



Canada Post 2023 Accessibility Progress Report



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General



Contact information

To request a copy of Canada Post's Accessibility Plan, Feedback Process and/or Progress Report in an alternate format, or to provide feedback on accessibility at Canada Post, please contact the Director of Accessibility.

Mailing address:

Director of Accessibility
Canada Post
2701 Riverside Drive Suite N0940E
Ottawa, ON K1A 0B1

Phone: 1-866-607-6301 (toll free)

Outside of Canada: +1 416-979-3033

Teletypewriter (TTY): 1-800-267-2797

Email:

accessibility@canadapost.ca

Web form:

canadapost.ca

Virtual chat:

canadapos.t.ca

Executive summary

On December 16, 2022, Canada Post published its first [Accessibility Plan](#) and [Feedback Process](#), as required by the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA). The purpose of the ACA 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 ACA came into force on July 11, 2019.

The Accessibility Plan, created with input from Canadians with disabilities, outlines the actions Canada Post will take between 2023 and 2025 to identify, remove and prevent barriers. More than 1,200 Canadians, including over 600 people who identified as living with a disability, responded to our national survey and helped inform our Accessibility Plan. We also consulted with our Accessibility Advisory Panel and our national Employee Resource Group for People with Disabilities.

The Feedback Process describes how Canada Post receives and responds to feedback regarding implementation of our multi-year Accessibility Plan; barriers faced by Canada Post customers, employees and other people that deal with Canada Post; and any other matters related to accessibility.

This Progress Report highlights the advancements we have made in our efforts to improve accessibility, challenges we faced and how we are continuing to apply feedback and lessons learned to achieve our goals. This is the first of multiple progress reports we will publish on our Accessibility Plan as we continue to review it every year and update it every three years.

Accessibility statement

About 6.2 million Canadians – or roughly one in five – live with at least one disability, and this number is increasing. With a presence in communities across the country, Canada Post has a responsibility to provide accessible programs and services that Canadians can rely on. We are committed to becoming more accessible and inclusive for our customers and employees.

In 2018, Canada Post created a national Accessibility team that provides advice and guidance, leads accessibility projects, and integrates accessibility across the company, including policy and program development.

Our vision is to be an inclusive Crown corporation and a recognized leader in accessibility by promoting awareness, removing barriers, and acknowledging the valuable contributions of people with disabilities. We want to ensure that everyone can access our programs and services and attract and retain 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 ACA. 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 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 Canada Post's Board of Directors approved the strategy in April 2020. It was published on May 31, 2021.

Accessibility Policy

Canada Post developed a draft Accessibility Policy. The policy reinforces our commitment to ensuring that accessibility is applied consistently across the Corporation. We want to make timely and measurable progress as we implement the actions outlined in our Accessibility Plan. The policy governs all aspects of the focus areas of the ACA and our Accessibility Strategy.

We engaged a third party to conduct three national public focus groups (two in English and one in French) with people with disabilities to gather their feedback on the draft policy. We also consulted with our external Accessibility Advisory Panel.

The policy is intentionally broad in nature as it touches upon every aspect of the Corporation and its business. We will use this policy to develop more specific guidelines that employees can use in their day-to-day work.

The policy will be reviewed by the ESG Committee of the Board of Directors in 2023.

Accessibility Advisory Panel

Canada Post's [Accessibility Advisory Panel](#) includes up to 15 members, who identify as people with disabilities and/or are part of organizations that represent people with disabilities and older Canadians. The inaugural panel meeting took place in November 2018 with subsequent meetings occurring twice a year. On June 6, 2023, Canada Post held a virtual meeting to consult on the development of our disability and accessibility awareness training and draft Accessibility Policy.

As several panel members' terms expired in 2023, we launched a national recruitment campaign inviting applications from the public in the spring. Recruitment is ongoing as we seek to fill numerous vacancies by 2024. Our objective is to form a panel that reflects Canada's diversity.

Progress report scope

This report provides an overview of the progress we have made in identifying, removing and preventing barriers in six focus areas:



Employment



Built environment (buildings and public spaces)



Information and communication technology



Communication, other than information and communication technology



Procurement of goods, services, and facilities



Design and delivery of programs and services

Canada Post requires this report be reviewed and approved by the ESG Committee of the Board of Directors prior to publishing. Actions completed between September 2023 and December 2023 will not be included in this year's report due to the review timeframe; they will be reported in the 2024 Accessibility Progress Report.

Social model of disability and inclusive language

The social model of disability is a perspective that distinguishes between “impairment,” meaning functional limitation, from the term “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/impairment.

It is important that we recognize the difference between identity-first language and person-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 report as it is widely accepted and used in Canada.

Accessibility feedback

Canada Post welcomes feedback from customers, employees, business partners and the public to help the company become more accessible and inclusive. In mid-2023, we received 60 submissions of feedback on accessibility. Feedback can be submitted by telephone, TTY, virtual chat, email, web form and by mail. Most of the feedback was provided by email and through our web form. The web form allows people to offer their input anonymously.

