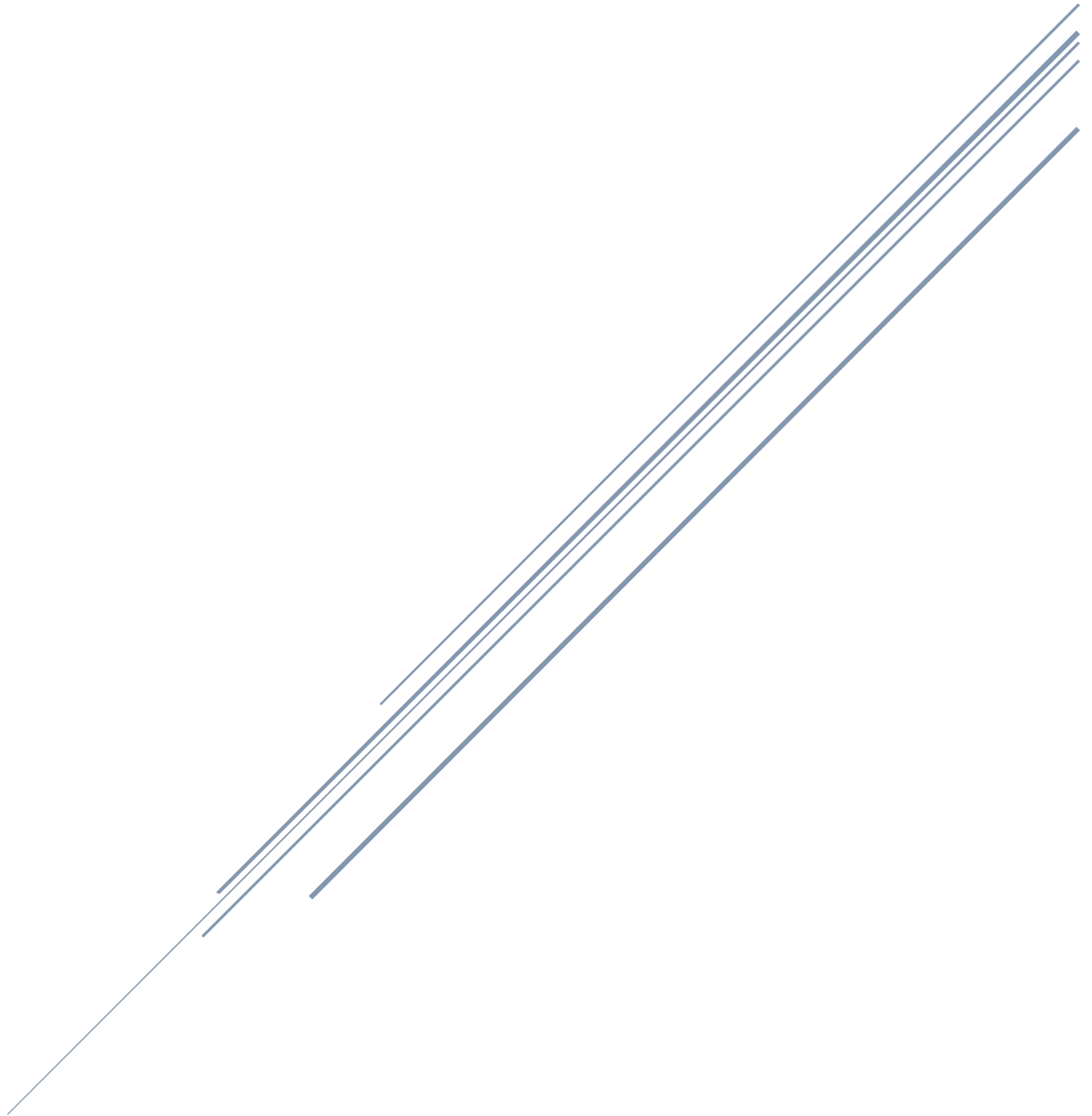


2022-2025 Accessibility Plan

Office of the Secretary to the Governor General



This publication presents the 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan for the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General.

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Plan d'accessibilité 2022-2025 - Bureau du secrétaire du gouverneur général.

