



Canada Energy
Regulator

Régie de l'énergie
du Canada

Annual Progress Report on the Canada Energy Regulator Accessibility Plan (2023-2024)



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General

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- Main Reception: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Library: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

How to provide feedback

Feedback on the CER's Accessibility Plan can be given to the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at accessible@cer-rec.gc.ca. Telephone: (403) 292-4800. Or by completing [this form](#).

The CHRO (or delegate) can also answer any questions on how to receive the CER's Accessibility Plan and Accessibility Report in an accessible format, as well as provide an accessible description of the CER's feedback processes for the Accessibility Plan.

The CER also has offices in Montreal, Vancouver, and Yellowknife. The contact information for each is listed below.

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Background

The Accessible Canada Act (ACA)

Enacted with Royal Assent in June 2019, the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA) aims to create a barrier-free Canada for people with disabilities by January 1, 2040. The Act focusses on identifying, removing, and preventing barriers within federal jurisdiction, addressing seven key priority areas to achieve this vision:

- Employment
- The built environment (including buildings and public spaces)
- Information and communication technologies
- Communication (beyond information and communication technologies)
- The procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- The design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation

Under the ACA, federally regulated organizations must develop and implement Accessibility Plans to address barriers in these priority areas. In response to this mandate, the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) developed its inaugural Accessibility Plan, which was submitted to the Accessibility Commissioner, Canadian Human Rights Commission and published on both the internal and external CER websites on December 31, 2022.

Key Definitions under the ACA

The ACA provides foundational definitions for key terms:

- **Barrier:** Defined as "anything – including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything based on information or communications, or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice – that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment, or a functional limitation."
- **Disability:** Defined as "any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or visible or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society."

The sections that follow provide a comprehensive overview of the CER's ongoing efforts to meet the ACA's objectives, including addressing barriers, fostering accessibility, and promoting inclusivity across the organization. The report will also cover the CER's consultations, feedback mechanisms, and actions aimed at enhancing accessibility and inclusivity, demonstrating our commitment to advancing a barrier-free Canada.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of the Canada Energy Regulator (CER), it is my privilege to present our 2024 Accessibility Progress Report. At the CER, our mission is to regulate energy infrastructure in a way that prevents harm and ensures the safe, reliable, competitive, and environmentally sustainable delivery of energy to Canada and the world. Our dedicated team, across the country, works in a hybrid environment that emphasizes our unwavering commitment to accessibility, equity, and inclusion.

As a lifecycle regulator, we prioritize safety, quality, and accessibility in all our operations. In 2024, we have integrated accessibility into the CER's three-year [Strategic Plan](#), emphasizing that accessibility is a critical element for fostering an inclusive workplace that reflects the diverse communities we serve.

Our commitment to enhancing accessibility is evidenced by our continued implementation of the [Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) and the ongoing review of our systems, processes, and tools to identify and remove barriers. Additionally, we are proud to support our newly established Ability and Barrier Circle, which plays a vital role in guiding our accessibility initiatives and fostering cross-departmental collaboration to remove barriers.

We believe that including persons with disabilities in our decision-making processes is crucial for our success. We actively seek feedback and engage stakeholders to ensure our strategies and actions are informed and effective.

As we reflect on our progress over the past year, we recognize that our work is ongoing. Together, we aspire to create an inclusive and accessible work environment where everyone can thrive.

We are committed to continuous learning, innovation, and improvement in our accessibility efforts. Together, we can break down barriers and contribute to a more inclusive society for all Canadians.

Tracy Sletto

Chief Executive Officer
Canada Energy Regulator

Message from the Accessibility Champion

As the Accessibility Champion for the Canada Energy Regulator (CER), I am honored to lead our commitment to enhancing accessibility within both our organization and the broader public service. Our [Accessibility Plan 2023-2025](#) outlines our objectives, strategies, and partnerships, aligning with the goals of the [Accessible Canada Act](#).

This report highlights our progress across seven priority areas included in the Act: employment, the built environment, information, and communication technologies (ICT), communication (beyond ICT), procurement of goods, services and facilities, design and delivery of programs and services, and transportation.

