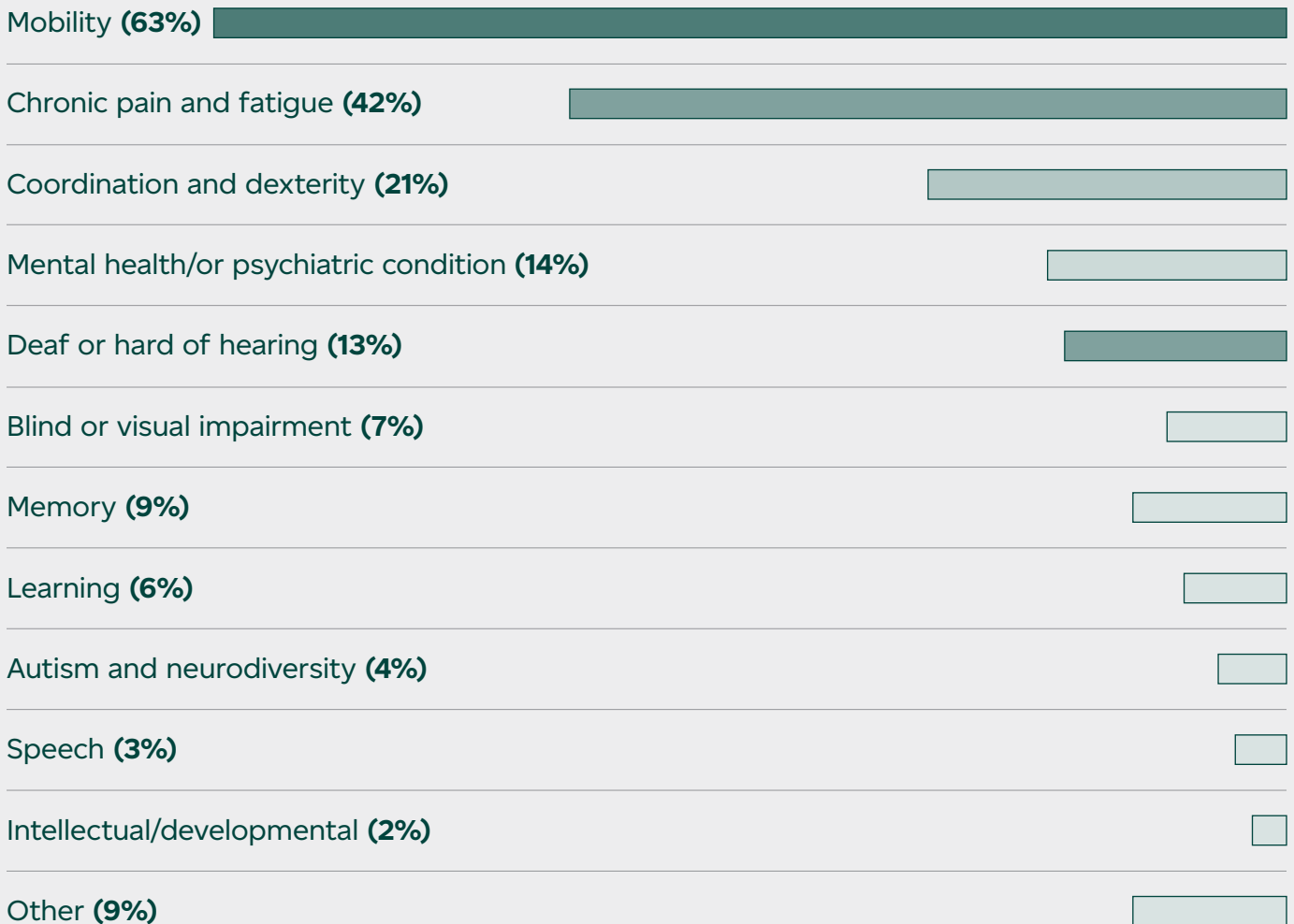


613 of whom
identified as people
with disabilities



The remaining participants self-identified as caregivers for people with disabilities, individuals who work or volunteer for a group that protects the rights of people with disabilities and interested citizens.

The nature of disability experienced by participants included:



Participants reflected Canada's diverse population and included First Nations, Métis Citizens, Indigenous-other, members of an ethno-cultural or a visible minority group, LGBTQ+, and members of an official language minority community.

Community representation included urban, suburban, and rural/small towns. Regional representation included British Columbia, Prairies, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic with most participants residing in Ontario (39%) followed by Quebec (24%).

How feedback was considered

We used feedback from the consultations and survey to develop the Accessibility Plan. It helped us identify barriers in each of the six focus areas of the *Accessible Canada Act* that apply to Canada Post, and to prioritize actions to remove and prevent them. Feedback from the consultations is included in this Plan for each focus area under the headings: 1. Barriers and 2. Recommended priorities.

We also identified barriers raised by Canada Post employees working in business functions related to the six applicable focus areas in the Act.



Employment

Canada Post is committed to fostering an equitable, respectful, and caring workplace where everyone is welcome and has equal opportunity, where diversity is valued and celebrated, and where we work together to remove barriers and promote accessibility.

We are dedicated to incorporating inclusive practices that will enable our employees to fully participate in the workforce. We are committed to hiring people with disabilities to attract, grow and retain diverse talent that is representative of Canadian labour market availability.

Barriers in employment

- Workplace accommodation is reactive. The onus is on the employee to advocate for themselves.
- The process to request workplace accommodation is unclear and inconsistent across the Corporation.
- Stigma surrounding disability may inhibit employees from self-identifying and from receiving adequate support and accommodation.
- Barriers in the recruitment and hiring process include lack of clarity among job applicants, recruiters and hiring managers on the types of accommodations that are available for people with disabilities who are applying, interviewing, and testing for jobs at Canada Post.
- Job applicants are not always provided with the full picture of what a job entails, which may make it difficult for some candidates to know what accommodation they would need.
- There is a general lack of awareness among employees and hiring managers about disability and how to create a more accessible recruitment, hiring and retention process.
- Managers and senior leaders across various functions need to recognize and communicate the importance of disability inclusion and accessibility.