For more information, contact

Office of the Secretary to the Governor General
1 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A1
www.gg.ca

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General (2022)

Catalogue Number SO4-3E-PDF

ISSN 2817-1330

Table of Contents

General.....3
Consultations3
Employment.....4
The Built Environment5
Information & Communication Technologies6
Communication*, other than information and communication technologies7
The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities8
The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services.....9

General

Alternate Formats

The Office of the Secretary to the Governor General (OSGG) is pleased to present its 2022–2025 Accessibility Plan. Should you require an alternate format of the contents of this Plan, you may submit your request by mail, email or telephone using the information outlined below under ‘Contact Information’. The OSGG will endeavour to respond to requests to make this Plan available in print, large print, Braille, audio format or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology as soon as possible.

Feedback Process

The OSGG has designated the Head of Human Resources as the recipient of feedback pertaining to its accessibility plan, the implementation of the plan and the barriers encountered by all individuals who interact with the OSGG in one manner or another. Individuals may submit their feedback by mail, email or telephone using the information outlined below under ‘Contact Information’. Anonymous feedback is welcome; however, acknowledgement of receipt can only be provided for feedback in which contact information is provided.

Contact Information

To the attention of: Head of Human Resources, OSGG

Phone number: 343-576-7483

Toll-free/TTY 1-800-465-6890

Mailing address: 1 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON
K1A 0A1

Email address: accessibility-accessibilite@gg.ca

Consultations

In keeping with the principle of “nothing about us without us”, the OSGG consulted with its employees on the mitigation strategies proposed for each of the areas of focus included in this Plan through an anonymous online survey. In future iterations of the OSGG’s Plan and its progress reports, the OSGG will endeavour to seek more fulsome feedback from the public and disability groups, and will consult at each major phase of the development of the report or plan.

The Employee Survey

Nearly one third of OSGG staff working at Rideau Hall and at the Residence of the Governor General at the Citadelle of Québec completed the survey. Of those participants, 19% indicated that they were living with a disability.

In addition to being asked to what extent the respondents do believe that the proposed mitigation strategies for each of the six areas of focus will advance accessibility, respondents were asked if they

had recommendations for additional actions that the OSGG should undertake. The recommendations made by employees were reviewed by senior management and the content of this Plan revised where needed to reflect the considerations raised by respondents to the survey.

The mitigation strategies proposed for all priority areas received largely positive feedback, with responses of ‘to a very large extent’ and ‘to a large extent’ accounting for 47.9% to 64.6% of responses. The two areas where barriers were most commonly encountered were the built environment and employment. Even though the feedback on the mitigation strategies was largely positive, the OSGG recognizes that this feedback only represents the views of a portion of one of its stakeholder groups, its employees. Moving forward, the OSGG will conduct consultations with other stakeholder groups who visit Rideau Hall and the Citadelle.

Employment

Current Context

As an organization within the Core Public Administration, human resources activities at the OSGG are guided by relevant legislation, regulation, policies, directives and guidance, including the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), the *Employment Equity Act* and the *Official Languages Act*. The Government of Canada as a whole is in the process of updating this overall framework, which will guide OSGG’s work to create a work place and work environment that are accessible by design.

The employee lifecycle is made up of five key phases in which barriers must be identified and mitigated or removed in order to ensure a barrier-free OSGG: recruitment, onboarding, development, retention and transition. As the OSGG works towards becoming a barrier-free organization, communication with current, future and potential employees will be critical to set direction and target efforts within each of these five phases.

The Human Resources Directorate (HRD) within the OSGG informs recommendations to management with workforce demographic statistics, including representation rates, in order to ensure a workforce that is representative of the Canada of today and of the future. That being said, inclusivity is more than numbers. The OSGG is actively working on the restoration of the workplace in order to create a culture where diversity of experience, perspectives, backgrounds, etc. is not simply valued, but is sought out and leveraged to advance all facets of the OSGG.

In addition, as a small department, the Pay and Benefits team is able to provide personalized service to employees. A Compensation Advisor is available to meet with employees with disabilities to review and explain their compensation and benefits package when requested, and to provide advice and guidance in the event of significant life changes. As employees transition to another role, to another public service department, or to retirement, they remain supported by the HRD and their management.