I am proud of the tangible strides we have made this year. Notable achievements include increasing the representation of persons with disabilities within our workforce, and successfully implementing the **Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport**. Additionally, the **Ability and Barrier Circle**, initiated this year, plays a vital role in informing and guiding our initiatives, ensuring that they are inclusive and effective, and fostering the identification of department-wide solutions. The CER has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) this year. This MOU will give CER hiring managers direct access to the talent pool from the visually impaired community, and thereby support achieving hiring targets. The CER will explore similar opportunities with other organizations in the future.

Accessibility is foundational to inclusion and critical for creating a barrier-free work environment where individuals with disabilities can thrive in all aspects of life, either social, economic, or cultural. Within the CER, this means ensuring that employees with disabilities have equal opportunities for promotions, work accommodations, and a truly inclusive workplace. We all share a responsibility to promote accessibility, and it must be embedded in our design and decision-making processes. By doing so, we uphold the rights of individuals with disabilities and foster a welcoming environment for all.

Srikanth Venugopal
Accessibility Champion
Canada Energy Regulator

Executive Summary

The Canada Energy Regulator's (CER) Accessibility Progress Report reaffirms our commitment to fostering an inclusive, accessible workplace aligned with the [Accessible Canada Act \(ACA\)](#). This report is structured around the seven priority areas outlined in the [CER's Accessibility Plan](#), providing a comprehensive overview of our progress and key activities within each area.

Our approach to implementing the Accessibility Plan builds on the foundational steps established through the CER's **Diversity and Belonging (D&B) Roadmap**, adopted in 2022. This strategic alignment not only underscores our commitment to accessibility but also emphasizes our dedication to nurturing a diverse workforce and an inclusive and equitable work environment that supports the well-being of all employees.

Key Achievements and Progress Highlights

Over the past year, **the CER has achieved significant milestones in creating a more accessible and inclusive workplace, implementing 23 of the 31 commitments outlined in its Accessibility Plan.** These accomplishments reflect CER's dedication to meeting the requirements of the ACA while fostering a supportive and inclusive organizational culture.

Notable achievements and progress include:

1. Leadership and Accountability

- The appointment of an Accessibility Champion to ensure strong leadership commitment to accessibility across the organization.
- Integration of accessibility accountabilities into leadership performance reviews, fostering accountability at all levels.

2. Accommodation Improvements

- Launch of the [Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport](#), streamlining workplace accommodations and improving transparency.
- Collaboration with the [Accessibility, Accommodation, and Adaptive Computer Technology \(AAACT\)](#) program to provide employees with disabilities access to essential tools and technologies.

3. Digital and Physical Accessibility

- Prioritization of compliance with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG 2\)](#) to ensure accessible digital platforms and online resources.
- Mandatory training on [accessible procurement](#) to embed accessibility in acquisition processes, ensuring inclusive procurement and technology solutions.

4. Enhancing Representation for People with Disabilities

- An increase in representation, with employees with disabilities rising from 35 to 46, narrowing the gap to the national Labour Market Availability (LMA) benchmark of 52.
- Focused efforts on addressing gaps, particularly in professional and leadership roles, through purposeful recruitment, promotion, and retention strategies.

These achievements demonstrate CER's commitment to removing barriers, embracing inclusivity, and fostering an accessible workplace that empowers all employees to contribute meaningfully to the organization's mission.

Looking Ahead to 2025

Our primary objectives for the upcoming year include:

- **Expanding the Accessibility Passport for a Hybrid Workplace:** Ensuring accessibility within our evolving hybrid work model, while recognizing its broader benefits, including fostering cultural adaptation, and supporting employees navigating the accommodation process.
- **Ongoing Accessibility Training:** Strengthening our commitment to accessibility awareness with training sessions provided to all staff.
- **Integrating Accessibility into Policies and Processes:** Continuing to embed accessibility into CER's core policies, procurement processes, and program development.
- **Promoting Disability Inclusion in the Workforce:** The CER is committed to prioritizing the hiring, retention, and advancement of employees with disabilities. Efforts will focus on identifying and actively removing systemic barriers to promotion, such as inconsistencies in career progression structures, to build a more inclusive, diverse, and representative workforce.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

As we continue implementing, refining, and updating our **Accessibility Plan**, we remain steadfast in our mission to contribute to a barrier-free Canada by 2040. Feedback received on our plan will guide ongoing improvements, ensuring that we create an accessible and inclusive workplace for all CER employees. Our commitment goes beyond compliance; we are dedicated to cultivating a workplace culture where every employee can thrive and feel valued.