Recommended priorities

During consultations, the following actions were prioritized:

- Provide disability awareness training for all employees to reduce stigma and negative stereotypes about people with disabilities.
- Ensure that people with disabilities have the accommodation they need to apply for jobs at Canada Post.
- Ensure that people with disabilities have the accommodation they need to do their jobs at Canada Post.

Policies and practices related to employment

- The Equality in Employment Policy was established in 2018. It applies to all employees at all sites where work is undertaken for Canada Post. This includes full-time, part-time, casual and term employees. The Policy governs all aspects of employment, including hiring, job assignment, promotion, compensation, discipline, termination and access to benefits and training.

The purpose of this Policy is to make the work environment as inclusive as possible and free from discrimination in employment opportunities and practices. It also ensures that Canada Post has effective mechanisms for responding to the individual accommodation needs of existing and potential employees.

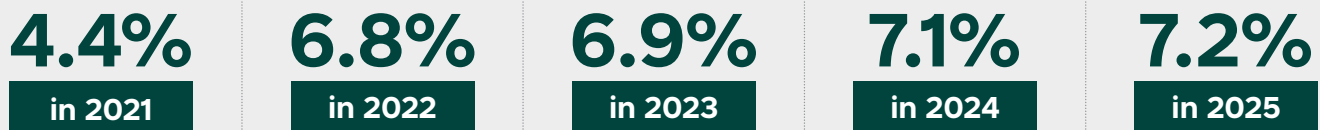
- The Duty to Accommodate Policy and the Practice were approved in 2018. They outline Canada Post’s commitment to providing reasonable accommodation to the point of undue hardship for employees and prospective employees who have a need based on any prohibited ground in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, to remove specific barriers to full participation in the workplace.
- Canada Post aims to respond in a timely, effective, confidential, and respectful manner to requests for individual workplace accommodation. We aim to ensure that all employees can effectively and efficiently use their skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute to the organization’s performance, production, and service delivery. This includes the opportunity to participate, without discrimination, in work-related and other activities conducted within a work context.
- The Accommodating Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing Employees Practice was approved in 2010. We accommodate the needs of employees who are D/deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing who experience barriers to full participation and equal opportunity in the workplace. The Practice provides employees and team leaders with information related to preferred method of communication, use of interpreters, assistive devices, and modifications to the workplace.



Actions achieved or in progress

- In 2020, Canada Post's [Accessibility Strategy](#) was approved by the Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) Committee of the Board of Directors. The strategy's goal is to adopt a proactive approach to integrating accessibility improvements across the Corporation's offerings to both customers and employees. It has four overarching pillars:
 1. Creating a diverse and inclusive workforce culture
 2. Delighting our customers
 3. Building accessible barrier-free spaces
 4. Seeking inclusive business opportunities
- Implementation of the strategy is under way. A five-year action plan, developed in 2021, includes initiatives for each of the four pillars. These initiatives are included in this Accessibility Plan under the applicable focus area.
- In addition to the Accessibility Strategy, a five-year Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan were also developed in 2021. It includes 40 action items that Canada Post will take and focuses on addressing oppression and discrimination in equity seeking groups, including barriers to participation for people with disabilities.
- To increase awareness about disability and accessibility among employees, an internal Accessibility webpage was launched in 2021. It's a centralized location for accessibility tools and resources, with information on inclusive language, universal principles of design, frequently asked questions, creating an inclusive work environment, and the *Accessible Canada Act*.
- In 2020, the *Careers* webpages on canadapost.ca were reviewed to identify areas for improvement in communicating our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. We later identified the need to undertake a more comprehensive audit of the end-to-end recruitment and retention process.
- An internal review of existing employee training was conducted to identify gaps in education and development related to equity, diversity and inclusion. After this review, the Accessibility team identified the need to develop awareness training on disability and accessibility for all employees as well as targeted training for hiring managers and team leaders.
- As part of our overall plan to raise awareness around disability and provide an inclusive workforce, initial training for recruiters and hiring managers in the regions was finalized. It includes modules on understanding disability and breaking down stereotypes and myths; disability etiquette that reinforces respect and dignity; and guidance on inclusive language and how to incorporate accessible practices in the recruitment process.

- In collaboration with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, equity measures were developed to implement preferential hiring to prioritize the recruitment of underrepresented candidates, including persons with disabilities, in regions well below the Canadian Labour Market Availability rate. Multi-year employment equity targets were established in 2020 to increase representation of persons with disabilities. The targets are as follows:



- In 2021, three new regional advisor positions were created to work with disability-led organizations to recruit people with disabilities and help us achieve our employment equity targets.
- A national Employee Resource Group for persons with disabilities was piloted and launched in 2021. It brought together 12 employees with disabilities, allies, and union representatives from across Canada to identify barriers in employment at Canada Post and to develop initiatives to remove barriers and promote greater awareness about accessibility. The pilot extended into 2022 with the goal of opening membership to more Canada Post employees in 2022-2023.
- In 2020, the Joint National Equity and Diversity Committee was formed. It has representation from the national presidents of all bargaining agents. The Committee meets on a monthly basis with the goal of co-creating meaningful change in the workplace. It focuses on education, processes, policies and programs and provides support to advance equity and diversity at Canada Post.
- In recognizing the barriers that exist for people with disabilities in obtaining employment, Canada Post partnered with the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) in 2020 to create paid summer work opportunities for students with disabilities. A job posting was created in 2021 to attract students with disabilities to increase meaningful employment and contribute to diversity at Canada Post. This resulted in hiring five students with disabilities in 2021 and seven students with disabilities in 2022.
- Unconscious bias training was provided to more than 500 senior leaders and Human Resources professionals in 2020 with plans to reach all team leaders. The training included content on awareness and support tools; creating a safe space toolkit to promote more inclusivity; and the promotion of a dedicated confidential diversity contact email to raise issues about equity, diversity and inclusion.