Areas of Focus and Planned Action

<i>Identified Barrier</i>	<i>Mitigation Strategy</i>
Entry into and mobility within the public service for persons with disabilities is inhibited by systemic biases or barriers	Partner with the Public Service Commission to evaluate and determine whether the employment assessments or the application of these assessments include or create biases or barriers that disadvantage persons with disabilities. Identified

	biases or barriers will then be removed or changes will be made to mitigate their impact.
Lack of partnerships with external organizations that support persons with disabilities in finding career opportunities	Create a targeted outreach function within the Human Resources Directorate that establishes partnerships with universities, colleges, communities, etc., to recruit persons with disabilities.
Lack of learning opportunities tailored towards persons with disabilities	Introduce mentorship, sponsorship and learning opportunities that support employees with disabilities, their development and their advancement within the public service.
Lack of education and support for management in implementing Duty to Accommodate	Expand the Occupational Health and Safety mandate to include an accommodation function who will train and support management, and emphasize the importance of empathy, active listening and flexibility.
Little opportunity for employees to provide feedback to inform HR-related strategies and initiatives	Include a section on accessibility in all quarterly employee surveys on human resources-related subject matter.

The Built Environment

Current Context

The OSGG conducts its operations within a unique portfolio of buildings in Ottawa and in the City of Québec. Many of these buildings are designated heritage properties and are of national significance. While the OSGG has been occupying these buildings for a considerable length of time, the department does not own them. As such, the OSGG works closely with its landlords, the National Capital Commission (NCC) and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), to ensure these buildings have the capacity to support OSGG employees, operations and services to the public.

The majority of the department’s operations are located in Ottawa at Rideau Hall, the Official Residence of the Governor General of Canada. The main part of the residence was constructed in 1838 and there have been a number of additions made to it since, with construction of the last addition ending in 2004. Rideau Hall and the buildings located on its grounds provide work spaces for federal public servants, public spaces for state ceremonies and events, and living spaces for the Governor General and their family. The surrounding grounds are a tourism destination where Canadians can learn about the governor general and enjoy a variety of activities throughout the year. In addition, the Chancellery of Honours, which includes the Canadian Heraldic Authority, occupies office space at 373 Sussex Drive in Ottawa.

The second official residence of the governor general is located in Québec City within the fortress walls of the Citadelle of Québec. The Residence was first constructed in 1831 and has been an official residence of Canadian governors general since 1872. Construction of the newest parts of the residence was completed in 1984 to replace the staterooms which were destroyed by fire. Similar to Rideau Hall, the residence at the Citadelle is a federal workplace, an event space, and a tourist destination. The residence itself is owned by PSPC, but located within an active military base which is home to the Royal 22^e Régiment. As such, the OSGG works in close partnership with the Regiment in supporting visitors and staff in accessing the residence.

Areas of Focus and Planned Action

Given the buildings' age, accessibility was not a factor that was considered in their construction. While some accessibility upgrades have been completed over the years, much more needs to be done to ensure that all Canadians, including federal employees, guests and public visitors, are able to fully access all aspects of the OSGG's built environments.

Moving forward, the OSGG will continue to partner and work closely with partners working on the different worksites: the NCC, PSPC, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Royal 22^e Regiment to evaluate the accessibility of employees, private and public spaces to create more inclusive environments for employees, guests and visitors. This will involve continuing to evaluate the accessibility of existing spaces in accordance with established guidelines and best practices, and ensuring that future modifications and renovations are inclusive by design.

<i>Identified Barrier</i>	<i>Mitigation Strategy</i>
Not all guests and employees are able to access public space and employee workspaces.	In consultation with persons with disabilities, review and identify areas in need of improvement.
	In partnership with the NCC, prioritize and implement recommended upgrades included in the Universal Accessibility Assessment for Rideau Hall, with a focus on the most critical areas to ensure employee and visitor accessibility.
	In partnership with PSPC, identify, prioritize and implement accessibility upgrades at the Citadelle and at 373 Sussex Drive as needed, and ensure future retrofits are inclusive by design.

Information & Communication Technologies

Current Context

As our processes become increasingly digital, the OSGG will build its capacity and capability to consider accessibility from the start, so that information and communications technology products, services and content are usable by all.

