



CANADIAN
MUSEUM
OF HISTORY
-
MUSÉE
CANADIEN
DE L'HISTOIRE



CANADIAN
WAR
MUSEUM
-
MUSÉE
CANADIEN
DE LA GUERRE

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2026-2028

Canada

Easy-Read Summary

An easy-read summary is a simpler and shorter version of our accessibility plan. It does not include every detail of the full plan. For the full plan, please skip to the section entitled [Accessibility Plan 2026–2028](#).

This plan is about accessibility at the Canadian Museum of History, the Canadian War Museum, the Canadian Children’s Museum, and Digital Museums Canada (the Museums). We want to be more accessible to people with disabilities, including our employees. This is important because the Museums are for everyone. When we say “accessible,” we mean without barriers. This makes sure as many people as possible can enjoy the Museums as visitors and as employees.

We look forward to making more changes to be more accessible. This document shows what we will do to achieve this over the next three years. To help us create this plan, we talked to visitors and employees with disabilities. They shared their opinion on accessibility at the Museums. We used what they told us to help develop this plan. We will

- **support and include people with disabilities** — make sure visitors and employees with disabilities feel welcome and valued
- **listen and learn** — pay attention to, and learn from, what people with disabilities tell us about their experiences
- **act on feedback** — use the feedback we receive to make decisions and improvements on barriers, applying suggestions from people with disabilities to make the Museums better for all visitors and employees
- **make meaningful changes** — improve buildings, communication tools, technology, services, and programs so that they work better for everyone, both in person and online
- **plan with accessibility in mind** — think about accessibility from the very beginning when creating new projects, programs and services

For a complete list of the Museums' accessibility commitments, go to [Appendix A: Accessibility Plan 2026–2028 Commitments](#), at the end of this document.

We welcome your feedback on this plan. Please tell us what you think of the plan by contacting:

By email: accessible@historymuseum.ca

By 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, Quebec K1A 0M8

Canadian War Museum

1 Vimy Place

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M8

In person:

Information Desk

Canadian Museum of History

100 Laurier Street

Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M8

Information Desk

Canadian War Museum

1 Vimy Place

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M8

On our feedback pages:

historymuseum.ca/about/contact-us

warmuseum.ca/about/contact-us

Via social media:

Canadian Museum of History

On Facebook: Canadian Museum of History (@CanMusHistory)

On Instagram: @CanMusHistory

On X: @CanMusHistory

Canadian War Museum

On Facebook: Canadian War Museum (@warmuseum)

On Instagram: @CanWarMuseum

On X: @CanWarMuseum

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Accessibility Plan 2026–2028

1. Land Acknowledgement

The Museums are located on the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg. This land has held, and continues to hold, great historical, spiritual and sacred significance. We recognize and honour the enduring presence of the Algonquin people. We also know that people visit us from many places near and far. We acknowledge the traditional owners and caretakers of those lands.

2. General

2.1 Statement of Commitment

Aligned with our vision, “Dare to inspire tomorrow’s history,” we aim to inspire future generations by creating an environment where everyone can participate, share their unique perspectives, and reach their full potential. The Canadian Museum of History, the Canadian War Museum, the Canadian Children’s Museum, and Digital Museums Canada are committed to creating inclusive experiences for visitors and employees when they access the Museums’ facilities, programs, services and employment opportunities. As part of our commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA), we are committed to

- fostering a diverse and inclusive corporate culture
- creating a diverse and inclusive workforce
- building collections and exhibitions that reflect Canada’s diversity
- creating accessible museums and engaging the Canadian public

Our obligations under the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) give us a framework to identify and remove barriers to accessibility. We know it is important to understand the different types of barriers, to assess our accessibility, to identify barriers, and to make changes to

remove and prevent barriers. The combined work for our EDIA Strategy and our Accessibility Plan will help guide our ongoing commitment to accessible and inclusive experiences for visitors and employees.

Including accessibility early in project planning is important to successfully prevent and remove barriers. We will continue to do this and build in what we have heard from people with disabilities. We are committed to listening to the lived experiences of employees and visitors with disabilities. This will help us make decisions on what changes to make to the Museums' public and work spaces, programs and services. We want everyone to be able to enjoy those spaces, programs and services in ways that respect their dignity and independence.

For a complete list of the Museums' accessibility commitments, go to [Appendix A: Accessibility Plan 2026–2028 Commitments](#), at the end of this document.

2.2 Contact Information and Feedback Process

We welcome feedback — including feedback submitted anonymously — from employees, volunteers, visitors, and everyone else who comes into contact with the Museums. Comments can be about accessibility on site at the Museums and online, or about this plan. We are committed to reviewing the feedback we receive and taking steps to address the barriers identified.

You can submit feedback about accessibility by contacting:

By email: accessible@historymuseum.ca

By 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

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On X: @CanMusHistory

Canadian War Museum

On Facebook: Canadian War Museum (@warmuseum)

On Instagram: @CanWarMuseum

On X: @CanWarMuseum

You can request alternative formats of this plan and a description of our feedback process by contacting: accessible@historymuseum.ca.

An electronic version of this plan, compatible with assistive technology, can be downloaded immediately from our website at: [Accessibility Plan 2026–2028](#).

