



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Year 1 Progress Report

2023-2025

Canada

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Accessibility Plan: Year 1 Progress Report

Canadian Museum of History and Canadian War Museum

1. Introduction

The *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)* is a new law designed to make Canada more accessible for everyone. Starting December 2022, [federal organizations](#) must make plans on how they will become more accessible. The Canadian Museum of History's first [Accessibility Plan](#) outlines what we will do in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

In December 2025, we will write a new plan about what we will do after that. In years when a new plan is not required, progress reports will be issued instead. This year's Progress Report shares what we've learned over the past 12 months through feedback and through consultations with people with disabilities. It also shares updates on all accessibility actions we took in 2023.

1.1. Summary of Progress

Since we finished our three-year Accessibility Plan at the end of 2022, we have made great strides in making the Museums more accessible. One of the most important things we did is actually not in the Plan itself. We created the base for how our teams can implement the Accessibility Plan.

To ensure that we could meet our commitments for the first year of the Plan, we:

- formed a working group of people from various sections at both Museums;
- assigned individual actions to members of staff, who then became responsible for ensuring that the action was carried out;

- decided how to consult with people with disabilities on actions requiring their input;
- decided how to measure whether or not an action has been done; and
- developed a system for tracking progress.

As you will see in this report, many of the actions set for 2023 are done. These include:

- creating a job for a person to support accessibility planning;
- reviewing and seeking new accessibility training;
- developing a new Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Strategy;
- reviewing how to support accessibility planning through our [governance structures](#);
- doing an [accessibility audit](#) of our [built environments](#);
- taking the first step in a lighting-conversion project;
- reviewing how we assist visitors who use wheelchairs or scooters;
- improving our job postings webpage to make it easier for potential candidates to get information in an alternative format;
- reviewing the accessibility of technology at in-person events;
- removing references to “special needs” on our websites and updating it with more appropriate language; and
- updating admission and accessibility information on our websites.

Of course, there is much more to be done. Although we achieved many of the goals to which we committed ourselves in 2023, there are many more actions planned for 2024. In the year ahead, this work will be even better supported as we roll out our [Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility \(EDIA\) Strategy](#), of which our Accessibility Plan is just one key component.

There have been some delays on actions that we had planned for 2023. It is important to make meaningful and lasting change, and we have discovered that some of the actions in our Accessibility Plan need to be grouped and better aligned. Allowing more time for planning across the Museums will ensure that everyone understands what

improvements are needed, and what steps need to be taken. Some actions, such as training, also need to be done before staff can deliver on actions that we have committed to in our Plan.

1.2. Contact Information and Feedback Process

We welcome feedback, including feedback submitted anonymously. Feedback may be provided by employees, volunteers, visitors, and anyone else who comes into contact with the Museums. We are committed to reviewing all feedback we receive and taking steps to address the barriers identified.

You can submit feedback about accessibility by contacting:

Project Manager, Accessibility

Email: accessible@historymuseum.ca

Telephone:

Local: 819-776-7000

Toll free: 1-800-555-5621

TTY for people with hearing disabilities: 819-776-7003

By mail:

Canadian Museum of History
100 Laurier Street
Gatineau QC K1A 0M8

Canadian War Museum
1 Vimy Place
Ottawa ON K1A 0M8

In person:

Information Desk
Canadian Museum of History
100 Laurier Street
Gatineau QC K1A 0M8

Information Desk
Canadian War Museum
1 Vimy Place
Ottawa ON K1A 0M8

On our feedback pages:

historymuseum.ca/about/contact-us

warmuseum.ca/about/contact-us

Via social media:

Canadian Museum of History

Facebook: [Canadian History Museum \(@CanMusHistory\)](#)

Instagram: [@CanMusHistory](#)

Twitter: [@CanMusHistory](#)

Canadian War Museum

Facebook: [Canadian War Museum \(@warmuseum\)](#)

Instagram: [@CanWarMuseum](#)

Twitter: [@CanWarMuseum](#)

You can also request alternative formats of our Accessibility Plan, this Progress Report, and/or a description of our feedback process by contacting:

Project Manager, Accessibility

Email: accessible@historymuseum.ca

The Museums commit to providing this Progress Report in alternative formats, as quickly as possible, to those who request it. We commit to meeting the following deadlines from the time the request is made:

- Print: 15 days
- Large Print (increased font size): 15 days
- Braille: 45 days
- Audio (a recording of the text read aloud): 45 days

An electronic version of our Accessibility Plan and this Progress Report, designed to work with assistive technology, can be downloaded now from our websites:

- historymuseum.ca/about/accessibility-plan
- warmuseum.ca/about/accessibility-plan

2.0. Areas Described Under Section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)*

2.1. General

Highlight: New Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Strategy

We are thrilled that we will soon be publishing of our brand-new, five-year [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility \(EDIA\) Strategy](#). One of the key pillars of the Strategy involves making the Museums as inclusive and accessible as possible to Canada’s diverse populations. Fulfilling all the actions in our Accessibility Plan is one critical way we will go about accomplishing this. We also look forward to beginning consultations with an external advisory group comprised of people with disabilities, as we embark on meeting the goals in our EDIA Strategy.