Areas of Focus and Planned Action

<i>Identified Barrier</i>	<i>Mitigation Strategy</i>
Not all users are able to use systems and software because they do not meet modern accessibility standards	Ensure new systems, including internally developed or externally procured hardware and software, meet modern accessibility standards that are "accessible by default."
	Accessibility issues in legacy systems will be addressed when they undergo maintenance or are re-developed in addition to when such an accessibility issue is identified by an employee or a member of the public.
Employees do not understand accessibility considerations, nor do they have knowledge of existing accommodations	Develop training and awareness sessions for OSGG employees on Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT).
	Set up guidelines for posting accessible documents and media on the Intranet and Internet (e.g., specify if employees have to make a PDF accessible if an HTML version is also available).

Communication*, other than information and communication technologies

*Communication includes the use of American Sign Language, Québec Sign Language and Indigenous sign languages

Current Context

The OSGG is responsible for all public-facing communications related to the Governor General of Canada, and for ensuring all communications initiatives, products and services meet the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion, as per the [Policy on Communications and Federal Identity](#) and the [Treasury Board Standard on Web Accessibility](#). The OSGG will continue to use public-facing platforms and communications tools to reach out to diverse audiences, and to help raise accessibility awareness in our public communications. These include:

- A public-facing website, which includes published content which conforms to the Treasury Board Standard on Web Accessibility. Content is published in HTML format and alternate formats are available by request, including plain text, print copies, audio versions and other options.
- Multiple social media accounts for both the Governor General and the official residences of the Governor General. Content for these accounts includes the use of inclusive imagery, alternate text for all visuals, and barrier-free language in both official languages.
- Marketing and print products, which includes brochures, posters, stationary, signage, etc. that take into account best practices for accessibility and are available in multiple formats upon request.
- Digital products, such as photos, videos, and graphic design that take into account accessibility requirements, feature consistent use of alt-text, captioning and other accessibility best practices that enhance the user experience.

Areas of Focus and Planned Action

<i>Identified Barrier</i>	<i>Mitigation Strategy</i>
Lack of knowledge, experience and expertise in developing the full scope of accessible communications products	Provide training to employees and managers on accessible communications best practices, and incorporate these changes into all public-facing OSGG communications.
Public Information, including information on the OSGG's Website and on its digital platforms, is not always accessible to all users	Identify key information and frequently used content that needs to be adapted and enhanced for greater accessibility. Use plain language in all products, both internal and external. Obtain external expert advice and technical support to enhance the accessibility of the OSGG website.
Visuals and information on digital platforms may not be fully inclusive or representative of the disability community	Incorporate ability-focused language in all communications. Identify and promote leaders in the accessibility community through OSGG communications products. Incorporate inclusive imagery in communications products.

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Current Context

Procurement is a key partner to achieving accessibility at the OSGG. The Materiel Management and Procurement (MM&P) team is committed to making its procurement barrier-free for the broadest range of end users.

As a result, the OSGG will ensure, where appropriate, to include accessibility considerations when specifying requirements for goods, services and ensuring that deliverables incorporate accessibility features; and clear justification is documented if it is determined that accessibility considerations are not appropriate to include as part of commodity specifications, or if it is not possible to obtain goods, services that comply.

Following the lead of central agencies, the OSGG will update its procurement internal procedures and adapt new direction on accessible procurement.

Areas of Focus and Planned Action

<i>Identified Barrier</i>	<i>Mitigation Strategy</i>
Lack of knowledge, experience and expertise in developing accessible evaluation criteria and ensuring that contract deliverables include accessibility features	Accessibility considerations will be included when specifying the requirements for goods and services, and ensure that deliverables incorporate accessibility features, consulting the Accessibility Procurement Resource Centre (APRC) and PSPC where appropriate.
Limited knowledge of accessible procurement concepts	<p>Procurement officers will be trained on the impact of the Accessible Canada Act in procurement, and on the importance and details of accessible procurement through videos produced by PSPC and the Canada School of Public Service. The following training must be completed by March 31, 2023, for current employees, or within three (3) months of employment for new employees.</p> <p>a) Two (2) short videos provided by PSPC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Accessible Canada Act and Government Procurement • What does it mean to consider accessibility in government procurement <p>b) The Canada School of Public Service Video: Spotlight on ACCESSibility Micro-learning Series: Procurement</p> <p>As part of its procurement framework, the MM&P will include and deliver procurement accessibility awareness training to clients, including Project Authorities (PA) and Technical Authorities (TA).</p>