Upon request, the Museums will provide this plan in the formats listed below as soon as possible. We commit to meeting the following deadlines:

- Print: 15 days
- Large print (increased font size): 15 days
- Braille: 45 days

- Audio (a recording of the text read aloud): 45 days

2.3 Definitions

These definitions are given in the context of the Museums and apply throughout this plan.

Accessibility: Making sure Museum spaces, programs, services and information can be used by everyone, including people with different types of disabilities — both in person and online.

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

Barrier: Anything that makes it harder for people with disabilities to fully use the Museums' public and work spaces, programs, services and activities — either in person or online. Barriers can be things like building design, technology and attitudes. They can also result from the way information is shared, or from rules, policies or ways of doing things.

Built Environment: Structures made by people, including sidewalks, roads, buildings and furniture.

Disability: Any difference in how a person moves, thinks, learns, communicates or understands. It can affect the body or the mind. Disabilities can last a long time or be temporary, and they may change over time.

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

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

2.4 About the Museums

We have three different physical museums: the Canadian Museum of History, the Canadian War Museum, and the Canadian Children's Museum. The Children's Museum is located inside the Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec. The War Museum is located 2.4 kilometres from the Museum of History, in Ottawa, Ontario. Both Museums are located on the banks of the Ottawa River. We also have a funding program for online projects, called Digital Museums Canada.

The **Canadian Museum of History** is the country's national museum of human history. Our job is to grow knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Canada's history and identity. We also work to enhance Canadians' awareness of world histories and cultures. The **Canadian War Museum** is Canada's national museum of military history. It is also a recognized centre for the study of armed conflict. The **Canadian Children's Museum** gives young visitors opportunities to learn through play in immersive settings that arouse curiosity and inspire imagination.

The Museums share knowledge through on-site exhibitions, physical educational kits, printed publications, and in-person lectures. We also offer a variety of digital content across our websites, including online exhibitions, podcasts, virtual tours, resources for teachers, games, activities, and access to collections and research. The Canadian Museum of History manages **Digital Museums Canada**, an investment program supported by the Government of Canada that funds digital storytelling projects developed by Canadian museums, and heritage, cultural and Indigenous organizations.

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

3.1 General

Action Taken and Barriers Identified

We recognize the importance of connecting with equity-deserving groups, including people with disabilities. We have a shared responsibility when it comes to accessibility and making the Museums' physical spaces, programs, services, activities and employment practices more accessible.

An important barrier we have identified is the knowledge and confidence employees need to embed accessibility in their work. We have organized employee training in basic accessibility awareness, accessible communication, and the real-world experience of visitors with disabilities. We learned about respectful and dignified ways of including accessibility in the workplace and the Museums' public spaces, as well as the inclusive language and accessible features and practices to use on site and online. This learning needs to continue to effectively remove the barrier we identified.

Through our consultations with people with disabilities, we have learned about changes we need to make to be more inclusive and accessible. Since 2023, we have experienced the importance of having people with a variety of disabilities test the Museums' accessibility. A barrier we had identified was that accessibility was not being included early enough in project planning. The project team for the new Canadian Children's Museum gathered feedback on themes and activities it proposed. We met with a group of parents with disabilities and caregivers of children with disabilities. The feedback from this group of parents and caregivers included creating a flexible and inclusive environment that supports diverse sensory, physical and cognitive needs. The group also shared the importance of encouraging meaningful connections between children and their caregivers. We will use this valuable feedback when creating the new Canadian

Children's Museum spaces, programs, services and activities. We know that we need to continue to include the voices of people with disabilities in our work planning.

Another format we used for consultation in 2025 was employee training during on-site visits by people with disabilities. An independent consultant recruited people who use wheelchairs, people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, people who are blind or have low vision, and people with cognitive disabilities. Each training session involved the group of people with disabilities planning a trip, visiting the Museums, and exploring them. The Museums' Visitor Services and Security employees participated in the training. They learned from the participants as they explored the Museums and engaged with employees. Staff then shared their learnings on what worked well, what could be improved, and how employees can take action to remove barriers to accessibility. The key learnings from this consultation are

- **participants had a positive experience** — visitors with disabilities enjoyed their visit and shared helpful ideas and feedback
- **staff make a big difference** — helpful staff are important for making the Museums welcoming, inclusive, safe and accessible
- **clear information is important** — clear and precise details are needed for visitors to plan and enjoy their visit
- **signs should be easy to follow** — signs and directions should be clear and consistent to help people find their way
- **the visit starts online** — visitors begin their experience on the website, so it is important that online information be easy to find and understand

A positive result from this consultation is a tip sheet on disability etiquette and inclusive visitor engagement that is now available for Visitor Services and Security employees to use when they connect with visitors with disabilities.

In the future, we need to continue finding ways to engage with visitors with disabilities to identify barriers and learn from their experiences.

We also identified that we need to do a better job of sharing accessibility resources and lessons learned with more employees. Staff have a wealth of knowledge that we need to share more broadly.

Commitments

We will continue to consult with people with disabilities, early and often, and share what we learn with more employees. The Museums are committed to finding opportunities to make positive and meaningful changes to the accessibility of visitor and employee experiences.