Introduction

The Canada Energy Regulator (CER) plays a pivotal role in Canada's energy sector by ensuring that energy moves safely and efficiently through the country's pipelines and powerlines. In alignment with the preamble in *Canadian Energy Regulator Act*, we are committed to taking actions that contribute to an inclusive and democratic society and allow all Canadians to participate fully in all spheres of their lives. The CER is dedicated to creating an inclusive and accessible workplace that mirrors the diverse communities we serve.

As part of our efforts, the CER is taking meaningful actions to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that impact people with disabilities, in accordance with the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA). The ACA outlines seven priority areas for action: employment, the built environment, information, and communication technologies (ICT), communication beyond ICT, procurement, program and service delivery, and transportation.

The [CER's Accessibility Plan for 2023-2025](#), developed through extensive consultations with CER staff, outlines strategies to address accessibility barriers within the organization. We recognize that feedback is crucial to the success of our initiatives, and we actively engage with employees and stakeholders to continuously refine and enhance our approach.

This report highlights the CER's key accomplishments and ongoing efforts to promote accessibility, including the introduction of the Accessibility Plan and the implementation of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport. Our commitment remains steadfast in removing workplace barriers, fostering an inclusive work environment, and ensuring equal opportunities for all. The journey towards a barrier-free Canada represents both a responsibility and an opportunity for the CER to demonstrate leadership in accessibility.

In the following sections, we present a comprehensive overview of our progress to date, the challenges we have encountered, and the objectives we will continue to pursue as we work toward a Canada that is accessible for all.

Progress in Areas in Section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*

Employment

The CER is deeply committed to creating meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, in alignment with the [ACA](#) and the [Government of Canada's Accessibility Strategy](#). As part of our [Accessibility Plan](#), we established **eight employment-related commitments, of which four have been fully achieved, and four are actively progressing toward completion**. Although we did not participate in a dedicated career fair for people with disabilities this year, we leveraged previous efforts and resources to maintain inclusive hiring practices and promote employment equity.

Initiatives and Accomplishments:

1. Accessible Employment Opportunities

- **Career Fair Continuity:** The CER continued to use resumes from last year's career fair to identify qualified candidates with disabilities. This resulted in a participant transitioning from a casual position at CER to a term position in another government department, demonstrating our commitment to fostering talent mobility.
- **Targeted Job Advertising:** During National Accessibility Week, the CER advertised job opportunities specifically for students with disabilities. This initiative raised awareness of our inclusive hiring practices and supported our goal of enhancing the representation of individuals with disabilities within CER.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CNIB:** CER has signed an MOU with the [Canadian National Institute for the Blind](#) (CNIB) to deepen our commitment to accessibility, particularly for individuals with vision impairments. This partnership aims to enhance our recruitment strategies and raise awareness of accessible employment opportunities.
- **Utilizing Public Service Commission (PSC) Inventories:** CER actively leverages PSC resources, such as the “[Digital Careers for Persons with disabilities - Recruitment campaign - Canada.ca](#), [Graduate and Focused Recruitment - Information for managers - Canada.ca](#) [Ongoing student recruitment](#)” and The Virtual Door to Talent with Disabilities - GCpedia initiatives. These resources help us identify and attract talented individuals for CER positions.

2. National AccessAbility Week 2024: Celebrating Accessibility and Raising Awareness

- **Employee Stories and Career Progression:** During [National AccessAbility Week](#), CER hosted a panel featuring employees with disabilities who shared their experiences and insights. These stories highlighted their successes as well as the systemic barriers they face in navigating workplace accommodations and career advancement.
 - **Challenges in Career Progression:** Panelists highlighted systemic barriers to equitable promotion pathways for employees with disabilities. A notable concern is

the inconsistent application of job ladders and technical leader roles. These structural gaps are impacting the career growth of highly qualified and experienced individuals with disabilities.