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Current Context

The programs and services of the OSGG support the governor general in fulfilling the constitutional, State and ceremonial responsibilities of the role. More specifically, this includes the planning and implementation of the governor general's program, and the many activities undertaken with, and on behalf of, Canadians in communities across the country and abroad, as well as activities undertaken with the Canadian Armed Forces, in the governor general's capacity as commander-in-chief. These activities recognize outstanding achievements by Canadians and foster national identity, unity and pride.

Many of these activities take place on the grounds of Rideau Hall and at the Citadelle of Québec, the locations of the governor general's official residences. Canadians from across the country are regularly invited to participate in ceremonies which recognize the extraordinary contributions of Canadians to making the world a better place, to participate and bear witness to important State events such as Cabinet shuffles and presentation of letters of credence by new ambassadors to Canada, as well as events which mark important moments in Canadian history such as the opening and closing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The OSGG also offers regular public access and programming to members of the general public and school-age children at the sites of both official residences. Throughout the year, visitors are invited to learn about the history of the residences, and the roles and work of the governor general by taking tours of the residence, participating in a variety of activities on the Rideau Hall grounds, and engaging in innovative educational programming.

The Chancellery of Honours of the OSGG recognizes and honours Canadians with medals, awards, decorations and heraldic emblems. It brings to light the stories of successes and unsung heroes in our communities. It administers aspects of the Canadian Honours System and several Governor General's Awards. The Chancellery is also home to the Canadian Heraldic Authority, which is headed by the governor general, and creates and records coats of arms, flags and badges for Canadian citizens, corporations and institutions.

The nomination and application lifecycle is made up of several key phases in which possible barriers must be identified and mitigated or removed in order to ensure a barrier-free process. These phases include: outreach and engagement; submission process; research; analysis and assessment; decision; communication with recipients; and presentation. A similar process is in place for applications for heraldic emblems.

As the Chancellery works towards becoming a barrier-free organization, communication with current, future and potential nominators, applicants and recipients will be critical to set direction and target efforts within each of these phases.

Nominations, applications and correspondence related to national honours are received primarily in electronic format (paper still possible). Communication with recipients is also primarily electronic; however, each award includes verbal and written interactions as well as printed material.

Canadian Honours are governed by regulations, policies and directives.

Note: Responsibility for many military service medals has been delegated to the Department of National Defence.

Areas of Focus and Planned Action

The Office ensures that plans are proactively in place to support visitors and guests with physical mobility restrictions and provides other types of accommodations, such as sign language interpretation, on an as requested basis. Moving forward, the OSGG will look at ways of incorporating accessibility into its public services to ensure that people of all abilities are accommodated and able to participate in the programs, services and events offered at Rideau Hall and the Citadelle. Plans to address some of the physical barriers within the department’s two sites are addressed in the built environment section of this strategy. As such, the commitments noted below focus on improving services relating to non-physical types of disabilities, including neuro-diverse and other types of invisible disabilities.

<i>Identified Barrier</i>	<i>Mitigation Strategy</i>
Visitors and guests not being able to fully participate in the programs, services and events offered at Rideau Hall and the Citadelle	Update website and direct communications with visitors and guests to invite them to proactively identify any accessibility issues prior to visiting Rideau Hall or the Citadelle so that accommodations can be put in place.
	On an ongoing basis, seek and document feedback from visitors and guests on accessibility measures put in place during their visit to ensure continuous improvement.
	Engage the services of external experts to assess accessibility gaps in the services and public programming at Rideau Hall and the Citadelle, and develop and implement solutions to address them.
	Create a “social story”, a step-by-step description of what to expect during a visit to Rideau Hall and the Citadelle.
	Ensuring services for persons with disabilities at on-site events and activities are available.
Accessibility of nomination / application portals and information destined to be used by the public.	Engage in a process to identify potential barriers and biases, and identify areas for improvement.