We will:

1. Create and adopt a flexible approach to regularly consult with people with disabilities, one that can grow over time.
2. Set up an internal accessibility group that includes employees who have lived experience with a disability. We will consult with this group to get its input and advice.
3. Improve how accessibility feedback is tracked, responded to, and shared within the organization.
4. Share accessibility resources with all Museum teams in a way that is easy to access.
5. Help more employees learn how they can give feedback, including anonymous feedback, about accessibility at work.
6. Review and update the Museums' Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Policy. Share the updates with employees on the intranet.

The details of the consultations we did with people with disabilities when preparing this plan can be found in [Section 4: Consultations](#).

3.2 The Built Environment

Action Taken and Barriers Identified

Accessibility within the Museums' built environment has a significant impact on whether visitors and employees with disabilities can comfortably use the public and work spaces in a manner equal to those without disabilities. We know it is important to understand the existing barriers in our built environment and how they create challenging experiences for people with disabilities. We also know that barriers in our built environment have had an impact on the accessibility of the Museums for visitors and employees.

To develop our first accessibility plan, we worked with an independent consultant and an architect in 2023 and 2024 to identify and analyze existing barriers. This included giving each barrier a score based on health and safety, dignity and equity, and operational impact. The consultants shared estimated costs to remove the barriers and proposed a work plan to help us choose the priorities for removing barriers and making upgrades to the accessibility of our built environment. Many barriers were identified during the four days the consultants spent on site. They gathered a lot of information and put it into a project database that now has a description, score, and upgrade cost for each barrier. The Museums now have all this information to make decisions that will improve the accessibility of their built environment.

The key findings of this built environment audit include the need for

- improved parking and passenger drop-off areas
- wider doors with an upgrade for accessible travel paths
- more powered doors in main areas and washrooms
- improved signs in public and work spaces with better font size, colour contrast, improved wall location, and tactile and braille characters
- accessible washroom stalls and urinals, including limited-mobility stalls, with an adult change table and an emergency call system
- accessible appliances in employee kitchens

- improved lighting in spaces with high visitor and employee traffic, including washrooms, stairs, elevators and employee kitchens
- upgrades to some stairs to include better colour contrast, grip, and tactile warnings
- upgrades to elevators, including having both audio and visual announcements
- an upgrade to visual alarm systems

The Museums have gathered feedback on their built environment from people with disabilities in different ways. We have consulted an advisory group of people with various disabilities, logged accessibility comments and questions sent by visitors and employees to the Museums' accessible[at]inbox, and gathered accessibility comments from visitor surveys. Common feedback we heard on the built environment relates to the following:

- Location and number of accessible parking spaces
- On-site arrival experience
- On-site access to mobility devices
- Physical access to some exhibition spaces
- Lighting in Museum spaces
- Ramps and railings in public spaces
- Location of rest areas
- Available seating throughout the Museums
- Accessibility of some public and employee washrooms
- Facilities for visiting service animals

In addition to the audit findings listed above, we have heard that the following built environment features are barriers for visitors and employees:

- Height of counters in public spaces and employee workplaces, including washrooms, change rooms, and employee kitchens
- Ramps, sloped floors, and walls
- Building materials used for walls and floors

We will use the key findings from the audit and the feedback received so far to help us decide what changes to make to offer visitors and employees a more accessible built environment.

Commitments

We know that we must make tough decisions on improvements to our built environment based on the many barriers identified, what we have heard from people with disabilities, and the resources available to us. When making decisions, we recognize that we will have limited resources, including staff capacity and budgets. We will use the information from the work done on barriers, the feedback received from visitors and employees, and employee expertise to choose priority projects. We are committed to including accessibility in the early phases of project planning to make sure that we are improving the accessibility of our built environment.

We will:

1. Develop a plan to action findings from the built environment audit.
2. Keep including accessibility standards and making accessibility a requirement in major renovation plans going forward. This includes public and exhibition spaces, rental and commercial spaces, and employee-only spaces (offices, lunchrooms, meeting rooms, washrooms, etc.).
3. Review and follow accessibility standards for service counters that need updates. If a counter will not be changed soon, create and use best practices in service delivery to make sure service is accessible, dignified, and fair for everyone.
4. Review how portable seating is used and consider expanding the program.
5. Review where accessible seating is available and identify improvements to help visitors rest, reflect and talk more comfortably.

Our plans for exhibition design, which is separate from the built environment, can be found in [Section 3.6: Design and Delivery of Programs and Services](#).

3.3 Employment

There are approximately 470 employees across the Museums. They work in visitor services, security, program development and delivery, the care of collections, research, exhibition development and design, human resources, communications, and project and building maintenance. Some employees work on site weekdays and weekends, while many others have signed hybrid work agreements that commit them to some days in the office and some days at home.

Action Taken and Barriers Identified

In our first accessibility plan, we worked to remove some barriers, and we know there is still more to do to make employment practices and opportunities accessible. We started using plain language in new job postings and made sure we use inclusive language in job descriptions when referring to access, diversity and inclusion. We organized mandatory disability and accessibility awareness training for all employees and will continue to offer learning opportunities about accessibility and inclusive workplace practices.