- **Addressing Bias and Workplace Barriers:** Panelists also discussed the importance of addressing workplace biases, microaggressions, and harmful attitudes. They advocated for fostering dialogue, empathy, and inclusive leadership to create an equitable environment.
- **Neurodivergent Perspectives:** Neurodivergent employees highlighted challenges in securing leadership roles, citing how workplace environments often prioritize neurotypical expectations. They called for a broader understanding of diversity in leadership, noting that leadership should accommodate diverse ways of thinking and working.
- **Guest Speaker Event:** We hosted Jeremy Evans, known as "[Grizzly Dude](#)," a motivational speaker and mental health advocate, who shared his story of resilience and highlighted the importance of mental health and personal empowerment in the workplace.
- **Partnership with CNIB:** CER's Calgary office hosted an event where [CNIB](#) representatives provided insights into their advocacy, demonstrated assistive technologies, and dispelled common stereotypes about visual impairments. Employees also had the opportunity to interact with guide dogs, enhancing their understanding of their role in supporting individuals with vision impairments.

3. Leadership Development

- **Participation in Leadership Programs:** CER continues to support leadership development for employees with disabilities through programs such as the [Aspiring Director Program](#) at the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS). Three CER employees recently completed training, while one employee is currently participating in the [Mosaic Leadership Development Program](#), which strengthens our organizational capacity and furthers our accessibility goals.

4. Accessibility and Awareness Initiatives

- **Engagement in Broader Accessibility Events:** CER employees participated in key events like the [Canadian Congress on Disability Inclusion](#) and the "Brave Conversations and Bold Actions" seminar. These opportunities allowed our team to learn from best practices across the public sector and further our accessibility initiatives.

Through these efforts, the CER continues to remove barriers to employment, foster inclusive opportunities, and build a workplace culture that values and supports employees of all abilities. We remain committed to achieving the goals of the ACA and the CER Accessibility Plan, contributing to a federal public service that respects and empowers individuals with disabilities.

The Built Environment

The Canada Energy Regulator is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible built environment for all employees. As part of its Accessibility Plan, the CER has taken significant steps to enhance accessibility across its facilities, ensuring that physical spaces support and accommodate all individuals. **Out of the four commitments related to the built environment, two have been fully completed, while the remaining two are at various stages of progress.**

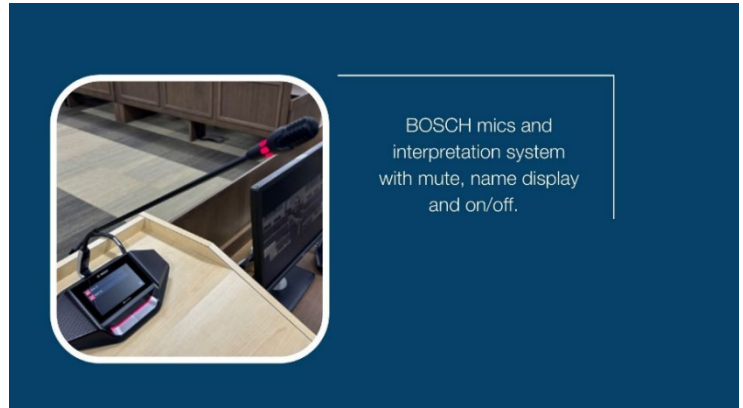
Key Initiatives and Accomplishments:

The CER has made significant strides in improving accessibility within its office facilities. These enhancements are categorized as follows:

1. Modernizing the CER Hearing Room

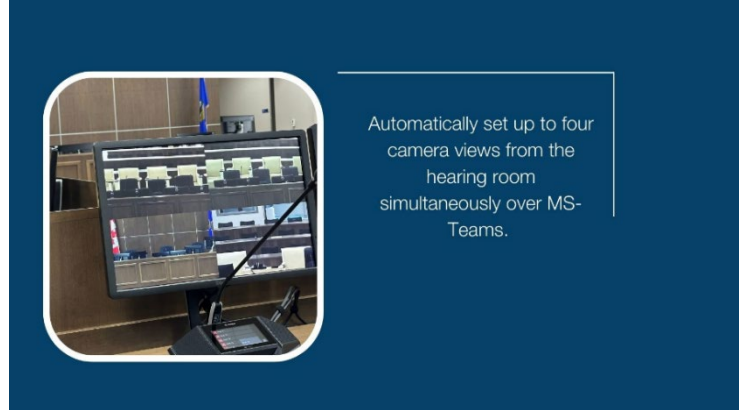
As part of CER's commitment to ensuring accessible and inclusive spaces, significant technological updates have been made to the Hearing Room to enhance its functionality for in-person and hybrid settings. These upgrades ensure better accessibility and improve the experience for participants, including those requiring interpretation, court reporting, or remote access.