Of the 60 submissions we received, 53 included feedback that identified barriers at Canada Post. Below is some of the feedback we received for each focus area of the Accessibility Plan:

Category (number of submissions)	Feedback
Employment (1)	Interview questions not accessible.
Built environment (9)	Difficulty accessing ramps. No automatic push buttons on some doors. Limited accessible parking near post office. Request to bring back writing tables.
Information and communication technology (8)	Website loading issues. Webpage for tracking parcels only accessible in English and not French. Automated phone calls unable to understand speech.
Communication (2)	Question regarding communicating with people who are blind. Question regarding Video Relay Service (VRS).
Design and delivery of programs and services (34)	Requests for sliding trays for community mailboxes. Limited hours of operation. Denied methods of payment for delivered parcels. Requests for weekly mail delivery to the door. Snow clearance at community mailboxes. Request for online application to the Delivery Accommodation Program. Long lines due to fewer postal outlets in some locations.
Procurement of goods, services, and facilities (0)	N/A

How feedback was applied

Canada Post acknowledged all feedback in the manner it was submitted. We also followed up with the appropriate teams to address feedback, where necessary.

Snow build-up at community mailboxes was a common barrier, reported in 13 separate feedback submissions. Canada Post has a process in place for requesting snow removal. If a customer cannot access their mailbox due to snow, they can request snow clearance online by creating a [service ticket](#).

In response to feedback on barriers in the built environment, we established a process with the real estate and facilities management team to exchange information on barriers identified in buildings and post offices to ensure they are added to the schedule for accessibility upgrades.

We will continue to monitor our framework for documenting and responding to feedback to provide a streamlined approach.





Consultations with people with disabilities

In the spirit of “nothing about us without us,” we conducted consultations with people with disabilities to develop this Progress Report. The consultations helped us to ensure that the report was clear and concise. The feedback also allowed us to identify areas of success and where continued work is needed, and other ways Canada Post can remove and prevent barriers not included in the Accessibility Plan.

Three focus groups (two in English and one in French) with 10 participants each were conducted by a third party in July 2023. Participants received a draft copy of the Progress Report to read in advance. Following the focus groups, a final report summarizing the feedback and recommendations was presented to Canada Post.

We reviewed the feedback and recommendations and revised the Progress Report accordingly. We modified how content was organized and presented and added more details to enhance clarity. We also noted barriers that were identified and recommended actions to address them.

Consultations with people with disabilities



3 online focus groups



Sessions were conducted July 20 and July 24, 2023



Each focus group lasted 90 minutes



- 10 recruited individuals per group
- 27 participants across groups



- 2 groups were conducted in English
- 1 session was in French.



Audience

Canadian residents 18+ who experience at least one disability



Participant Profile

Each group included a mix of age, gender, disability, and both urban and rural locations.

Participants were required to review the draft Progress Report before to the group discussion and complete a homework exercise.

Group participants included people who described themselves as being actively involved in improving accessibility in their community, or in the promotion or adoption of inclusive policies promoting accessibility.

Participants indicated that they seek out knowledge about accessibility standards and best practices and spread awareness about accessibility issues.

The focus groups were comprised of people who experienced a wide range of disabilities including emotional or mental health conditions, mobility, coordination and/or dexterity conditions, Deaf, late deafened, hard of hearing/hearing loss, blind, low vision/sight loss, learning disabilities, neurodivergent, and other non-visible disabilities.



Geographic Coverage

One focus group was conducted with residents in each of the following regions:

Western Canada
(BC, AB, SK, MB, YT, NT)

Eastern Canada
(ON, NB, NS, NL, PE, NU)

Province of Quebec



Sampling/Recruitment

Recruitment was conducted via a combination of national qualitative panel and referrals led by external consultants.



Accessibility of Focus groups

CART was provided in all sessions. ASL interpretation was available in one session upon request.



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.

Progress in 2022-23

Accessibility Plan launch and ongoing communications

- Canada Post introduced its Accessibility Plan to employees through a corporate announcement in February 2023.
- The announcement included an internal video with President and CEO, Doug Ettinger providing an overview of our accomplishments to date and future priorities. The video included American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).
- We also shared information about the Accessibility Plan and its objectives with our retail post offices and on iTV slides in our plants.
- In March 2023, the Accessibility team launched an internal quarterly newsletter to share key updates and progress on our efforts to become more accessible for our customers and employees. The newsletter is sent to senior management by Canada Post's Vice-President of ESG.

Corporate disability and accessibility awareness training

- We are developing mandatory disability and accessibility training to promote awareness among all employees, increase knowledge and understanding of disability and accessibility, and help reduce stigma associated with disability.
- Training will be provided online through digital content and through printed self-study guides. The training aims to:
 - Increase awareness about disability and accessibility among employees.
 - Reduce stigma and negative stereotypes about people with disabilities.
 - Encourage the use of inclusive language.
 - Promote accessibility in the workplace.
 - Create a culture of inclusion and a safe, fair and respectful workplace.
- The training includes the following key sections or modules:
 - Accessibility – definition, importance, universal design, accessibility at Canada Post.
 - Disability – definitions, medical/social model, prevalence, barriers, stereotypes.
 - Ableism – examples, inclusive language, people-first language, identity-first language.
 - Allyship – definition, how to be an ally and champion accessibility.
- Training will be tested with a small group of employees in fall 2023 before our national rollout in 2024.