The Museums have gathered feedback from employees who self-identified as having a disability. A key finding of this consultation with employees with disabilities is that they appreciate the leadership efforts made to address and improve the accessibility of the Museums' workplaces. There is a need for more proactive efforts in anticipating the needs of employees with disabilities, rather than relying on them to advocate for themselves. This is especially important for people with disabilities that are less apparent. For example, some employees with disabilities recommended proactive communication about accessibility supports to improve the accessibility of the workplace. We learned from them that they would appreciate a consistent approach from their supervisors for check-ins on accommodations. This feedback is important and helps us understand that we have more work to do on disability inclusion for employees with disabilities, including employees with disabilities that are less apparent.

The details of the consultations we conducted with employees with disabilities when preparing this plan can be found in [Section 4: Consultations](#).

We recognize that barriers have impacted the accessibility of employment opportunities at the Museums. We know that it is important to understand the existing barriers in our employment practices and how they create challenging experiences for people with disabilities.

Some barriers to our employment practices have included

- some lack of staff awareness of the Museums' accommodation process
- accommodation request practices
- inconsistent use of plain language
- limited use of inclusive language in job postings
- limited disability and accessibility awareness training

Commitments

We will continue to improve disability and accessibility awareness for all employees at the Museums and work together to share the responsibility of thinking about accessibility.

We will:

1. Make sure all staff are aware of, and can easily access, the updated Accommodation Directive.
2. Review how our new human resources software affects accessibility. Consider doing an accessibility review to make sure the platform is easy for everyone to use.
3. Offer continuous learning opportunities about accessibility and inclusive workplace practices.
4. Review and expand current training tools for front-line employees so they can offer visitors inclusive and accessible service and program interpretation.

3.4 Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)

The Museums use websites, email, digital documents, software, hardware, and virtual platforms to communicate with public audiences and employees. The websites share information on current and upcoming exhibitions, events, programs and activities. There are three websites: the [Canadian Museum of History](#), the [Canadian War Museum](#), and [Digital Museums Canada](#).

Action Taken and Barriers Identified

A barrier identified in our first accessibility plan was that the websites of the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum were not accessible. In 2024, both Museums launched their new websites. We organized user testing consultation with people with disabilities a few months after the new websites were launched. The purpose of this consultation was for the Museums to learn more about the user perspective, including the new website features and accessibility. One tester was completely blind, and another tester had tunnel vision and could only see things on the left side of their field of view. One user was sighted with limited hand mobility, and another user was sighted with an acquired brain injury.

The user testers were impressed with the accessibility of the new websites and had a very positive sense of their content. Their feedback recognized the efforts made by the digital content team to build accessibility into the new websites. The user testers also gave suggestions on areas in need of improvement based on new barriers they faced in their testing of the new websites. The areas most in need of improvement are

- labelling buttons, including accordion menus, used by screen reader users
- the ticket buying interface
- increasing the size of small fonts, removing italic fonts and creating stronger colour contrast where it is missing
- re-writing alt text and image descriptions to make them different from each other and to better align them with each of their functions

- improving the search field and menus to make them more intuitive for users

The Museums have also gathered feedback on their information and communications technologies practices from people with disabilities in different ways. We have consulted an advisory group of people with various disabilities and logged accessibility comments and questions sent by visitors and employees to the Museums' accessible[at] inbox. We repeatedly heard from visitors that the Museums' maps and guides should include accessibility features and be easy to access online and on site.

Commitments

The recommendations and best practices shared during these consultations have helped us decide which actions to focus on to improve the accessibility of the websites, and information and communications technologies.

We will:

1. Add more and improved accessibility information on the Museums' websites.
2. Fix and improve navigation and design elements of the Museums' websites to make them more accessible. Research ways to make the site search feature more accessible.
3. Make sure alt text is used consistently on the Museums' websites going forward.
4. Keep building digital accessibility awareness and skills through the Digital Museums Canada program by helping to create accessible online exhibitions and experiences.
5. Review and update Digital Museums Canada's technical requirements and make sure proposal support documents and information sessions are accessible. This includes budget, schedule, support letter templates, and sign language interpretation.

3.5 Communications (Other Than Information and Communications Technologies)

The Museums share information with the public and their employees in many ways. Information is shared with public audiences online and in person through the Museums' websites, email distribution lists, pre-recorded menus, and live call-centre agents, as well as at the information desks and ticketing counters, over the public announcement systems, in exhibition spaces, during events, and through programs, tours and films. Print documents, videos, email messages, and social media posts are ways we communicate with the public. We answer questions through our Contact Us form on our websites, with options for the public to email or call the Museums.

We share information with all employees through the Museums' intranet, including details on upcoming meetings, events and activities. The intranet also has pages dedicated to the Museums' workplace culture changes, diversity and inclusion, wellness, health, and safety. There are guides available to employees on research and managing information, the use of communication tools and the finance platform, and working from home, as well as a wide range of forms, policies, information and tools for contracts.

We also share information with employees by email, in written documents, and during meetings, presentations and training sessions. Employees also communicate with one another through video calls, written chats, and email messages. All these ways of sharing information can create barriers to accessible communication.