- **Video Technology:** New cameras with enhanced video quality and automated direction, which adjust to active microphones and support multiple concurrent camera views. Additional cameras have been installed, improving room coverage, and enabling better support for remote interpreters and court reporters.
- **Audio System:** Upgraded BOSCH audio systems with touchscreen mic bases, enhanced sound quality, mic mute buttons, and optional delegate name displays for clearer communication.



- **Bilingual Hybrid Meetings:** The new system now supports bilingual hybrid meetings, addressing a longstanding gap in our technology and improving accessibility for participants in both official languages.

These updates mark the first major technology improvement since 2014 and reflect CER's commitment to creating inclusive and technologically advanced spaces that build trust and transparency in regulatory processes.



Broader Accessibility Improvements

In addition to the Hearing Room enhancements, the CER has implemented accessibility features applicable throughout its facilities:

- **Optical Access Buttons:** Optical Access Buttons are advanced accessibility features installed on washroom and reception doors to improve ease of use for individuals with mobility challenges. Unlike traditional push buttons, these devices use optical sensors that detect hand motion or gestures, eliminating the need for physical contact. This touch-free design enhances accessibility and hygiene, providing a more seamless experience for users. These buttons are particularly beneficial in reducing barriers for individuals with mobility disabilities, creating a more inclusive and accessible environment.
- **Gender-Neutral and Fully Accessible Washroom and Change Room:** This addition reflects the CER's commitment to ensuring that all employees and participants in our regulatory processes, regardless of gender identity or ability, have access to fully accessible facilities.



2. Hybrid Workplace Adaptations

The CER adopted a Hybrid Workplace model in April 2023 supported by a **Hybrid Guidance and Telework Policy**, offering flexible work arrangements. This approach allows employees to work remotely for up to three days a week or 60% of their work hours each month. Additional hours (banked hours or earned days off) in excess of normal hours are also available.

Feedback from staff has highlighted that flexible work arrangements provided by the hybrid approach have enhanced accessibility, particularly for employees requiring accommodations. For example:

- **Remote Work Benefits:** Employees with accessibility needs have noted that remote work creates a more accommodating environment, leveling the playing field.
- **Active Feedback Mechanism:** The CER actively seeks employee input to address concerns or suggestions about office arrangements, ensuring continuous improvements to accessibility.

3. Accessibility Assessments

The CER remains committed to identifying and addressing barriers in its built environment. In alignment with this commitment, the following updates are provided:

- **Accessibility Assessment of Centre 10:**
Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) hired an accessibility expert to complete an assessment of the CER's Calgary office at Centre 10. The assessment report has been shared with the landlord, along with a request to ensure compliance with the accessibility code requirements outlined in the lease agreement.
- **Future Assessments:**
As part of its ongoing accessibility efforts, the CER will prioritize conducting additional detailed physical accessibility reviews of its office spaces in Vancouver and Montreal in 2025-26. This proactive approach aims to identify and address any barriers, ensuring consistent and equitable working conditions that meet accessibility standards and support the needs of all employees and visitors across CER office locations.

3. Communication and Transparency

Recognizing the importance of clear and open communication about accessibility, the CER is committed to providing detailed information regarding accessibility features at its office locations.

- **Accessible Information:** This information is made available on the CER intranet and included in job postings to promote inclusivity, attract diverse talent, and ensure that prospective employees are well-informed about the accessibility measures in place.
- The CER also recognizes the importance of showcasing its achievements in accessibility and aims to incorporate examples of accessible initiatives and their impact in its communications moving forward.

Through these initiatives, the CER is making meaningful progress toward creating a built environment that is inclusive and accessible for all. The organization recognizes that accessibility is a continuous journey and is committed to identifying and removing barriers as

they arise. By embedding accessibility into its culture and operations, the CER is moving closer to a truly barrier-free environment, where all employees can thrive.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The CER is dedicated to ensuring that its Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are accessible to all employees. Aligned with the third priority area of its [Accessibility Plan](#), CER has implemented comprehensive measures to improve the accessibility of its digital platforms, systems, and tools. **Notably, all six commitments related to ICT have been successfully completed, reflecting CER's proactive approach to removing digital barriers for individuals with disabilities.**

In line with the [Government of Canada's Accessibility Strategy](#), which advocates for universal usability in ICT, CER's accessibility efforts adhere to national standards, including the ACA. These initiatives focus on areas such as data visualization, Microsoft Office accessibility, and system-wide compliance, with the goal of fostering an inclusive digital environment for all employees.