- A joint equity census strategy was developed with all bargaining agents to encourage employees to self-identify when they are a member of one of the employment equity designated groups, including persons with disabilities. An annual campaign was launched in April 2021 that included a mailout to employees, a link to a video featuring Canada Post employees promoting the equity census, a joint letter with bargaining agents, frequently asked questions, and talk tracks for team leaders of employees who do not have corporate email.
- A diversity icon was created in 2020 to increase visibility of diverse candidates on succession ladders to further develop and foster career opportunities for employees identified among the four equity groups.
- Canada Post recognizes the importance of addressing barriers from an intersectional lens. In 2022, we released an Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Charter that affirms our commitment to foster a safe, inclusive workplace free from racism or discrimination. This Charter demonstrates our zero tolerance for all forms of racism and discrimination. It applies to anti-Asian, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, antisemitic, homophobic, Islamophobic, transphobic, anti-disability, sexism, or any prohibited grounds in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.
- To commemorate National AccessAbility Week in 2022, we created a disability-themed stamp slideshow to chronicle progress towards a barrier-free Canada and reinforce disability inclusion as a shared value among Canadians.
- The slideshow was shared with our employees and the public via social media. The stamps highlighted achievement, innovation, and leadership from the first Paralympic games in 1976 through guide dogs, inventions, athletes, a musician, and supporting mental health.

Plans to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in employment

- To address the lack of awareness about disability and accessibility, Canada Post will develop training for all employees including focused training for hiring managers. People with disabilities will be involved in developing this training. Sessions will include content on ableism, the prevalence of disability, the importance of accessibility, how to interact with people with disabilities, how to promote accessibility in the workplace and how to ensure that people with disabilities who may require accommodation receive the tools and support needed to do their jobs. Planning began in 2022 and deployment is scheduled for early 2024.
- News and events related to accessibility will be updated on the internal accessibility webpage for employees. Tools and resources, including guidelines and best practices on how to promote accessibility across business functions will also be added.
- An annual campaign aligned with National AccessAbility Week will be developed to promote awareness about disability inclusion and the importance of accessibility for employees. Engagement will include in-person and virtual events for employees, stories featuring Canada Post employees with disabilities, accessibility updates posted on the internal accessibility webpage, guest speakers, and other communications and activities.
- In 2022, expert consultants were engaged to conduct two comprehensive audits of 1) our end-to-end recruitment and retention process and 2) our disability accommodation process. These audits include a review of policies and practices including the Equality in Employment Policy, the Duty to Accommodate Policy and Practice as well as the Accommodating Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing Employees Practice. The audits will provide us with comparisons to other employers and recommend improvements, and help us to adopt best practices.
- We will review the auditors' recommendations and will begin implementing improvements in phases, starting in 2023. Our goals are to make sure the end-to-end recruitment and retention process is inclusive and ensure the disability accommodation process meets the needs of employees, including their need for a process that is accessible and easy to navigate.
- The Accessibility; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Human Resources and Disability Management teams will continue to collaborate to support the Accessibility Strategy and Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Strategy with an inclusive recruitment to retention plan and targeted initiatives to increase representation of people with disabilities. Our goal is to work together to identify, remove and prevent barriers to employment at Canada Post through cross-functional meetings and reviews of existing processes.



Built environment

As Canada's largest Crown corporation, Canada Post has an extensive physical footprint with close to 6,000 post offices, 473 letter carrier depots and 21 processing plants across the country. Our goal is to make our post offices, administrative offices, depots and processing facilities accessible to all users: customers, employees, clients, contractors and stakeholders.



Barriers in the built environment

Regrettably, there are barriers in our post offices, some of which are corporately owned, while others are managed by authorized dealers:

- Accessibility is inconsistent in post offices and facilities across the country.
- Post offices that are in the back of stores can be difficult to access.

Recommended priorities

During consultations the following actions were prioritized:

- Develop accessibility standards to ensure that post offices and other Canada Post buildings across the country are accessible.
- Include accessibility features in post offices that would be useful for people with a wide range of disabilities.
- Review accessibility in every post office to determine where improvements are needed.

Actions achieved or in progress

- Formed in 2019, the Barrier-Free Working Group brings together cross-company expertise in accessibility, real estate, retail and facilities management. It meets on a monthly basis to ensure a consistent and efficient approach to removing barriers in post offices and facilities.
- Canada Post engaged an expert accessibility consulting firm, Level Playing Field and the Rick Hansen Foundation, to develop the Canada Post National Accessibility Design Standards to be applied across our network of post offices and facilities. These standards integrate accessibility best practices that go beyond the minimum accessibility requirements in building codes. The Canada Post National Accessibility Design Standards were finalized in early 2022.
- In 2022, we implemented the Canada Post National Accessibility Design Standards across the Corporation. All new builds, major renovations and accessibility construction projects must meet these standards. Where we see an opportunity, we will go beyond and incorporate best practices in universal design.
- The Accessibility team consults on projects that relate to building infrastructure and capacity improvement programs as well as corporate business cases proposing new builds, expansions and/or leased space. This ensures that accessibility is included in the planning before projects are approved.
- Since 2020, over 350 audits were conducted by designated Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) Professionals to assess the level of accessibility of corporate facilities. These audits resulted in 10 accessibility construction upgrades in 2021 with 25 construction upgrades planned in 2022.
- For post offices in dealer locations, dealers must ensure that the post office is always accessible in accordance with our requirements. Our dealership agreements allow us to require various accessibility features including directional signage and an unobstructed path to the post office.
- Professional development was provided to three cohorts of Canada Post employees to enroll in the RHFAC Training, as part of the requirements to become a designated RHFAC Professional. The course emphasizes the importance of universal design and meaningful access and helps students understand how people with disabilities interact with and experience the built environment.