Action Taken and Barriers Identified

Key barriers identified in our first accessibility plan were related to accessible communication. For example, an important barrier was the lack of accessibility information on the Museums' websites. We recognize the importance of making sure all accessibility spaces, services and programs are described on the Museums' websites. We understand that many people, especially people with disabilities, plan their visit to the Museums based on information they find online. To remove this barrier, we added more

information to the Plan Your Visit web pages, and they now include details on the following:

- Free admission for a person accompanying a visitor with a disability
- Accessible parking and drop-off areas
- Mobility devices, noise-cancelling headphones, and assistive technology available to visitors
- Elevator access
- Accessible public washrooms
- Bringing service animals to the Museums
- A social narrative that describes what to expect when visiting the Museums
- Information on sounds and lighting

We will continue to update the information on these web pages as we make improvements to the accessibility of public spaces, visitor services, programs, events and activities.

The Museums have gathered feedback on their communications practices from people with disabilities in different ways. We have consulted an advisory group of people with various disabilities, logged accessibility comments and questions sent by visitors and employees to the Museums' accessible[at] inbox, and gathered accessibility comments from visitor surveys. Common feedback we heard on communications included suggestions that the Museums should make sure

- signage is easy to locate and easy to read
- exhibition text and other signage include braille to assist people with reduced vision
- sign language interpretation is offered for people who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing
- directional aids on the floors are highly visible and textured to help people with reduced vision get around the Museums

In our consultations with employees with disabilities, we heard that communication tools, like email, can create cognitive challenges for employees with reading or comprehension differences. For some people, instant messaging or other alternative communication technologies can be more accessible.

We learned that there is a lack of understanding and support for different communication styles and channels. We recognize that awareness and training in accessible communication is an important step for employees who write and share information. We are committed to learning about standards, using available tools, and applying strategies when sharing information with the public and each other.

Commitments

In our first accessibility plan, we committed to starting work on reducing barriers to accessible communication. We will build on this work to make sure we are communicating with the public and employees in accessible and inclusive ways, for a wide range of audiences and learning styles. To improve the accessibility of communications with the public and employees, we will:

1. Create plain language standards for print and digital communications. Guidelines will be created, and training on plain language writing will be given to staff responsible for communications.
2. Ensure inclusive and plain language is used in employee-focused communications and programs, including posts, messages, and training materials.
3. Review and update the Museums' rental agreements to make sure that contracts are written in plain language.
4. Review the work done so far on creating accessible Museum-branded PowerPoint and Word templates. Decide what still needs to be done to complete this and start using them.
5. Organize and lead a yearly review of the Museums' Plan Your Visit, Accessibility, and Temporary Exhibitions web pages. Make sure the information is up to date, correct and accessible.

6. Share information on the updated accessibility features in the CINÉ+ cinema with all visitors and employees.
7. Improve the current social narrative by adding new content, like details about temporary exhibitions, and incorporating feedback from users.

3.6 Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

There are many ways public audiences can enjoy the Museums' programs and services, both in person and remotely. On-site programs include group and self-guided tours, events, and school programs. The Museums also offer online programs to the public, including a virtual school program, pre-recorded online tours, online exhibitions, recorded podcasts, blog posts, videos, games, and activities. On-site visitor services include parking options, storage of personal items, access to mobility and assistive devices, washrooms, eating areas, and other amenities. Online or remote visitor services include access to the Museum's Call Centre, the Canadian History Research Centre, and the Military History Research Centre.

Action Taken and Barriers Identified

The Museums have gathered feedback on the design and delivery of their programs and services from people with disabilities in different ways. We have consulted an advisory group of people with various disabilities, logged accessibility comments and questions sent by visitors and employees to the Museums' accessible[at]inbox, and gathered accessibility comments from visitor surveys. Common feedback we heard on programs and services include the need for

- physical rest areas where visitors can decompress when overstimulated
- sensory considerations in exhibition design and program delivery to avoid overstimulation
- clear communication on the admission price for the person accompanying a visitor with a disability, including information on accepting the Access 2 Card
- scent-free exhibition spaces or only allowing mild scents

In keeping with our first accessibility plan, we added information gathered through this accessibility feedback to the Museums' Plan Your Visit web pages. These web pages now include details on admission, accessible parking, access to assistive devices and technologies, public eating areas, washrooms, service animals, sounds and lighting, and accommodation requests for tours, programs and events.

A key barrier to designing and delivering accessible programs and services is the lack of employee awareness and the lack of confidence when it comes to understanding disabilities and accessibility. Under our first accessibility plan, we reviewed training for employees who interact with the public, including accessibility training, and offered mandatory disability and accessibility awareness training to all employees. In 2025, employees who work in Visitor Services and Security completed visitor-focused training by learning from people with disabilities during their visit. As described on page 14, this meaningful training gave employees an opportunity to learn from visitors with a range of disabilities and observe their lived experiences on site with the Museums' built environment, programs and services. Employees then shared with each other what they heard and learned from the visitors with disabilities. They also presented their training experiences to all the Museums' employees. They shared the lessons they learned and the best practices they will use to offer visitors inclusive and accessible programs and services. The Museums' Visitor Services and Security employees now have access to a tip sheet on disability etiquette that they can use when providing services and programs to visitors with disabilities.