This table summarizes general actions for 2023, as outlined in our Accessibility Plan.

Action	Progress
Action: By 2022, create a position to support accessibility planning. The person in this role will ensure that the goals in this Plan are achieved.	Done.
Action: By March 2023, review existing basic accessibility training.	Done.
Action: By December 2023, revise existing basic accessibility training, and/or source new training.	Done.
Action: By March 2024, all employees and volunteers receive basic accessibility training.	Action in progress. We are testing an online accessibility training module with employees.
Action: By September 2023, develop a consultation framework.	Action in progress. A consultation framework has been drafted. Work on implementing the framework needs to align with the Museums’ new EDIA

Action	Progress
	Strategy. This action has been postponed to December 2024.
<p>Action: Establish an internal advisory group of employees with disabilities in 2023.</p>	<p>Action in progress. An employee-led EDIA working group, which includes employees with disabilities, worked with the Diversity Institute to create the Museums’ first EDIA Strategy. An internal advisory committee of employees with disabilities is also being included in the Museums’ draft consultation framework. To align this activity with other EDIA activities, it has been postponed to 2024.</p>
<p>Action: In 2023, develop terms of reference and a recruitment infrastructure to launch an external advisory group.</p>	<p>Action in progress. Terms of reference for the Museums’ future Accessibility Advisory Committee (ACC) have been drafted. Completing this action has been updated to 2024.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, implement a new Diversity and Inclusion Policy.</p>	<p>Action in progress. The new Policy being developed will be an equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA) policy, rather than being limited to diversity and inclusion. The Museums have prioritized the development of their first EDIA Strategy, and are in the process of drafting an EDIA Policy. As a result, this action has been delayed until December 2024.</p>

Action	Progress
<p>Action: In 2023, review how to support accessibility planning through governance structures. May include terms of reference and membership for committees, roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Done. Within the Museums’ new governance structure, the EDIA Steering Group now:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports EDIA initiatives across different parts of the Museums; • supports completion of the EDIA Strategy and Accessibility Plan; and • uses expertise, resources and knowledge to support employee-led Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG) initiatives.

2.2.The Built Environment

Highlight: Audit of the Built Environment

A detailed audit of the built environments at both the Canadian Museum of History and Canadian War Museum was done this year. During the diagnostic phase, a significant number of opportunities for improvement were noted, ranging from how easy it is to grasp handrails to the lighting of hallways. Solutions to these barriers were identified, and priorities were determined, followed by a costing exercise.

A work plan was then created, completing the audit. Over time, this project has the potential to result in major accessibility-related improvements for people with a range of disabilities.

The following table summarizes actions related to the built environment in 2023, as outlined in our Accessibility Plan.

Action	Progress
<p>Action: By January 2023, we will define the scope of work for an accessibility audit for the built environment at each Museum.</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, we will complete an accessibility audit of the built environment at each Museum, including both public and administrative spaces.</p>	<p>Done. A list of accessibility barriers at both Museums has been compiled. The data from this list will be analyzed in order to create a workplan and address barriers.</p>
<p>Action: In 2023, review and update the Plan Your Visit webpages for both Museums, to add information about accessibility features and known barriers.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024. Details on the progress of this action can be found below in the section Communications (Other than ICT).</p>
<p>Action: In 2023, deliver the first phase of the ongoing LED lighting-conversion project.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by December 2024. A purchase order has been issued for new fixtures, although installation dates will depend on production and delivery delays.</p>
<p>Action: In 2023, research and purchase portable seating for visitors.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by December 2024. A stakeholder meeting has defined requirements, and research was done to explore issues and best practices. More research is needed before choosing the most accessible option.</p>