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Plans to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in the built environment

- We aim to complete over 200 accessibility audits of corporate post offices each year and between 40 and 100 accessibility construction projects.
- We will develop a central database of information from the accessibility audits. It will help us monitor progress in creating a more accessible network, and to prioritize facilities for accessibility upgrades. We expect the database to be completed in 2023.
- We will seek opportunities to promote accessibility and demonstrate leadership by continuing to include accessibility requirements in new contracts with retail partners. This is an ongoing initiative based on contract expiration and renewal dates.
- To model accessibility best practices, we aim to achieve an Accessibility Certified Gold rating by the Rick Hansen Foundation for several flagship sites, including our Head Office in Ottawa; the Membertou community hub in Nova Scotia – a new kind of post office intended to provide Indigenous, rural or northern communities access to important products and services – opened in the Mi'kmaw community in the Membertou First Nation in May 2022; and the Albert Jackson Processing Centre being built in Toronto.





Information and communication technology (ICT)

Canada Post has more than 150 webpages providing access to over 25 applications and tools on its website and two mobile apps. With this digital presence, we recognize the importance of removing barriers and creating an inclusive online experience. As our digital offerings evolve and as we introduce new products, our goal is to create digital spaces with accessibility and usability in mind. We want to enable all Canadians to access our services.

Barriers in ICT

- While there is awareness among Canada Post's Digital teams on the importance of accessibility, there is a general lack of skills to ensure that digital products and services are fully accessible.
- Testing of our digital products in the development stage by people with disabilities to identify, remove and prevent barriers is currently not possible because there is no way to support public access at that stage.
- Digital products are often designed and built on different platforms even for the same device. While products may look and feel the same, the level of accessibility varies.
- We do not have established processes or guidelines to ensure that third-party digital products and services are accessible. There is no common way to track whether a third-party product with known barriers has improved during the service contract.

Recommended priorities

During consultations the following actions were prioritized:

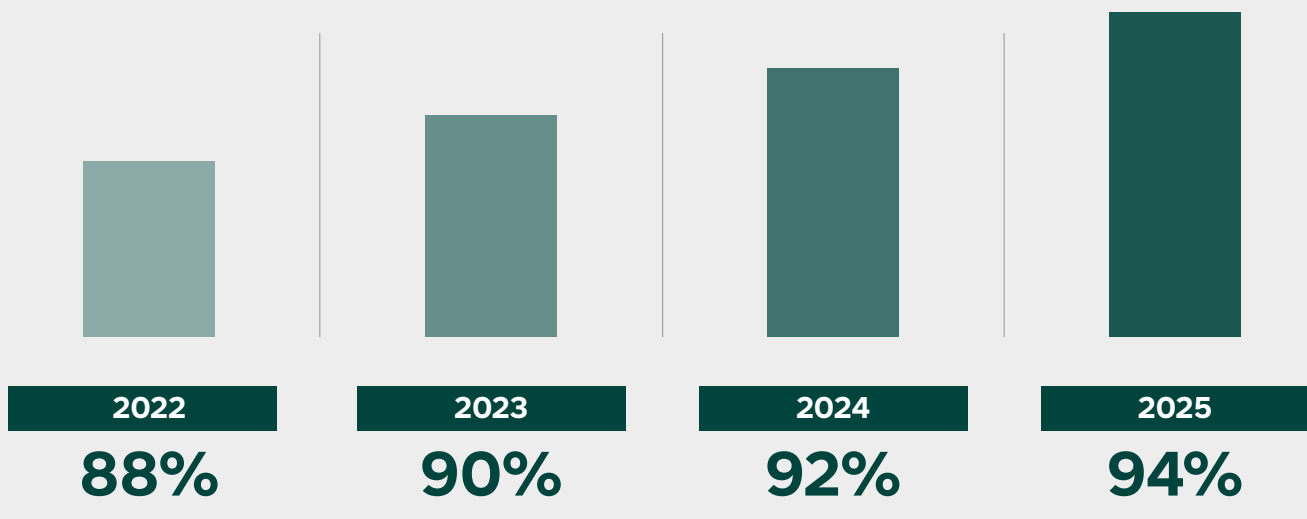
- Test website pages, apps, digital products and services with a wide variety of people with disabilities to make sure they are usable and accessible before they are launched.
- Conduct tests with new software and digital technology before buying it to make sure it is accessible.
- Conduct regular testing of website pages, apps, digital products and services to make sure accessibility is updated as needed.

Actions achieved or in progress

- In 2020, we established a digital accessibility team, trained 100 digital employees and contractors, and implemented accessibility testing. In 2021, 37 digital employees and contractors completed training on incorporating accessibility in their work. In 2022, over 60 staff members across design, product and development teams received this training.
- In 2022, we completed over 50 research studies with people with disabilities and captured digital accessibility issues in a centralized database.
- We regularly review our digital solutions' compliance with recognized standards such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA. We conduct regular testing with employees and customers using a variety of assistive technologies. This approach goes beyond WCAG 2.1 standards and helps us to identify and remove barriers in our web and mobile applications.

- We established a measurement framework and targets based on real-world use of our products by people with disabilities. We test all digital products and services to measure task success – the degree to which a person with a disability can complete a defined goal, such as track a package online. By measuring the usability of our products for customers with a variety of assistive technologies and disabilities, we better understand how much a specific product has improved over time.

We achieved a measure of 85.9% task success across all active digital products in 2021, exceeding our 2020 result of 77.3%. Our target is to achieve a 2% year-over-year increase for task success on all active public-facing digital products.