Key Initiatives and Accomplishments:

1. Application of the Government of Canada's ICT Accessibility Scorecard and Maturity Model

- In 2024, CER applied the [Government of Canada's ICT Accessibility Scorecard](#) to assess its ICT services comprehensively. This collaboration with the Procurement and Web teams has led to substantial progress in documenting governance processes, risk management, and accessibility planning.
 - The scorecard is currently under review, with a recommendation from the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) to align with the [Harmonized European Standard \(EN 301 549\)](#), which also served as the foundation for CER's ICT Accessibility Guidelines.

2. Ensuring Compliance with ICT Accessibility Standards

- As part of CER's commitment to accessible ICT, the **ICT Accessibility project** assessed 20 priority data and information management systems against the **CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024 Accessibility requirements** for ICT products and services, establishing accessibility baselines.
 - To ensure ongoing compliance, an accessibility review process has been integrated within CER's **Architecture Review Board** to evaluate new systems before implementation.
 - CER also published its **Accessibility Guidelines** and **Evaluation Checklist** on the project iWeb page and hosted a **Digital Accessibility Workshop** for CER designers and developers, enhancing empathy and knowledge in building accessible systems and tools.

3. Promotion of Microsoft Office Accessibility Features

- To promote the use of Microsoft Office's accessibility features, CER co-hosted an **Accessibility Kitchen Café** in May 2024, highlighting tools such as alt text, keyboard shortcuts, and the **Microsoft Accessibility Checker**.
 - These features were further promoted through an iWeb article and regular updates on the project iWeb page, ensuring staff awareness and supporting the creation of accessible documents across the organization.

4. Industry Monitoring for Data Visualization Accessibility Tools

- CER is committed to staying at the forefront of accessibility in data visualization. By monitoring industry developments, we ensure that we are equipped to integrate new tools and practices as they become available, further enhancing our approach to data accessibility.

Through these initiatives, CER has demonstrated leadership in ensuring that its ICT services are an integral part of an inclusive and accessible workplace. By continuing to refine and expand our efforts, we will ensure equal access to digital tools and information for all employees, contributing to a supportive culture and an accessible and inclusive work environment.

Communication, Other than ICT

The CER is committed to enhancing communication accessibility through targeted initiatives outlined in its Accessibility Plan. This priority area includes three key commitments aimed at fostering inclusivity, awareness, and clarity in communications. **A commitment to providing training that enhances accessibility awareness among staff has been successfully completed. Progress has also been made on the remaining two commitments:** promoting plain language in communications and encouraging the use of the Decision in Brief (DiB) practice within adjudication and regulatory decision-making processes. Both are well underway and will remain a focus for completion in the coming year as CER continues to enhance communication accessibility for all stakeholders.

1. Training and Awareness

In alignment with CER's Accessibility Plan, a comprehensive review of course offerings was conducted to enhance accessibility awareness and understanding among staff. In addition to courses like [Moving from Bias to Inclusion](#) (INC123), [Responding to Unconscious Bias](#) (INC133), and [Call It Out: Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Human Rights](#) (INC119), employees and leaders are encouraged to engage with the Canada School of Public Service's [Accessibility Learning Series](#).

To deepen accessibility knowledge, two new courses were added to the CER's learning catalog:

- [Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility](#) (INC115): This self-paced online course challenges common assumptions about people with disabilities, shifting the focus from impairments to the barriers they encounter. Participants gain practical tools for fostering inclusive, barrier-free workplaces and services.
- [Disability Management and Workplace Wellness](#) (INC120): This self-paced online course covers managing impairments, functional restrictions, and limitations while emphasizing workplace wellness and accommodations for remain-at-work or return-to-work planning.

These offerings aim to dismantle barriers stemming from limited accessibility awareness and foster an inclusive work environment.