Accessibility audits and Disability Management strategy

- Ensuring that people with disabilities have the accommodation they need to apply for and do their jobs at Canada Post were outlined as two priorities in our Accessibility Plan.
- We completed the external accessibility audits that began in 2022 on our end-to-end recruitment and retention process.
- Expert consultants were engaged to conduct the external audits, which included a voluntary employee survey. The survey was distributed in June to 31 plants and depots and 200 post offices, for employees to share their views on accessibility at Canada Post anonymously.
- Several workshops with Employment Policy and regional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) advisors were held as part of the external accessibility audits to identify barriers in the recruitment process.
- A final report on the external accessibility audits was submitted to Canada Post and currently under review.
- We also conducted an internal audit to assess the effectiveness of the employee accommodation program. The scope of the audit included how well the employee accommodation program supports Canada Post's strategic objectives in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion; health and safety; and fostering a fair and respectful workplace.
- The internal audit also assessed whether current and prospective employees in protected groups are accommodated as required by the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.
- A final report with recommendations from the internal audit was presented to internal stakeholders. We are in the action planning phase.
- We also engaged external consultants to begin developing a Disability Management strategy. The strategy will include all Disability Management programs, such as occupational injuries, non-occupational programs (including short- and long-term disability) and disability accommodations.
- The purpose of the strategy is to improve the overall employee experience by offering employees support when navigating disability benefits.

National AccessAbility Week and community events

- National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) is an official annual observance legislated by the ACA. Beginning 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.
- In 2023, we undertook several initiatives to commemorate NAAW and help increase awareness among employees and the public. We shared our Accessibility Plan on social media, along with a slideshow that highlighted the actions we are taking to remove barriers.
- We published a set of internal guidelines to help employees better understand how to make our communications as well as meetings and events more accessible. We shared some of those tips in our NAAW-themed internal Accessibility Newsletter in June, along with a spotlight on two employees with disabilities.
- We also shared an internal corporate message and created iTV slides to show in our plants that focused on how employees can champion accessibility. Messages were also sent to customer service agents to thank them for assisting customers interested in applying to the Delivery Accommodation Program.
- Also in 2023, Canada Post participated in Mayfest, an annual community festival held in Toronto that celebrates Deaf culture, language, arts and heritage. Employees from our Operations; Recruitment; and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion departments attended and provided information about employment opportunities.

National Accommodation Committee

- We re-established a national, multi-functional accommodation committee that includes employees from Disability Management; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Human Rights and Employment Equity; Accessibility; Talent Acquisition; Labour Relations; and Legal.
- The committee includes employees with disabilities and meets monthly to discuss accommodation issues, including disability-related and other types of accommodation, policies, practices, processes, national policy grievances, case law and legal updates.
- In 2023, the committee was focused on action planning, prioritizing and implementing recommendations from the external and internal audits.

Improving our hiring practices

- To increase representation of people with disabilities, we attended more than a dozen job fairs and networking events geared towards hiring people with disabilities. At these events, we promoted current employment opportunities at Canada Post, provided an overview of the work environment, and responded to questions from potential applicants.
- As of Q2 2023, we exceeded our 2023 hiring target of 6.9 per cent for people with disabilities and achieved 7.9 per cent.
- Our three regional advisors who promote accessible hiring practices for people with disabilities participated in numerous training sessions, webinars and conferences to increase their knowledge on accessibility and implement inclusive practices.
- The training included sessions organized by the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI), the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN), Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), and covered topics such as:
 - Autism and neurodiversity in the workplace
 - Hiring and supporting neurodivergent workers
 - Allyship
 - Mental health and well-being
 - Accessible communication
 - Advancing employment opportunities and retention for people with disabilities
 - Accessible spaces in the built environment
 - Disability, inclusion and belonging in the workplace
- To create an inclusive experience for job candidates, we developed a guide on equity, diversity and inclusion and accommodation to be used as part of our staffing process. The purpose is to provide additional guidance on how to approach these topics and accommodation with sensitivity and assist candidates in evaluating their needs in every step of the recruitment process.
- Canada Post is also a member of the Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) Abilities at Work Advisory Team. Members meet monthly to discuss barriers and identify solutions, trends, and best practice to improve accessibility in recruitment and retention from a national employer perspective.



Built environment

As Canada's largest Crown corporation, Canada Post has an extensive physical footprint with nearly 6,000 post offices, 473 letter carrier depots and 22 processing plants across the country. Our goal is to make our post offices, administrative offices, depots and processing facilities accessible to everyone.

To remove physical barriers in our network of buildings, in 2023 we invested \$12 million in capital expenses for accessibility construction projects to include elements of universal design. This amount was given to Real Estate (\$10 million) and Retail (\$2 million).

For new builds and expansions to increase our capacity to handle mail and parcels, the cost of implementing accessibility is included in the project's scope and budget.



Progress in 2022-23

Building upgrades

- In early 2023, we started 27 and completed 5 accessibility construction projects in buildings across Canada. Upgrades included:
 - Improved vehicular access
 - Accessible parking
 - Pathways to main entrance including ramps
 - Accessible entrances (doors and door openers)
 - Counter upgrades that are more accessible for clerks and customers
 - Audible and visual emergency systems
 - Tactile indicators
 - Accessible circulation and knee clearance
 - Accessible postal boxes
- 59 retail accessibility projects are underway across the country for completion in 2023. These upgrades include accessible counters and door openers.
- 173 pod-style service counters were installed in our post offices. The pod design enables clerks to step out from the counter to assist customers by handing over parcels or handheld point-of-sale systems and offer other forms of assistance during retail transactions.

Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified Gold rating

- In 2023, Canada Post opened the Albert Jackson Processing Centre, our largest parcel sorting facility. The 585,000-square-foot building, located in northeast Toronto, was assessed by the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF)'s Accessibility Advisory Services team to determine the level of meaningful access beyond building code. It is our second building to receive a Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) Gold rating.
- An administrative building at our head office campus in Ottawa is our first real estate project to be awarded a RHFAC Gold rating for the building's accessibility features.
- Since 2020, Canada Post has worked with the RHF and independent contractors who achieved RHFAC professional designation to conduct audits of our buildings and ensure that upgrades are applied consistently across the country.
- The RHF is a registered charity focused on removing barriers in the built environment and promoting inclusion of people with disabilities. The foundation has an accessibility certification program that rates the level of meaningful access in buildings and spaces from the perspective of people with disabilities.
- The RHFAC Gold rating highlights our commitment to creating barrier-free workspaces accessible to everyone through a variety of features.
- The accessible features at the administrative building in Ottawa include:
 - A universal washroom on every floor;
 - Workstations with mobile pull-out filing cabinets with seats on the top, for easy access to seating when working collaboratively;
 - Four living walls that provide visual and olfactory wayfinding cues;
 - Kitchens with open space for maneuvering with knee clearance below the sink;
 - Microphone at the security desk;
 - Sound dampening features;
 - Hearing loop in one meeting room;
 - Tactile features and braille on signage;
 - Fully accessible parking lot;
 - Visual and audible fire alarms throughout the building.



™ Trademark of Rick Hansen Foundation

- The accessible features at the Albert Jackson Processing Facility include:
 - Five emergency beacon stations in the parking lot;
 - Wayfinding signage to help users remember which zone they parked in;
 - Entrance with shelter and automatic sensor power sliding doors;
 - Exterior seating along path of travel and accessible picnic table with knee clearance;
 - Accessible sink and microwave in the cafeteria and rest pods;
 - A quiet room and private phone rooms;
 - 11 universal washrooms;
 - Tactile features and braille on signage;
 - Accessible lockers, weight trainer and roll-in showers;
 - Visual and audible fire alarms;
 - Intercom in area of refuge;
 - Handrails and seating installed in long corridors;
 - Workstations provided with a mobile pull-out filing cabinet with a seat built into the top;
 - Workstation outlets provided at desk height benefiting all users;
 - Brightly coloured accent walls which highlight the location of the drinking/ water bottle filling stations;
 - A combination of natural and artificial light providing consistent lighting levels throughout the site;
 - Numerous power operated doors, with elongated vertical bar-style power door operators;
 - Video intercoms at yard gates.
- With more than 600 sites audited to date, the RHF has recognized Canada Post as an [industry leader](#) and published a [blog](#) to showcase our commitment to accessibility.

Accessibility Standards Canada Technical Committee on Wayfinding and Signage

- Canada Post is represented on the Accessibility Standards Canada Technical Committee on Wayfinding and Signage. This committee is tasked with delivering Canada’s national standard on wayfinding and signage to include the following:
 - Tactile walking surface indicators
 - Signage (indoor and outdoor)
 - Accessible paths of travel
 - Wayfinding cues
 - Lighting
 - Audible beacons

Challenges and lessons learned

Costs and resources

- Inflation and supply chain issues affected our ability to make accessibility upgrades to our buildings. We consulted with the RHF and the individual contracted auditors for guidance on using available building materials to maximize our budget.
- Severe labour shortages also impacted the delivery of projects and costs with contractors identifying labour shortages as the primary issue. We responded to this challenge by grouping sites and projects in remote areas where supply would be limited.
- We also experienced process delays with our accessibility audits as the individual auditors required additional time to secure subject matter experts who would undertake the design concept for the site construction upgrades. We minimized these delays by grouping our requirements together for both the audit and design concept for future needs.
- To respond to these challenges, we have spread some larger projects (i.e., elevator installations in plants) over two years. For these projects, we focus on the design in the first year and aim to complete construction the following year.