- We ensure that all new Portable Document Format (PDF) files posted to our website are fully accessible. We are developing guidelines to prioritize remediation of older inaccessible PDFs.
- Our Digital Accessibility team has developed guidelines for accessible email communications. Marketing communications also use these guidelines to create an inclusive experience. Emails generated as a part of our online products and services are regularly reviewed to identify opportunities for improvements and to remove barriers.

Plans to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in ICT

- We are developing a secure digital environment where members of the public and other external service providers can test products that are under development before they are released. This will help us identify and prevent barriers. We plan to launch this testing environment in 2023.
- The Digital Accessibility team will develop guidelines to ensure that technology is proven to be accessible before we purchase it. By 2024, our goal is to require all new digital products and software to undergo an accessibility review before we purchase and use them.
- We will design solutions to improve map-based user interfaces to be more accessible. This may include improving the design of digital tools such as “Find a Post Office” so that customers who use assistive devices can more easily navigate map-based information.
- We will continue to evaluate and improve our digital accessibility training programs to increase awareness and skills on our Digital team. This initiative will help us to integrate accessibility across all digital teams and increase the usability of our digital products and services.





Communication

Canada Post interacts with customers, employees, stakeholders, contractors and clients in many different ways, including in-person, print, online and by phone. We want to communicate in ways that are accessible and inclusive.



Barriers in communication

- Communication in post offices can be difficult for people who are D/deaf and hard of hearing especially with plastic dividers and face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The primary method of communicating with customer service is the phone, which can be difficult for people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.
- Sign language is not provided for public videos posted on Canada Post's website or events open to the public, such as the annual public meeting.

Recommended priorities

During consultations the following actions were prioritized:

- Provide different ways for customers to contact customer service such as by mail, phone, text, online chat, web form and email.
- Develop guidelines on accessible communication that will benefit employees and customers.
- Give customers the option to write their request for service to employees in post offices.
- Train employees to be able to assist and accommodate people with disabilities.

Policies and practices related to communication

- The Accommodating Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing Employees Practice was approved in 2010. We accommodate the needs of employees who are D/deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing who experience barriers to full participation and equal opportunity in the workplace. The Practice provides employees and team leaders with information related to preferred method of communication, use of interpreters, assistive devices and modifications to the workplace. This Practice will be reviewed as part of the two audits on the end-to-end recruitment and retention process and disability accommodation process to determine whether it should be updated.

Actions achieved or in progress

- Canada Post provides closed captioning for training videos, public facing videos and videos shared with employees. Automated closed captions are also enabled for meetings held on Microsoft Teams and Zoom.
- Communication Access Realtime Translation Service (CART) services are provided for meetings or events to which the public is invited, such as Canada Post's Annual Public Meeting.
- CART services are also provided for invitation-only meetings and events when a request is made by an attendee/guest or if there is a need based on the audience.
- Where required in the workplace, we provide sign language interpreters. This includes interviews, some training, formal team meetings, grievances and arbitration.



- For written documents and publications, we use sans serif fonts, and adequate colour and contrast for corporate documents to make sure they are more accessible.
- We created guidelines for accessible communication and marketing materials. They include content on best practices in accessible formats, social media, in-person communication, email, videos and print, as well as positive portrayals of disability and inclusive language.
- Guidelines on how to create accessible Word and PDF documents are available on the internal Accessibility page for employees to use in their day-to-day work.

Plans to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in communication

- Starting in 2023, we will provide sign language interpretation for corporate videos shared with the public, important announcements, and events that are open to the public such as the Annual Public Meeting. For events that are not open to the public, sign language interpretation services will be provided when requested by invited attendees.
- Training to frontline employees in retail and customer service will be developed to enhance interactions with customers with disabilities. People with disabilities will be involved in developing this training. Content will include a definition of ableism, facts and figures on the prevalence of disability, an overview of different types of disabilities, and how to provide accessible customer service. Our goal is to launch pilot training in 2024 and expand the training across the retail network in 2024-2025.
- To complement formal training, we will develop accessible service guidelines for operations, retail clerks and customer service agents.
- Currently, Canada Post provides customer service and support by phone, Teletypewriter (TTY), mail, online chat through both virtual assistants and live agents, interactive voice recognition self-serve and through social media. In 2023-2024, we will review our existing contact options to determine if and where we can increase or improve accessibility.



Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

Canada Post purchases approximately \$2 billion worth of goods and services a year. The Sourcing Management team works with businesses across Canada and recognizes the importance of a procurement process that enables potential suppliers to participate in our tendering process.

Barriers in the procurement of goods, services, and facilities

- Canada Post is not aware of any barriers in its procurement process and will need to conduct a review to identify if any barriers exist.
- Canada Post does not currently provide resources on how suppliers can enhance accessibility and inclusion within their own businesses.
- There are no formal guidelines for Canada Post employees outlining how to integrate accessibility in the procurement process and how to ensure goods and services are accessible.

Recommended priorities

During consultations the following actions were prioritized:

- Make sure that goods and services that are bought are accessible and have been tested by people with disabilities.
- Identify where barriers exist in Canada Post's process of obtaining goods, services and facilities.
- Include the requirement to be accessible in contracts for businesses and suppliers that work with Canada Post.

Policies and practices related to the procurement of goods, services, and facilities

- Our Procurement Policy outlines a requirement to obtain goods and services in a way that ensures best overall value for Canada Post. We seek suppliers that satisfy our objective of obtaining quality goods and services in a timely and cost-effective manner, meet the specifications, and consider environmental and social responsibility.