Another important barrier to the design and delivery of programs and services was the need for more on-site support for visitors with disabilities. The Museums have made a lot of progress to remove this barrier, including adding new services and starting new pilot programs. People with disabilities can find a lot more accessibility information on the Museums' new websites to help plan their visit, as described above in the "Communications" section. They can reserve wheelchairs, strollers and assistive devices before they visit the Museums, including ear defenders and motorized scooters. Once they arrive on site, visitors can access new programs where volunteers assist them with

parking payment and when they want to access one of the Museums' theatres. We are committed to tracking the requests from visitors for these programs and services. We will come up with ways to better inform visitors about them, and expand the programs and services if there is a need.

Commitments

We will use what we heard from visitors with disabilities and what we learned from their lived experience at the Museums. We will apply the best practices from our new disability etiquette tip sheet, continue to remove the barriers to our programs and services, and address any new barriers.

We will:

1. Use new data from accessibility device requests to track how often devices are used by visitors, and where and how visitors access the devices on site. We will find ways to better tell visitors about this service and expand the offer of devices as needed.
2. Research best practices from similar institutions for service animal relief areas, choose pet relief locations and set them up.
3. Review the Access Ambassador Volunteer pilot program. Evaluate its effectiveness and consider expanding it to help visitors in more Museum spaces.
4. Keep track of visitor requests for the new parking payment help service to understand how often it is used and how well it works.
5. Apply lessons learned to existing tours, animations and programs developed by the Learning team.
6. Review the Museum Guide visitor tool for accessible and inclusive content.
7. Keep evaluating visitor experiences and selected exhibitions, programs and services to gather feedback on accessibility.
8. Update accessibility standards and start using the updated process for future exhibition projects and related products.

9. Keep offering one-on-one mentorship opportunities to equity-deserving groups that apply for Digital Museums Canada funding and need help with their applications.

3.7 Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

When the Museums buy a good or service, employees write descriptions of what they need, including specific requirements. When determining those requirements, it is important to think about best practices and what people with disabilities might need. We are committed to including accessibility early in our processes and practices and have started to make improvements to our procurement process.

Action Taken and Barriers Identified

In our first accessibility plan, we committed to including accessibility in procurement documents. The Museums now better support the employees who make procurement decisions when they are reviewing accessibility criteria in documents. Since 2023, it has been mandatory for the Museums' procurement documents, like a request for proposals (RFP), to include accessibility criteria. We also committed to reviewing the Museums' Contracts Policy. An updated policy was published in 2024.

We have consulted an advisory group of people with various disabilities and logged accessibility comments and questions from visitors and employees. We learned from people with disabilities the importance of including an accessibility review early in the procurement of goods and services.

Our procurement process uses a privately owned platform called MERX. The files that we upload to this platform are not accessible. A barrier for vendors, including vendors with disabilities, is accessing files on the MERX platform. For example, we use Portable Document Formats (PDFs) and know that this type of file is often not accessible to people with disabilities. We will explore options to make our procurement documents accessible on the MERX platform and see if Microsoft Word documents can also be

accepted. We will review our procurement documents to see which ones can be updated to make them accessible and add them to our procurement process.

We have a procurement team available to assist vendors who need help to navigate our procurement process. If a vendor requires our documents in alternate formats, they can send their request to our procurement team through the MERX platform.

Another barrier in our procurement process is how the accessibility-related costs for vendors with disabilities may impact the competitiveness of their cost proposals. We recognize that our process does not build in the possible needs of vendors with disabilities. We know that we have more work to do in this area to improve our procurement process and better support vendors with disabilities. We do not know yet how we will remove this barrier, but we will keep an eye on what other organizations are doing.

Commitments

We will use what we heard from people with disabilities, lessons learned from Accessibility Standards Canada's Technical Guides for Procurement of Accessible Goods and Services, and the experiences of employees who work in procurement. We will keep learning about best practices in procurement of goods and services and find ways to apply them in our procurement process. We will learn from the vendors we work with to continue to remove the barriers in the procurement of goods and services and address any new barriers.

We will:

1. Use the lessons learned and the recommendations in Accessibility Standards Canada's Technical Guides for Procurement of Accessible Goods and Services to help us improve the accessibility of our procurement process for goods and services.
2. Explore options to make sure our procurement documents are accessible.
3. Explore and develop possible accessibility evaluation criteria to use when planning to buy goods and services.

3.8 Transportation

Action Taken and Barriers Identified

Museum visitors can face barriers when planning their trip to and from the Museums. Barriers can include road closures for community events, limited accessible parking, Museum closures due to service interruptions, private events, and other unplanned situations.

The Museums have gathered feedback on transportation from people with disabilities in different ways. We have consulted an advisory group of people with various disabilities, logged accessibility comments and questions sent by visitors and employees to the Museums' accessible[at] inbox, and gathered accessibility comments from visitor surveys. For example, during an on-site consultation, we heard from a manual-wheelchair user that it is important for the Museums to be aware of obstacles, especially snow-covered ramps used to access the Museum sites. The Museums will continue to identify barriers to accessibility and work with their external maintenance, program and service providers to improve access to their sites.

Commitments

The Museums are committed to sharing information with visitors and employees when details on limited access to their sites are known. On a case-by-case basis, we will review how events may impact accessibility for employees and the public. We will continue to provide information about possible barriers and accommodations as early as possible, and through the best possible public and employee communication channels. We will make sure that access to the Museums is a priority when external events impact the areas around the Museums.