Action	Progress
<p>Action: In 2023, set up processes and communications to guide visitors in the use of portable seating.</p>	<p>Action in progress. Delayed until 2024. Accessible portable seating must be sourced and purchased before processes can be set up.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, make portable seating available to visitors.</p>	<p>Action in progress. Delayed until 2024. Accessible portable seating must be purchased before it can be made available to visitors.</p>
<p>Action: Work with an accessibility advisory group throughout the Canadian Children’s Museum Renewal (CCMR) project. This activity will be ongoing.</p>	<p>Action in progress. The CCMR project team is planning external consultations with people with disabilities in early 2024 around the project’s theme.</p>

2.3. Employment

Highlight: Diversity and Inclusion Group

The Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG) is made up of 20 volunteer employees and has been active since 2016. DIG's role is to support the Museums in becoming diverse and fully inclusive workplaces, in which all employees feel accepted and valued. To that end, DIG helps educate staff while raising awareness of the value and richness in our similarities and differences. We do this by leading meaningful diversity and inclusion initiatives and activities, including partnership events such as National Museums at Pride. The year 2023 was the first time that the region's national museums participated in the Capital Pride Parade.

The following table summarizes employment actions for 2023, as outlined in our Accessibility Plan. It also includes goals for 2024 and 2025 that we have already started.

Action	Progress
<p>Action: In 2023, develop guidelines for accessible meetings.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, communicate new guidelines for accessible meetings to staff.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024. The guidelines must first be developed.</p>
<p>Action: In 2023, take steps to ensure that the staff intranet is more accessible. Begin to identify barriers and prioritize solutions, in consultation with an internal advisory group of employees with disabilities.</p>	<p>Action in progress. The Museums replaced their outdated intranets with a new and more accessible platform in June 2023. A new architecture and hierarchy was introduced, making it easier to navigate. The identification of remaining barriers, and prioritization of solutions, will be done in consultation with an internal advisory committee. We expect to complete this action by June 2024.</p>
<p>Action: In 2023, confirm skills or provide training on inclusive job postings.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024.</p>
<p>Action: In 2023, review new job postings and job descriptions to ensure that they are inclusive of people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024.</p>
<p>Action: Write new job postings in plain language.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024.</p>

2.4. Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)

Highlight: *In Their Own Voices* Oral History Project

In Their Own Voices is a collection of more than 150 personal interviews with Canadian veterans and their families. A future online portal will make the audio recordings available to the public, along with photographs and digitized objects. To support the accessibility of the interviews, all of them will have accurate transcripts available in both official languages. Subtitles will also be created, and images will have alt text.

All interviews with the veterans themselves were supported by accessibility measures such as covering travel expenses for veterans and a support person. Care was also taken to conduct interviews in an accessible recording studio.

The following table summarizes ICT actions for 2023, as outlined in our Accessibility Plan. This also includes goals for 2024 and 2025 that are already underway.

Action	Progress
Action: By June 2023, identify a contact on the job-postings webpage to make it possible for applicants to obtain information in an alternative format.	Done.
Action: By December 2023, complete an accessibility audit of the Museums' websites.	Action is in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024.
Action: By December 2023, complete a review of social media content and practices for accessibility.	Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024.

2.5. Communications (Other than ICT)

Highlight: Digital Museums Canada

The Museums administer a national investment program called Digital Museums Canada (DMC). DMC helps to build digital capacity within Canadian museums and other cultural organizations.

DMC took on several accessibility initiatives this year, including building a new version of its Community Stories web platform to meet accessibility standards. Successful applicants to this funding stream will now be able to build their projects on a platform that is accessible to users at the front end, and to website creators with disabilities at the back end.

DMC also created accessible supports for people with disabilities who are applying for funding. These supports included information sessions, office hours, and mentorship chats that all used plain language. DMC offered ASL or LSQ interpretation and closed captions, and provided accessible documents ahead of time. This commitment to accessibility reduced and removed barriers for people with disabilities who were applying for funding to create digital projects with DMC.

The following table summarizes communications actions for 2023, as outlined in our Accessibility Plan.

Action	Progress
<p>Action: By December 2023, develop and implement accessible PowerPoint and Word templates.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024. The company Left Turn Right Turn will provide communications-specific training to members of Museum staff who will be creating and using these materials. Training will take place in January 2024.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, develop a checklist for making documents accessible in Word, PowerPoint, PDF, Excel and other media and digital formats.</p>	<p>Action in progress. As for the action above, this checklist will be created once staff training has taken place.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, establish internal standards for plain language and inclusive language. Develop processes to meet these standards.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024. The standards and the processes for following them will be created once staff training has taken place.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, establish internal processes to respond to and fulfill requests for materials in alternative formats.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024. A vendor list is being created collaboratively, and will be used in Year 2 of the Accessibility Plan to respond to requests for alternative formats.</p>
<p>Action: Continue to provide sign language interpretation and captioning at in-person and virtual public events and programs, when requested in advance.</p>	<p>Action in progress.</p>