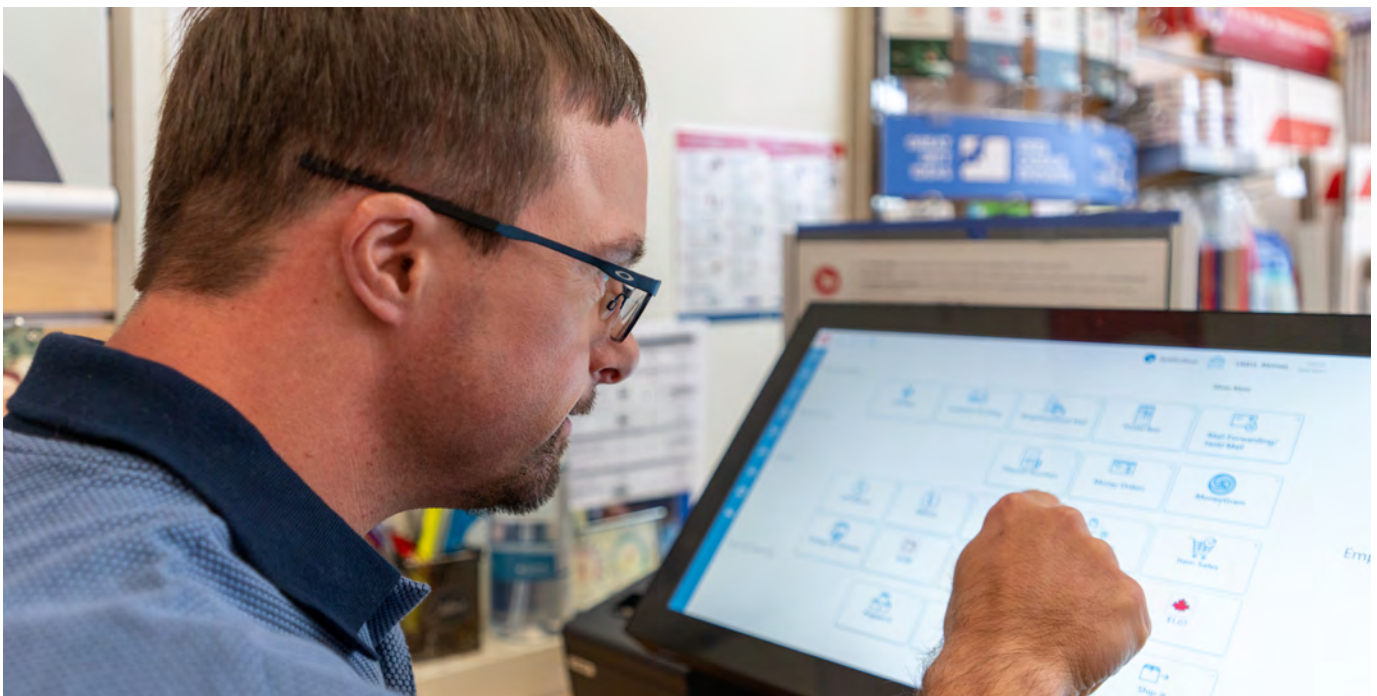
Actions achieved or in progress

- We replaced our paper-based procurement process in 2021 with the Ariba platform and marketplace for purchasing goods and services. This platform improves accessibility for Canada Post employees with disabilities who are involved in procurement and for people with disabilities who work with Canada Post suppliers, as well as prospective suppliers owned and operated by people with disabilities. As a condition of adopting Ariba, Canada Post required that the software remain compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards throughout the platform's life.

- In 2021, Canada Post joined the Inclusive Workplace and Supply Council of Canada (IWSCC) as a Procurement Partner. This partnership provides greater access to information about businesses owned by people with disabilities and access to a range of IWSCC research and information, including the report “Supplier diversity in Canada: Research and analysis of the next step in diversity and inclusion for forward-looking organizations” published by IWSCC and the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion.
- To increase diversity in our supply chain, we surveyed our suppliers in 2021 to benchmark their performance on Indigenous and environmental, social, and governance issues. We asked about diverse ownership among Indigenous Peoples and other equity-seeking groups, including people with disabilities; small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) status; and use of SME subcontractors. The survey results will be used to develop a procurement strategy to increase supplier diversity, including people with disabilities.
- We revised our Supplier Code of Conduct in 2021 to include requirements that all supplier facilities or vehicles used by Canada Post employees must be accessible as outlined in our Duty to Accommodate Policy and Practice. Suppliers are now required to confirm their compliance with the Supplier Code every year.
- In 2021, we included criteria about diversity and inclusion in some Requests for Proposals. For example, we asked bidders whether they track representation of employment equity groups and have plans to improve representation based on the percentage of Canadian Labour Market Availability. This helps us promote diversity among our suppliers.
- In 2022, we began reviewing international standards and best practices for accessible packaging. Our goal is to develop accessible packaging guidelines and best practices to share with our supply chain.
- We are developing a supplier portal aimed at small business and businesses owned and operated by people with disabilities as well as other equity-seeking groups. The portal will assist diverse suppliers in understanding Canada Post’s procurement needs and processes and enable these suppliers to participate fully and equally in competing for contracts.
- In 2022, we began two studies to (1) quantify the number of Canada Post suppliers that represent diversity in the supply chain and (2) identify and quantify suppliers owned and operated by people with disabilities. These studies will give us a baseline to assess our current level of diverse representation and inform our plans to increase representation among equity-seeking groups, including people with disabilities.

Plans to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in the procurement of goods, services, and facilities

- We will review our Procurement Policy and process to determine where barriers exist and to develop corporate guidelines on accessible procurement practices. These guidelines will outline the requirement for goods and services to be accessible by design and/or customizable in ways that enhance accessibility (e.g., software, technology, testing tools, training, ergonomic furniture, etc.) The guidelines will also outline what we expect of suppliers with regards to accessibility, social responsibility and diversity in their business practices.
- We will connect with businesses owned and operated by people with disabilities to understand the barriers that may exist when they compete for contracts with Canada Post. Their feedback will help us determine the actions we can take to provide inclusive business opportunities.
- We will develop guidelines and resources to promote accessible practices with suppliers. We will also give new suppliers onboarding information that includes an overview of our accessibility practices. The guidelines and resources will include a thoughtful introduction to accessibility and suggestions for integrating it across business functions.
- To promote accessibility and inclusion in our supply chain, we will look at ways we can recognize and applaud companies that have adopted an accessibility policy, practice, or strategy.
- We will examine our current lease requirements and look for opportunities to include accessibility in contracts for leasing new facilities. This is an ongoing initiative based on when current leases expire.