Applying our accessibility design standards

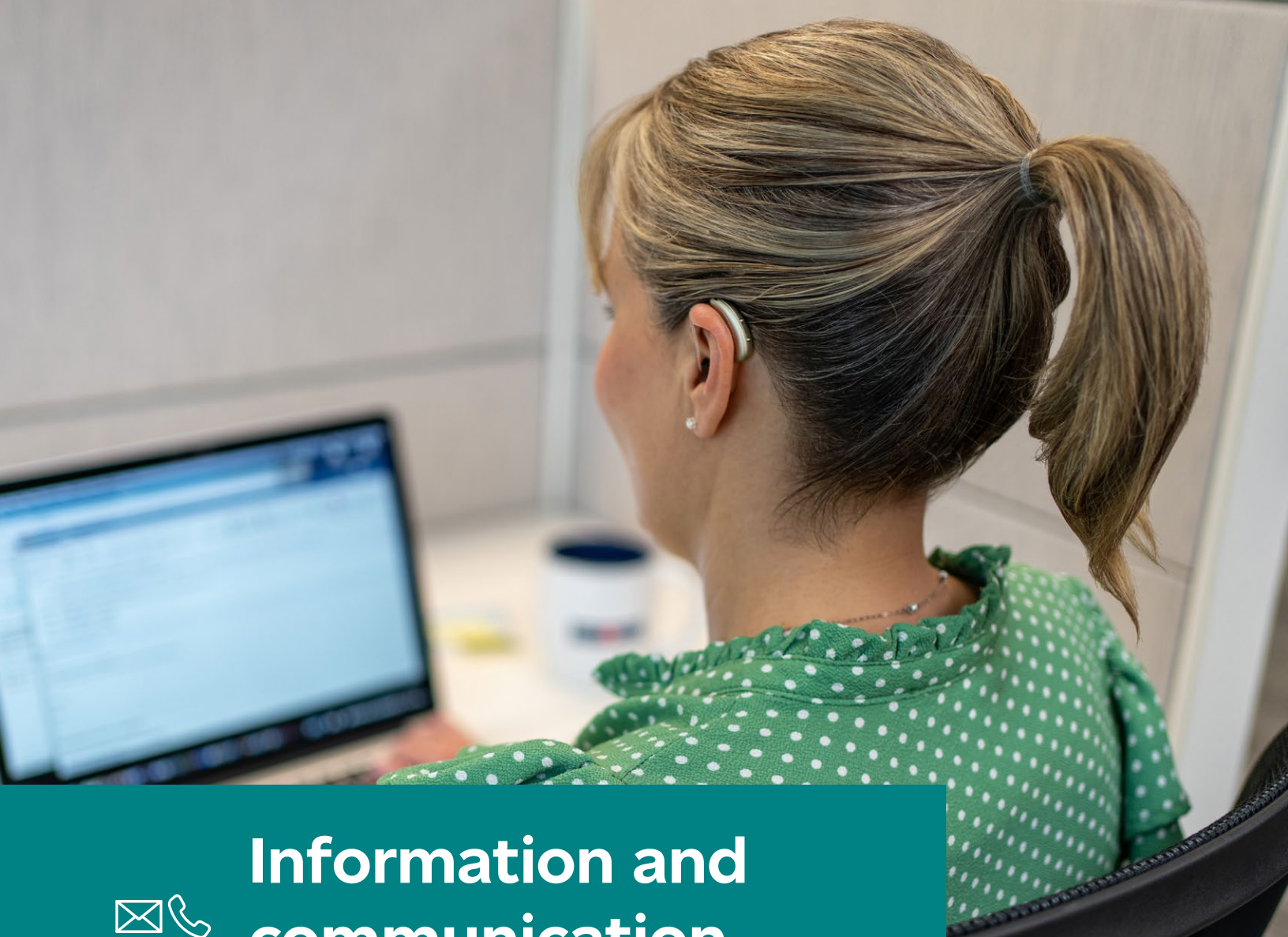
- All new builds and major renovations must meet Canada Post's National Accessibility Design Standards. These standards integrate best practices that go beyond the minimum accessibility requirements in building codes.
- However, most of our corporate-owned facilities are more than 50 years old, have not been retrofitted, and have limited square footage and/or configurations. For these buildings, we are aiming to achieve a basic level of accessibility and include best practices and innovative universal design features, when possible.
- We recognize that responding to concerns about accessibility in a timely fashion is important. About 20 per cent of the accessibility investments allocated for capital improvements in 2023 were used to respond to accessibility issues raised by employees and by the public through elected officials.
- As a result, barriers were removed in some, but not all areas of a building while we responded to as many accessibility issues as possible. In these cases, the rest of the building will be assessed and upgraded when funds are available in future years.

Plans or improvements that could create new barriers

- We discovered that accessibility upgrades in buildings with limited space may impact other aspects of the building and potentially create new barriers. For example, adding seating to a small area could impact circulation room for wheeled mobility devices.
- When auditing a facility, we assess how an accessibility upgrade could impact accessibility in other areas to ensure we do not create new barriers.
- Some upgrades may not be possible without extensive building modifications. There are cases where we may not be able to meet every requirement in our National Accessibility Design Standards due to the structure of the building and/or geographic landscape.
- In these situations, we explore other solutions to remove barriers. For example, if a building is too close to the road and cannot accommodate a properly graded ramp, we will consider other options, which may include a platform lift.

Adapting to changing standards

- Improving accessibility in our built environment is an ongoing process. We want to ensure that our current accessibility construction projects align with evolving accessibility standards.
- Since we developed our corporate National Accessibility Design Standards, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) published an updated version of their National Standard for the Built Environment, B651-23, which replaces B651-18.
- We have identified areas where technical specifications in our corporate standard are inconsistent with the new version published by CSA. We responded by incorporating the updated specifications in B651-23 in our accessibility upgrades.
- We will review the new CSA standard and update our corporate standard to reflect current best practices in accessibility.



Information and communication technology

Canada Post has more than 150 webpages, over 25 applications and tools, and two mobile applications. 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 digital services.

Progress in 2022-23

Design system updates and training and partnership opportunities

- We are updating our design system to match our new corporate branding and other corporate investment initiatives. A design system is a set of standards that helps everyone understand how people use our website.
- These updates will improve the user experience for our customers and allow us to continue meeting our accessibility goals.
- In 2022, the Digital Accessibility Team attended the a11yTO Conference, a recognized Canadian conference on digital accessibility.
- To commemorate the 12th Global Accessibility Awareness Day, members of the Digital Accessibility team provided in-person demonstrations at the Ottawa and Toronto offices. The demonstration showed how different assistive technologies support our customers' use of our mobile and web applications.
- We released an updated course for employees on mobile accessibility. This online and on-demand course, provided through our partnership with Fable, has two streams (iOS and Android). It contains up-to-date information on how to ensure applications are fully accessible.
- We are collaborating with multiple federally regulated entities on the development of The Accessibility Exchange (TAE), a project of the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS) and the Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD University.
- This project will develop an online platform that will connect people with disabilities to federally regulated entities to consult accessibility plans and progress reports, as required by the ACA, and carry out other activities related to accessibility.
- We developed a series of accessibility resources to support mobile application teams. This includes guidelines on how to design and test for accessibility on the iOS and Android operating systems.
- A secure digital environment was launched where members of the public and other external service providers can test products that are under development before they are released. We are using this environment to test consumer and business applications with users with disabilities to help us identify and prevent barriers.
- We are also tracking the volume and progress of software and web issues related to accessibility using a tool that documents issues into a dashboard.