Barriers related to transportation accessibility are addressed through the built environment section of this plan, individually through accommodations (e.g., employee travel), or on a case-by-case basis when temporary barriers occur.

4. Consultations

We are committed to including people with disabilities early and often in ongoing consultations. A lesson we learned in the consultations for the development of this plan is that accessibility is a shared responsibility. It should not be seen as the responsibility of people with disabilities. The Museums have a role to play in developing an inclusive work environment for all employees, and an accessible and inclusive learning environment for their visitors. We can achieve this by making sure accessibility practices are applied consistently.

The following sections outline how people with disabilities were consulted during the development of this plan and how we used what we learned to prepare our list of actions.

4.1 Accessibility Advisory Group

We consulted an advisory group on a list of actions that we wanted to include in this plan. The advisory group was made up of members from the cross-disability community and included people with the following disabilities:

- Mental health disabilities
- Acquired neurological and cognitive disabilities
- Learning disabilities
- Neurodivergence, including autism and ADHD
- Blindness
- Deafblindness
- Hearing loss
- Low vision
- Chronic health conditions
- Physical disabilities requiring the use of mobility devices, including canes and power and manual wheelchairs.

- Sensory and chemical sensitivities
- Dwarfism
- Speech impairments

A week before the consultation session, the members of the group received a list of questions that would be asked during the session. Below are the questions, which they were asked to read in advance.

1. What are your overall impressions of the list of potential actions?
2. Do you think any of the goals are especially important? Goals that should be highlighted and kept in the plan. Can you explain why you think those goals are important?
3. Of the goals that you think are especially important, can you recommend other related goals that should be considered? Do you have any recommendations for additional goals that would relate to what you saw on the list of actions?
4. If you had to remove some goals, which ones would you pick and why?

The advisory group shared very thoughtful and meaningful feedback on our list of actions. Most members shared positive views on the Museums' direction and commitment to accessibility. Feedback ranged from suggestions on adopting a universal design approach when upgrading the built environment to considering making accessible changes in an agile way and adjusting if necessary.

The advisory group shared recommendations on important visitor considerations, such as including non-visual experiences online and in person, and the impact on mobility for aging visitors. Some members of the group recognized the value and importance of the Museums' volunteers and encouraged us to include them more in the planning of visitor and employee experiences. Some members found certain actions unclear and gave suggestions to explain them better. It was suggested that we clarify some of the wording we use to describe physical aspects of the Museums' spaces.

The important feedback from the advisory group helped us better understand the impact of our list of actions related to the

- demand for accessible digital content and interest in such content
- need for an accessible built environment, including seating options, ramps, and curb cuts
- importance of universal design
- importance of clear signs in plain language
- need for mandatory accessibility training
- expectation that employee systems be accessible
- need to have accessible transportation to and from the Museums

4.2 Employees with Disabilities

The purpose of consulting employees with disabilities was to listen and learn from their lived experiences in the workplace. We heard about the barriers they face as employees with disabilities and their suggestions to make employee workplaces and opportunities more accessible.

Employees were sent an email inviting them to participate in a consultation on accessibility. Seven employees responded and participated in a discussion in the official language of their choice. Most were people with disabilities that are less apparent. The discussion was facilitated by an independent consultant to ensure that participants felt free to be candid about their experiences. The facilitator led the consultation, analyzed feedback, and provided suggestions to the Museums for improving the accessibility of our workplaces. All information shared was confidential and aggregated before being shared with the Museums, to protect individual privacy.

Two separate focus group sessions were scheduled, one in English and one in French. Both sessions were facilitated by the consultant in a neutral, supportive and confidential environment. The seven employees who participated were asked to share their thoughts on the accessibility of the Museums' workplaces, as well as their lived experiences. They were told that their input would be important in helping the Museums improve accessibility for employees.

Overall, the employees with disabilities value the Museums as workplaces and appreciate the efforts made to support accessibility. The Museums are recognized as workplaces where we are actively working on accessibility. However, employees with disabilities continue to face barriers. They have experienced barriers to accessibility in

- workplace culture and attitudes
- the physical environment of the Museums
- the use of technology and communication tools in the workplace
- the accommodation request process
- participation in online and in-person employee events, meetings and activities

The employees with disabilities shared that there is room for improvement in the following areas of workplace accessibility and employment practices:

- Recognizing and supporting a range of abilities and working styles
- Understanding of invisible disabilities and the needs of employees with an invisible disability
- Disability awareness and inclusive training with a focus on disabilities that are less apparent
- Diversity as more than visible differences, including how people think, process and communicate
- Support needed for employees with disabilities who are masking them or self-accommodating in the workplace
- Accommodation check-ins to review requests and better understand accessibility supports
- Accessibility issues and the barriers people with disabilities face in their lived experience
- Improving compliance with existing policies and procedures
- Training in accessibility features in commonly used tools

5. Conclusion

We want to be more inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities. We will use this accessibility plan to guide our work for the next three years. We understand that accessibility is a shared responsibility and that we need to work together to improve the accessibility of visitor experiences and employee workplaces. We are committed to including accessibility early in project planning and using best practices when designing and delivering programs, events, services and activities offered in the Museums' on-site spaces. We will have to make choices based on the resources we have. We will make informed decisions to improve accessibility in a meaningful way.