Design and delivery of programs and services

As a Crown corporation with a presence in communities across Canada, we understand the importance of providing accessible programs and services. In addition to collecting and delivering letters, parcels, and publications, we offer a wide range of personal services. They include money and wire transfers, prepaid debit cards, gift cards and foreign currency, access to government services and collectible stamps and coins. Services for business include solutions for shipping, marketing, ecommerce and small businesses.

We recognize that Canadians are interacting with our programs and services in different ways, and we are committed to making these interactions inclusive.

Barriers in the design and delivery of programs and services

- Retrieving mail from assigned mailboxes can be difficult for people with disabilities and older Canadians especially during winter.
- There is a lack of public awareness about programs and services that promote accessibility including the Delivery Accommodation Program.
- Some community mailboxes are far for some customers to travel or difficult to access.
- Some products and services are only available online, which excludes customers who do not use the Internet.

Recommended priorities

During consultations the following actions were prioritized:

- Raise awareness about the Delivery Accommodation Program so more Canadians know that accommodation is available to help them access their mail and parcels.
- Develop an accessibility policy to ensure that accessibility is considered in the design and delivery of all Canada Post programs and services.
- Develop customer service training for post office employees to raise awareness about disability and accessibility.

Policies and practices related to the design and delivery of programs and services

Customer Service Policy

- Canada Post established a Customer Service Policy to set guiding principles for all employees and contractors engaging with Canadian consumers and businesses. These principles include supporting our customers through all interactions from sales, delivery, after-sale support and care as well as through service and product design.

A strong commitment to customer service is critical to our success. This policy demonstrates our commitment to a uniform standard of service excellence and reinforces the belief that all employees and contractors share and contribute to providing positive customer experiences.

Under this policy, all employees and contractors will:

- understand that retaining customers is key to business growth and sustainability;
- recognize, adapt, and improve products and services to the needs of customers;

- comply with corporate policies and contractual and statutory obligations, such as Accessibility, Privacy, Official Languages, Code of Conduct, and Health and Safety;
- and understand and apply corporate guidelines, including the decision-making authority, when resolving customer issues.

Service animal protocol

- To consistently welcome service animals in post offices across the country, we developed corporate protocols for how post office employees should respond when a customer enters with a service animal. It also addresses how to respond to health and safety issues that may arise.

Without a nationally recognized standard for validating the status of service animals in Canada, we have adopted the minimum provincial requirements. We recognize a service animal as one that “works or performs a task for a person with a disability that relates to the person’s disability.”

Canada Post does not require proof on the status of service animals. This ensures that customers with service animals are not denied entry to post offices.



Actions achieved or in progress

- [*Literature for the Blind*](#) is a free service we offer that allows Canadians to mail specific items that will be used by people who are blind or living with vision loss. We accept items of material for Canada Post Registered Mail™ or Xpresspost™ (in Canada) at no charge, subject to certain conditions and restrictions specified in the *Canada Post Corporation Act* and regulations.
- The Delivery Accommodation Program was established to support residential customers with functional limitations, as well as older Canadians, to access their mail and parcels. Delivery accommodation includes mailbox key turners, sliding mail trays, adjustments to the mailbox compartments, mailbox braille markings, weekly home delivery and community mailbox reassignment. This program is offered year-round, temporarily, or seasonally. Since its launch in 2014, over 29,000 Canadians have benefitted from it.
- A social media campaign in 2021 increased awareness about the Delivery Accommodation Program. We consulted with our external accessibility advisory panel before the launch and invited members to share information about the program with their organizations and networks. We also shared a video on our LinkedIn and Facebook pages.
- To improve our customer experience, we audited the Delivery Accommodation Program in 2020. A satisfaction survey was also sent to 767 clients of the Program who opted to receive the survey. We used results of the audit and the customer satisfaction survey to establish recommendations for improving accessibility of the Program, including the development of an online application form.
- A review of the supporting documentation required to access weekly home delivery or community mailbox reassignment was carried out. In addition to accepting supporting documentation from medical doctors, we now accept supporting documentation from a range of qualified professionals from physical therapists to personal support workers, as well as proxies such as provincial accessibility parking passes and proof of enrollment in municipal para transit services.
- To ensure our indoor and outdoor non-automated parcel lockers are accessible, we include braille on keys and on compartments, and use images for instructions on the keys.
- In line with our goal to provide accessible services, the Digital Accessibility team tracks information from design reviews, user testing, and other activities that identify accessibility and usability issues in our online apps. Doing so helps the product team to remove barriers and improve access to online programs and services.
- The Accessibility team provides advice and guidance on implementing accessibility for new



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products and prototypes. Between 2020 and 2022, the team reviewed new point-of-sale systems, the first and second prototypes of mail and parcel induction for post offices, hand sanitizer dispensers and automated parcel lockers. Following each review, the Accessibility team recommends options that incorporate accessible design.

Plans to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in the design and delivery of programs and services

We will continue to increase awareness about the Delivery Accommodation Program through social media, paid advertising and by sharing information to members of Canada Post's accessibility advisory panel. Our long-term goal is to provide regular and more frequent information about the Program with relevant updates that Canada Post provides on social media. Examples include public notices about winter weather that affects delivery.