Accessibility Standards Canada Technical Committee

- Canada Post is represented on the Accessibility Standards Canada Technical Committee on accessibility requirements for Information and Communication Technology Products and Services. This committee is tasked with delivering Canada’s federal standard on digital accessibility for the following:



Websites



Software



Electronic devices



Mobile apps

Challenges and lessons learned

- Working with digital development partners outside of Canada Post presents additional challenges. Key issues include ensuring that training in accessibility is built into their onboarding processes and identifying gaps in knowledge to ensure that accessibility is supported in the products and services being developed for Canada Post.
- Currently, resources are limited for ensuring internal facing ICT is accessible. The Digital Accessibility team is focused on customer-facing digital products and has supported internal tools when possible. To remove barriers and ensure accessible ICT for employees, we need to provide additional resources.

Digital accessibility targets and upcoming changes

- We are putting accessibility and usability at the forefront of our digital services to create an inclusive online experience. In line with our goal to provide accessible products and services to Canadians, all new public-facing digital products must be built to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at Level AA.
- To meet these standards, we implemented a thorough accessibility testing approach and trained more than 100 employees and contractors.
- We monitor the usability of our digital services by measuring the ability of people with disabilities to complete the tasks our applications support. We achieved a measure of 88.8 per cent on all active digital products in 2022, exceeding our 2021 result of 85.9 per cent. For 2023, we set the target of 90.8 per cent. At mid-year, our score for active digital products is 91.2 per cent, and we are on track to exceed our target.
- We are developing a strategy to respond to the upcoming changes to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. An updated version is expected to be released in 2023.



Communication (other than ICT)

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

Progress in 2022-23

- Canada Post continues to provide 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 (CART) services are provided for in-person meetings or events to which the public is invited, and for online meetings and events where automatic closed captions are not available.
- 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.
- We are beginning to expand our use of sign language for corporate videos and announcements. Our Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process are available in American Sign Language ([ASL](#)) and langue des signes québécoise ([LSQ](#)) on our website. We also included ASL and LSQ in our internal video announcing the publication of our Accessibility Plan and included ASL in our Annual Public Meeting.
- We are exploring opportunities to provide ASL training to some groups of employees as part of their professional development, and to facilitate more effective and accessible communication with employees who are culturally deaf, deafened and hard of hearing who communicate using sign language.
- To enhance accessibility in our communications and meetings and events, we created and published guidelines on our internal accessibility website. These guidelines explain the barriers that can limit access to various forms of communications, meetings and events and offer tips on how employees can remove them to create an inclusive experience.

Challenges and lessons learned

- We are striving to incorporate ASL and LSQ in more of our corporate videos and public events. We have encountered challenges with suppliers unable to provide interpreters for the dates required or fulfill the project requirements.
- This has led to situations where we could not schedule sign language interpreters. We are reviewing our process to identify how we can ensure we have reliable access to sign language interpretation services.



Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

Canada Post purchases approximately \$2.8 billion worth of goods and services from more than 13,000 suppliers annually. We want to create fair sourcing practices that offer equal opportunities to suppliers in Canada and around the world.

Progress in 2022-23

- Canada Post approved a Supplier Diversity strategy in 2023 to promote the use of suppliers owned by people with disabilities, women, visible minorities and/or 2SLGBTQI+ people directly and as subcontractors. This strategy complements our existing Indigenous Procurement policy. We increased our spend with suppliers owned by people with disabilities by more than 10 per cent from 2021 to 2022, and set a goal of achieving 10 per cent increases each year from 2022 to 2025.
- We ensure that accessibility requirements and standards are considered during the requirements-setting phase of RFPs for goods, services and facilities, and that procurement processes and templates make note of the importance of accessibility standards.
- When procuring internal-facing software, we give preference to suppliers who demonstrate compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at Level AA. If this is impossible, we have introduced a mandatory contractual requirement that new software purchases be brought into WCAG 2.1 AA compliance within 24 months of contract signature.

Training, research and presentations

- The procurement team attended multiple online training events and in-person training events, sponsored by the Inclusive Workplace and Supply Council of Canada (IWSCC) and Supplier Diversity Alliance of Canada on working with diverse suppliers and suppliers with disabilities.
- Canada Post presented at the Supply Chain Management Association of Ontario seminar on Supplier Diversity, and at a Fireside Chat about “Doing business with big businesses” as part of Reach: National Forum for Disabled Entrepreneurship.
- Canada Post partnered with Adaptability Canada and IWSCC to participate in a study on accessible procurement in large purchasing organizations. The study aims to identify ways to make procurement more accessible to people with disabilities. In recognizing that accessible procurement tends to focus on physical and sensory disabilities, we have expanded our scope to better understand how we can be accessible to people experiencing mental health conditions and intellectual disabilities.