We will keep talking to people with disabilities and use their feedback to make things better for everyone. People with disabilities have told us about the barriers they face when accessing the Museums' on-site spaces, programs and services, and their websites. We will keep collecting feedback through consultations, email messages, website forms, and phone calls, and use it to decide which accessibility improvements to make first. This includes making changes to buildings, programs, services, and how people work.

A key message from employees with disabilities was that the Museums should be more proactive, not wait for people to ask for help. Instead, offer support early and consistently, especially for employees with invisible disabilities. We will keep consulting with employees with a range of disabilities to make sure they feel supported and included in an accessible workplace.

We will share with all employees what we have learned from our accessibility training and consultations with people with disabilities. We will find ways to build in accessibility early and often when making plans to action the goals in the Accessibility Plan.

Appendix A: Accessibility Plan 2026–2028

Commitments

1. Create and adopt a flexible approach to regularly consult with people with disabilities, one that can grow over time.
2. Set up an internal accessibility group that includes employees who have lived experience with a disability. We will consult with this group to get its input and advice.
3. Improve how accessibility feedback is tracked, responded to, and shared within the organization.
4. Share accessibility resources with all Museum teams in a way that is easy to access.
5. Help more employees learn how they can give feedback, including anonymous feedback, about accessibility at work.
6. Review and update the Museums' Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Policy. Share the updates with employees on the intranet.
7. Develop a plan to action findings from the built environment audit.
8. Keep including accessibility standards and making accessibility a requirement in major renovation plans going forward. This includes public and exhibition spaces, rental and commercial spaces, and employee-only spaces (offices, lunchrooms, meeting rooms, washrooms, etc.).
9. Review and follow accessibility standards for service counters that need updates. If a counter will not be changed soon, create and use best practices in service delivery to make sure service is accessible, dignified, and fair for everyone.
10. Review how portable seating is used and consider expanding the program.
11. Review where accessible seating is available and identify improvements to help visitors rest, reflect and talk more comfortably.

12. Make sure all staff are aware of, and can easily access, the updated Accommodation Directive.
13. Review how our new human resources software affects accessibility. Consider doing an accessibility review to make sure the platform is easy for everyone to use.
14. Offer continuous learning opportunities about accessibility and inclusive workplace practices.
15. Review and expand current training tools for front-line employees so they can offer visitors inclusive and accessible service and program interpretation.
16. Add more and improved accessibility information on the Museums' websites.
17. Fix and improve navigation and design elements of the Museums' websites to make them more accessible.
18. Make sure alt text is used consistently on the Museums' websites going forward.
19. Research ways to make the site search feature on the Museums' websites more accessible.
20. Keep building digital accessibility awareness and skills through the Digital Museums Canada program by helping to create accessible online exhibitions and experiences.
21. Review and update Digital Museums Canada's technical requirements and make sure proposal support documents and information sessions are accessible. This includes budget, schedule, support letter templates, and sign language interpretation.
22. Create plain language standards for print and digital communications.
23. Provide training on plain language writing to staff responsible for communications.
24. Ensure inclusive and plain language is used in employee-focused communications and programs, including posts, messages and training materials.
25. Review and update the Museums' rental agreements to make sure that the contract language is written in plain language.

26. Review the work done so far on creating accessible Museum-branded PowerPoint and Word templates. Decide what still needs to be done to complete this and start using them.
27. Organize and lead a yearly review of the Museums' Plan Your Visit, Accessibility, and Special Exhibitions web pages. Make sure the information is up to date, correct and accessible.
28. Share information on the updated accessibility features in the CINÉ+ cinema with all visitors and employees.
29. Improve the current social narrative by adding new content, like details about special exhibitions, and incorporating feedback from users.
30. Use new data from accessibility device requests to track how often devices are used by visitors, and where and how visitors access the devices on site. Find ways to better tell visitors about this service, and expand the offer of devices as needed.
31. Research best practices from similar institutions for service animal relief areas, choose pet relief locations, and set them up.
32. Review the Access Ambassador Volunteer pilot program. Evaluate its effectiveness, and consider expanding it to help visitors in more Museum spaces.
33. Keep track of visitor requests for the new parking payment help service to understand how often it is used and how well it works.
34. Apply lessons learned to existing tours, animations and programs developed by the Learning team.
35. Review the Museum Guide visitor tool for accessible and inclusive content.
36. Keep evaluating visitor experiences and selected exhibitions, programs and services to gather feedback on accessibility.
37. Update accessibility standards and start using the updated process for future exhibition projects and related products.
38. Keep offering one-on-one mentorship opportunities to equity-deserving groups that apply for Digital Museums Canada funding and need help with their applications.

39. Use the lessons learned and the recommendations in Accessibility Standards Canada's Technical Guides for Procurement of Accessible Goods and Services to help us improve the accessibility of our procurement process for goods and services.
40. Explore options to make sure our procurement documents are accessible.
41. Explore and develop possible accessibility evaluation criteria to use when planning to buy goods and services.
42. On a case-by-case basis, we will review how events may impact accessibility for employees and the public. We will continue to provide information about possible barriers and accommodations as early as possible, and through the best possible public and employee communication channels.