- We will develop training to employees in retail and customer service to improve interactions with customers with disabilities. People with disabilities will be involved in developing this training. Content will explain the prevalence of disability, different types of disabilities, and how to provide accessible customer service in person, online and over the phone. Our goal is to launch pilot training in 2024 and expand training across the retail network in 2024-2025.
- To complement that formal training, we will develop accessible service guidelines for operations, retail and customer service employees. Our goal is to finalize the guidelines in 2023 and circulate in 2024.
- Currently, Canada Post provides customer service and support by phone, teletypewriter (TTY), mail, online chat through both virtual assistants and live agents, interactive voice recognition self-serve and through social media. In 2024, we will review our existing contact options to determine if and where we can increase or improve accessibility.





Transportation

Canada Post does not provide public transportation and has not identified barriers under this focus area of the *Accessible Canada Act*.



Sponsorships and community engagement

Canada Post recognizes the importance of advocating for accessibility, sharing knowledge within the greater community and building strong partnerships. By working with organizations representing the disability community and other supporting stakeholders, we increased our engagement and community involvement through sponsorships that promote disability inclusion.

Canada Post Award for Students with Disabilities

In 2020, the Canada Post Award for Students with Disabilities was established to support outstanding scholarship in higher education. Valued at \$10,000, the annual Award recognizes and celebrates the achievements of those who are leading by example and making a difference through knowledge sharing, community involvement and innovation. It is open to students with a disability enrolled in a degree granting program in any discipline at the undergraduate or graduate level. The Award is administered through the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) National Students Awards Program.



**National Educational Association
of Disabled Students**
Association nationale des étudiant(e)s
handicapé(e)s au niveau postsecondaire

Summer work opportunities for students with disabilities

The Canada Post Summer Student Work Opportunity was established in 2020 to recognize the contributions that people with disabilities bring to the workforce. As an equity seeking initiative, students with disabilities are encouraged to self-identify by applying through this category. This opportunity is promoted by NEADS to their network and members. Canada Post receives applications directly from students in a wide range of disciplines. The first summer work placement for students with disabilities took place in 2021 and was offered again in 2022 with plans to continue in 2023 and beyond.

The Valuable 500

To demonstrate our commitment to accessibility, Canada Post joined The Valuable 500, a global movement that unites 500 of the most influential business leaders and their brands to facilitate systemic change and create opportunity for people with disabilities.

By joining The Valuable 500, Canada Post is among a group of leading multinational and national firms, and a small group of government-owned entities, that have committed to improving disability inclusion in their businesses. Through our membership, we have the benefit of tapping into global best practices as well as tools and resources to complement and support the implementation of our Accessibility Strategy.





Glossary of terms

Accessibility is the extent to which environments, buildings, technology, goods and services, information and opportunities are available to as many people as possible. Accessibility is about taking difference into account and including everyone.

Accessible Canada Act is legislation that was enacted with the goal of removing barriers and achieving accessibility within areas of federal jurisdiction on or before January 1, 2040. It came into force on July 11, 2019.

Accommodation is the legal obligation of eliminating disadvantage to employees, prospective employees or customers resulting from a policy, practice or barrier that has or may have an adverse impact on individuals or groups protected under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

American Sign Language (ASL) is the defining language of many deaf people in the USA and Canada. It is a true language that uses signs, facial expressions, body language and finger spelling to convey information. Its vocabulary and grammar are different than that of English.

Barriers are defined by the *Accessible Canada Act* as anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment. The impairment could include a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. The barriers could be physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal. They could also be based on information or communications or the result of a policy or a practice.

Canadian Labour Market Availability (CMLA) refers to the share of designated group members in the workforce from which employers could hire.

Captions are the displayed text on videos that enable people to read dialogue and sounds. Closed captions [CC] can be turned on or off by the user whereas open captions are part of the video itself and cannot be turned off. Automated closed captions in virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams operate through built in speech-to-text software.

Communication Access Real-time Translation Service (CART) is a speech-to-text service provided by a live transcriptionist who types what they hear during meetings or events. For in-person events, the text is displayed on a large screen for the whole audience to see. For virtual events, the text is often accessible through a separate window or link. Virtual meeting platforms that enable CART services to be turned on in the same meeting window are preferable to enable a more inclusive experience.

D/deaf

Used as a collective noun to refer to both people who identify with the Deaf culture and people who have little to no functional hearing who do not identify with the Deaf culture.

Deaf with a capital ‘D’ refers to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and who identify with and participate in the language, culture and community of Deaf people, using sign language as the first choice of communication. Deaf culture does not perceive hearing loss and deafness as a disability, but as the basis of a distinct cultural group. Culturally Deaf people may also use speech reading, gesturing, spoken language and written English to communicate with people who do not sign.

Deafened and late deafened describe individuals who grew up hearing or hard of hearing and, either suddenly or gradually, experienced a profound loss of hearing. Late-deafened adults usually understand speech with visual clues such as captioning or computerized note taking, speech reading or sign language.

Disability is defined by the *Accessible Canada Act* as any impairment that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society. The impairment could be a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation. It could also be permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, and visible or hidden.

Environment Social Governance (ESG) ESG stands for environmental, social and governance. Taken together, they refer to sustainable, ethical and responsible business practices.

Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) is a sign language originating in Quebec which, like ASL, uses signs, facial expressions, body language and finger spelling to convey information. Its vocabulary and grammar are different than that of French.

National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) was legislated by the *Accessible Canada Act* as an official annual observance to start on the last Sunday in May. It is a time to celebrate the valuable contributions of Canadians with disabilities and recognize achievements in removing barriers.

Teletypewriter (TTY) is a device that enables people who are D/deaf, hard of hearing, or people with speech impairments to use the phone by typing messages.

Undue Hardship is the limit to how far an employer or service provider must go to accommodate a person’s needs. Sometimes accommodation is not possible because it would cost too much or create health or safety risks.

Universal Design is the planning and configuration of an environment, building, product, program or service so that it can be accessed and used to the greatest extent possible by all people.

Video Relay Service enables people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing who use sign language to communicate over the phone through video camera. A sign language interpreter joins the call to relay messages.