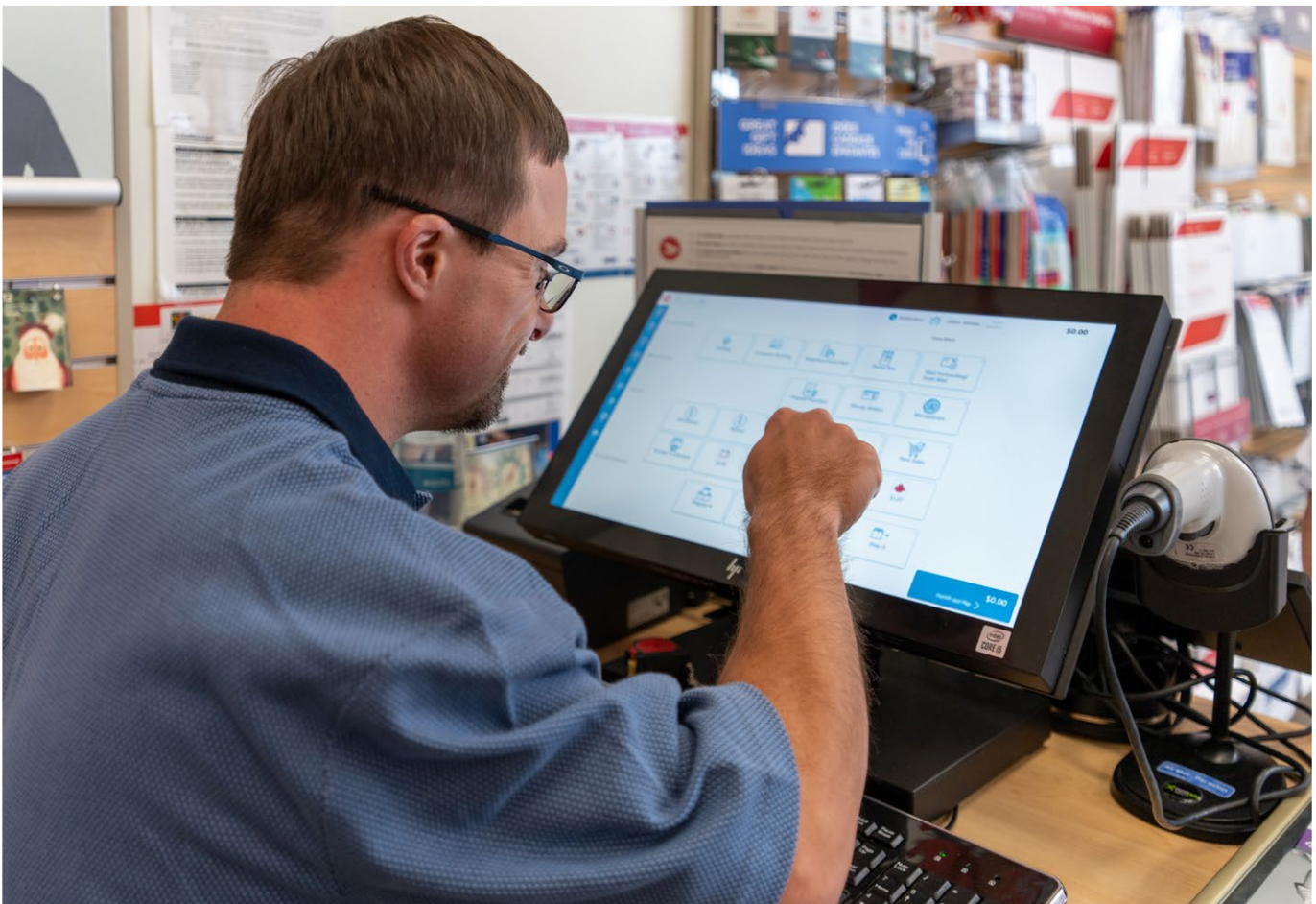
Tools and resources

- We continue to strive to increase opportunities with diverse suppliers and seek inclusive business opportunities. We added questions about supplier equity, diversity and inclusion policies and the use of diverse subcontractors, and businesses owned and operated by people with disabilities, to our RFP templates and to our annual supplier survey.
- These questions encourage suppliers to include a description of their commitment to diversity and how accessibility and inclusion are promoted and supported within their organization. Their responses to these questions will be considered during scoring.

- We created internal accessible procurement guidelines and are currently reviewing our procurement templates and documents. Changes to the documents will be made after we receive the final report from Adaptability Canada and IWSCC study of accessible procurement.
- We are also developing a formal accessible procurement policy that addresses the inclusion of accessibility requirements when establishing criteria and selecting products and services.

Challenges and lessons learned

- We are looking at the barriers that suppliers owned and operated by people with disabilities face when working with Canada Post or bidding on contracts. Identifying businesses owned and operated by people with disabilities has been challenging as very few certified suppliers identify as such.
- We are exploring different ways to locate businesses owned and operated by people with disabilities to understand their experience and help us to identify barriers.





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.

Progress in 2022-23

Accessibility training for customer service

- We developed and provided training for 398 customer service agents and 27 resolution specialists.
- We also trained 27 senior resolution specialists, who manage feedback we receive on accessibility that may require additional support.
- The training provided an overview of the ACA, including its focus areas and the regulatory requirements as they relate to the Feedback Process.
- The training also provided definitions of disability and accessibility and included scenarios and examples to ensure that customer service agents were prepared to respond to customers who were calling to provide feedback on accessibility.
- This training has been included in the onboarding process and is provided to all new customer service agents.

Parcel boxes, quick drop-off boxes, and pick-and-drop locations

- To date, we have installed 38 new parcel boxes with improved accessibility. Parcel box doors and key fobs now have braille and raised letters. The tactile features on the key fob give direction on which parcel box to locate, which also has a matching tactile identifier.
- Quick drop-off boxes are large containers that either stand alone, are in the counter line or in the wall (like postal boxes). We are testing and expanding a new service that enables customers to drop off parcels without waiting in line.
- We changed our network of 125 parcel pick-up locations to pick-and-drop locations that now also receive parcels, which increases services and access for customers. A clerk is present to deliver and receive parcels and provide customers with assistance, if needed.