Action	Progress
<p>Action: By December 2023, review the accessibility of technology used at current in-person events.</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, review and revise the language used on both Museum websites when referring to people with disabilities. Ensure that it is respectful and dignified; remove all references to “special needs.”</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, review and update the Plan Your Visit webpages for both Museums, and provide information on accessibility features and known barriers at the Museums, including a list of available amenities in accessible washrooms.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect to complete this action by January 2024. The Museums tested information for a revised Accessibility Tab with internal stakeholders, and drafted a document with new text for both Museum websites. We confirmed missing information with internal stakeholders, internally reviewed a draft, and sent it for French translation.</p>
<p>Action: By Fall 2023, research social stories best practices and develop initial storyboards.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done in 2024.</p>

2.6. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Highlight: Audience Survey

Both Museums conducted on-site audience surveys this summer. These surveys will help us better understand who is coming to the Museums. They

will also help us see how we can meet the needs of different target audiences, including people with disabilities.

The surveys have allowed us to measure visitor satisfaction with our exhibitions and programs. We also asked specifically about accessibility, and collected constructive feedback about our services, amenities and facilities. Participants shared their ideas on how we can improve. The data collected will help shape future offerings and identify initiatives to further improve accessibility.

The following table summarizes actions related to Design and Delivery of Programs and Services for 2023, as outlined in our Accessibility Plan.

Action	Progress
<p>Action: By December 2023, develop and implement accessible PowerPoint and Word templates.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024. A vendor has been selected to provide communications-specific training to members of staff who will be creating and disseminating these materials. Training will take place in January 2024.</p>
<p>Action: In 2023, research and purchase noise-cancelling headphones for visitor use.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done in early 2024. Research options were shared and are being reviewed.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, make noise-cancelling headphones available to visitors. Set up visitor lending processes and communications.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect this to be done by March 2024. The headphones must be purchased first.</p>

Action	Progress
<p>Action: By December 2023, add information about headphones to the Plan Your Visit webpage.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect to complete this by March 2024. Information will be added to the website once the headphones have been purchased and related processes are in place.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, review procedures around asking visitors to check bags in storage areas. Implement dignified alternatives for visitors who need to keep their bags for accessibility reasons.</p>	<p>Done. Current procedures and documentation on bag checks were reviewed. Standard operating procedures, including provisions for medical supplies, equipment, and mobility aids were drafted. New procedures were tested for two weeks with positive results.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, review procedures for conducting bag searches under specific security situations.</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, provide training/briefings to visitor-facing staff on the need to use discretion when searching visitors' bags.</p>	<p>Done. Training has been provided and documentation shared with security staff — including our third-party security provider.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, update admission information and accessibility information, indicating that support persons and caregivers for people with disabilities do not need to pay.</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, revise the Visitor Code of Conduct to be more inclusive.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect to complete this by December 2024.</p>

Action	Progress
<p>Action: In 2023, provide audit training to employees who interact with the public (visitor services staff, security staff, Library and Research Centre staff, volunteers, Boutique and food services staff, etc.).</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect to have this done by December 2024.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, review and revise existing accessibility training for customer service staff; align with and enhance basic accessibility training.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect to complete this by December 2024.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, write and implement a scent-free policy. Post the policy the Museums' websites, in employee training manuals, and on the intranet.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect to complete this by December 2024.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, provide a form on the Museums' websites, along with a telephone number for visitors to request scooters for visits.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect to complete this action by March 2024.</p>
<p>Action: By December 2023, ensure that the Canadian War Museum has at least one dedicated mobility device available to volunteers.</p>	<p>Action in progress. We expect to complete this action by March 2024.</p>

2.7. Procurement of Goods and Services

The following table summarizes the procurement actions for 2023, as outlined in our Accessibility Plan.

Action	Progress
Action: By December 2023, update the corporate Contracts Policy.	Done.
Action: In December 2023, confirm that accessibility considerations are included in all procurement documents.	Done. All procurement templates were updated in March 2023 to include identified accessibility criteria.
Action: By December 2023, plan how to better support procurement decision-makers in defining accessibility criteria.	Done.
Action: By December 2023, establish a source list for required accessibility services (for example, plain-language writers, editors and translators; Braille, digital, audio, captioning, descriptive video, sign language interpretation).	Action in progress. We expect to complete this by March 2024. Note that this action has been revised. It now commits to the establishment of a vendor list, rather than a source list.

2.8. Transportation

We do not provide transportation to the public. We do, however, understand that it is our responsibility to be aware of transportation barriers that may affect employees or visitors. Our Accessibility Plan currently includes addressing one transportation-related barrier in the [built environment](#). We have also identified issues with snow removal along bus routes outside our buildings. In addition, the Museums have received feedback on access to our sites during large-scale events hosted on Museum grounds, or nearby.

The Museums will continue working with event partners to address specific barriers to accessibility. Our objective is to continue building upon this awareness by including this and other transportation-related actions in our next Accessibility Plan.

3.0. Consultations

On November 1, 2023, the Museums had an hour-long consultation with members of the Left Turn Right Turn Accessibility Advisory Group. Before the meeting, participants reviewed a draft of this Progress Report. At the meeting itself, we asked the group the following questions:

1. What are your general impressions of the Progress Report?
2. What are your thoughts on the progress the Museums have made in 2023?
3. What do you think is missing from this Progress Report?
4. Can any improvements be made regarding the flow or organization of the Report? Were there any accessibility barriers to understanding it?
5. What do you like about the Progress Report?

Feedback included:

- Praise for the actions that the Museums have already taken.
- Finding the right balance between providing enough details about our actions, but also not making the Report too long.
- Defining some words in the glossary and using plain language.
- Adding an explanation about why some actions have been delayed.

We have addressed their feedback as much as possible in this updated Progress Report.

4.0. Feedback

To date, the Museums have received one request for the Accessibility Plan in an alternative format. This request was made on March 8, 2023, with a request for a Word version of the Plan. We took steps to post an MS Word file on the Museums' websites. Along with an accessible PDF version of the Plan, the MS Word file is now available on the Accessibility Plan landing pages for both Museums.

We have also received general accessibility-related requests, comments, questions, complaints and recommendations. This feedback has either been submitted through

online web forms or sent to the Museums' accessible@historymuseum.ca or accessible@warmuseum.ca email inboxes.

The following is a summary of the volume of feedback received, by theme, from January 1 to November 30, 2023.

- Design and delivery of programs and services:
 - Two comments about the Access 2 Card. The Access 2 Card is a partnership between Easter Seals and cultural attractions to provide access to persons with disabilities.
- Built environment:
 - Three comments about accessible parking
 - Three comments about our mobility devices
 - Three comments about service animal visits/amenities
 - Two comments about seniors with disabilities access
 - Three comments about accessible visit planning
 - Three comments about additional seating
 - Two comments about the accessible arrival experience
 - Two comments about doors and curb cuts
 - Two comments about accessible washrooms
- Design and delivery of programs and services:
 - Four comments about visiting with support persons
 - Two comments about accessible audio tours
 - Two comments about sensory-friendly visits
 - One comment about Indigenous collections
 - One comment about members with disabilities

This feedback has provided opportunities for the Museums to acknowledge and respond to accessibility-related requests, comments, questions, complaints and recommendations. Once receipt of the feedback has been acknowledged, staff decide where to forward it. The relevant department then decides how to handle the issue —

for example, deciding whether it is possible to act on the feedback immediately, or whether it requires a longer-term solution.

Among other things, we have identified a need to improve how we update our Accessibility Working Group. Accessibility Plan leads in this group would benefit from hearing the public's comments, questions, suggestions and recommendations. This can help to ensure that systemic problems and trends are noted and prevented. We will report back on our progress in this area in next year's Progress Report.

Glossary

Accessibility Audit: This involves assessing barriers for people with disabilities. An audit is normally undertaken by different organizations, using a shared set of standards.

Administrative Spaces: This refers to spaces not accessible to the public — including offices and meeting rooms.

Built Environment: This refers to structures made by people, including sidewalks, roads, buildings and furniture.

Consultation Framework: This Plan indicates how, when and with whom the Museums will consult.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Strategy: The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Strategy is the name given to a plan that the Museums have worked on. It is designed to ensure that people are treated fairly and with respect, and that they are given equal opportunities. This document applies to all individuals, no matter their backgrounds, identities or abilities.

Federal Organizations: Various levels of government are responsible for different things in Canada. The federal government oversees the country as a whole. Federal corporations are companies for which the federal government is responsible. These include national museums such as the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum.

Portable Seating: Accessible seating options designed to be transported and used throughout the Museums by members of the public with reduced mobility.

Governance Structures: These structures determine how decisions are made and how organizations are managed.

Terms of Reference: This is a committee or board document describing who they are, what they do, and how they will work.