Point-of-sale units

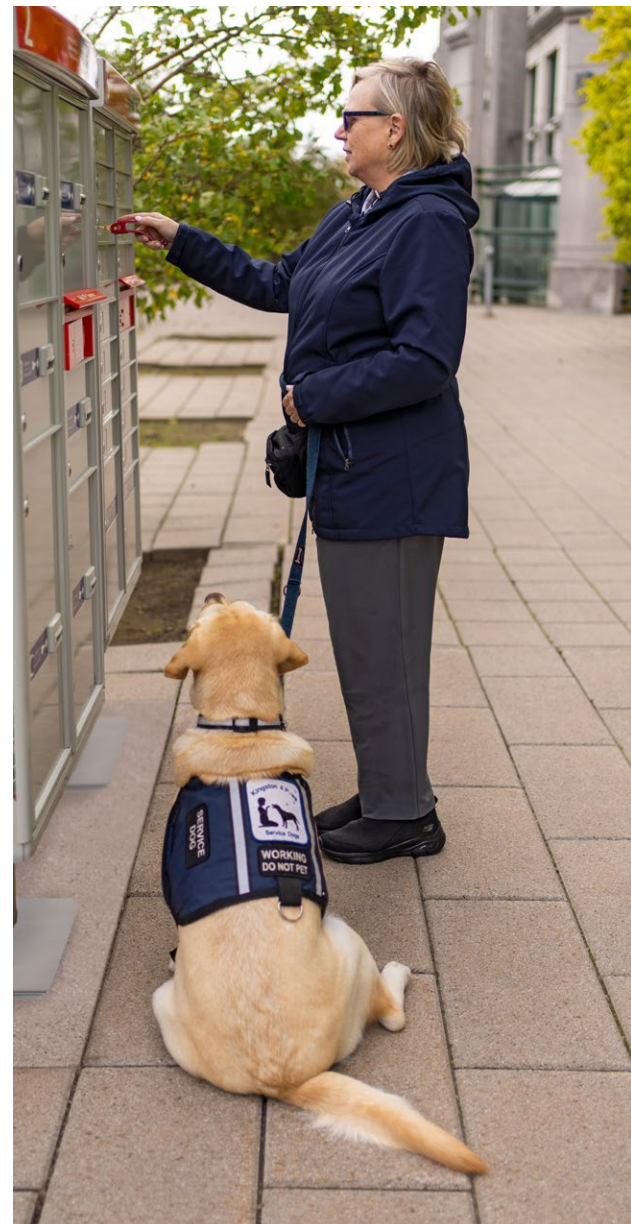
- We completed the deployment of 7,000 point-of-sale units and 3,350 handheld units.
- The new system includes accessibility features such as a customer facing touch screen. The handheld units are wireless, allowing them to be brought over to the customer for easier transactions.

Service animal signage and awareness

- To ensure our customers know that service animals are welcome in all post offices, we updated our hours of operation decals to include a message that service animals are welcome along with the international organization for standardization (ISO) symbol for service animals.
- We are also including the symbol and service animal message in the [Find a Post Office](#) feature on our website. Whenever someone uses this feature to search for their closest post office, they will see that service animals are welcome.
- To increase awareness among our employees, we published information about service animals in the tools and resources section of our internal accessibility website.

Delivery Accommodation Program

- The Delivery Accommodation Program supports residential customers with functional limitations or health conditions to access their mail and parcels. The service is offered year-round, temporarily, or seasonally.
- In the first half of 2023, we implemented 1,134 new accommodations.
- Examples of accommodations include mailbox key turners, sliding mail trays, adjustments to the mailbox compartments, mailbox braille markings, and seasonal or weekly home delivery. In some cases, more than one accommodation is offered to the customer to ensure their needs are met.
- We continued to increase awareness about the Delivery Accommodation Program through social media, slides shown in our plants, an article in the national retail newsletter and by sharing information with members of our Accessibility Advisory Panel.
- We also continue to review how we manage accommodation requests and simplify our customer forms and our requirement for supporting documents. We plan to develop an online application form to further enhance accessibility.
- We are committed to increasing awareness of the program and improving service. Customers who need accommodation can access the program online or by calling 1-844-454-3009.





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.

Progress in 2022-23

Canada Post Award for Students with Disabilities

In 2023, we awarded the third Canada Post Award for Students with Disabilities in partnership with the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS). 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 recipient of the award in 2023 was Rivellie Aimée Tchuisseu Tchepnkep, a PhD candidate in Environmental Science at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).

Summer work opportunities for students with disabilities

We continue to recognize the contributions that people with disabilities bring to the workforce through the Canada Post Summer Student Work Opportunity. 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. In 2023, we hired 111 summer students, of which 13 self-identified as a person with a disability.

Workplace Opportunities: Removing Barriers to Equity (WORBE)

In 2022, we expanded our partnership with NEADS and joined the project “Building Employment Pathways for People with Disabilities,” funded by the Workplace Opportunities: Removing Barriers to Equity (WORBE) program, by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). As the industry partner, Canada Post supported the application that NEADS submitted to ESDC. We will work with NEADS and its partners to identify barriers in employment for people with disabilities within the postal and courier industry and help develop tools and resources to remove these barriers.

Rick Hansen Foundation – Accessibility Professional Network (APN) Conference

Canada Post was a gold sponsor and presenter at the 2023 Accessibility Professionals Network Conference, organized by the Rick Hansen Foundation. The conference was held in Vancouver in March. Over 400 individuals attended virtually and in person. The 2023 theme: Building Together included topics on accessibility legislation and what organizations are doing to remove barriers in physical spaces.



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 (ACA) 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 (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 is 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.

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 (VRS) 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.