2. Plain Language Initiatives and Decision in Brief (DiB) Implementation

The Canada Energy Regulator (CER) is committed to promoting plain language in alignment with the Government of Canada's policy objectives, ensuring clear and accessible communication across all platforms. CER follows the [Canada.ca style guide](#) to produce materials, including websites and social media content, at the lowest possible reading level while maintaining technical accuracy.

Recognizing the complexity of regulatory and technical subjects, CER is enhancing plain language initiatives through targeted efforts:

- **National Accessibility Week 2025 Campaign:** Strategic Communications will lead an internal campaign to highlight the importance of plain language in creating accessible materials.
- **Staff Training and Resources:** Courses such as *A Roadmap to Digital Accessibility* (DDN2-A28) and *Making Documents Accessible* (INC1-V46) are being promoted, alongside articles and videos like *Let's Talk about Accessibility* (DDN2-A03) and the *Spotlight on ACCESSibility Micro-Learning Series* (CSPS).
 - Collaboration will take place between internal groups, such as the Hearing Managers Community of Practice, to incorporate accessible writing practices into training and guidance provided to staff.

A key component of these efforts is the DiB initiative, which enhances the accessibility of CER's regulatory decisions. DiBs provide concise summaries of complex or high-profile cases, tailored to the needs of individuals with neurological or cognitive disabilities.

Progress includes:

- In October 2023, a DiB was created for [the NEBC Connector Project](#) recommendation. While it demonstrated progress, its readability level was assessed at grade 10-11, above the target range of grade 5-7.

Long-Term Goals:

- The CER will explore opportunities to enhance the readability of regulatory decisions and materials using emerging technologies, including approved tools, to ensure greater accessibility and clarity for diverse audiences.

These combined efforts underscore CER's commitment to fostering inclusivity and accessibility through plain language communication.

3. Accessible Meetings

As part of its ongoing commitment to accessibility, CER has developed and implemented a guide for accessible meetings. This guide is utilized for several all-staff events, such as town halls and awards ceremonies, ensuring these events are fully accessible. CER has incorporated accessibility assessments for all events, providing closed captions, bilingual information, and making materials available in advance to ensure all participants can engage fully.

CER's progress in Priority Area Four demonstrates a strong commitment to creating an inclusive communication environment. By addressing barriers, fostering transparency, and promoting plain language and accessible practices, CER advances its dedication to inclusivity and accessibility for all stakeholders.

The Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

The CER remains steadfast in its commitment to integrating accessibility into its procurement processes, ensuring that all goods, services, and facilities meet the diverse needs of stakeholders. This focus on accessible procurement supports the CER's broader objectives under the ACA. Demonstrating its proactive approach, **the CER has fully implemented all five commitments in this priority area**. Below are the key accomplishments related to Priority Area Five:

1. Accessible Procurement Training

- **Team Development:** The procurement team has participated in information sessions offered by (PSPC), the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS), and Shared Services Canada. These sessions enhanced the team's understanding of accessible procurement principles and underscored the importance of prioritizing accessibility in procurement decisions.
- **Development of Resources:** The CER developed and distributed an **Accessibility in Procurement Toolkit** and **Accessibility in Procurement Checklist** across the organization to ensure accessibility considerations are integrated into procurement plans and processes. While initially provided to the Data and Information Management teams as key users, these tools are intended for use by all employees involved in procurement activities to embed accessibility throughout the organization.

2. Privacy Considerations in Procurement

- **Enhanced Training:** Privacy training is now provided to the procurement team to ensure privacy considerations are seamlessly integrated into contract requests that include accessibility requirements.
- **Updated Resources:** The Accessibility in Procurement Toolkit and Checklist are being updated to reflect privacy requirements, ensuring that accessibility and privacy considerations are aligned in procurement practices.

3. Accessibility in Purchase Requisition Process

- **Form Enhancements:** Accessibility considerations are now embedded in the Purchase Requisition Supplementary Form, requiring business units to account for accessibility needs when initiating contracts.
- **Mandatory Tools:** The Accessibility in Procurement Checklist is included in all requisition documents, emphasizing accessibility as a key consideration from the start of the procurement process.

4. Streamlining Procurement Procedures for Accommodations

- **Process Improvement:** The procurement team is actively reviewing procedures to better manage contract requests involving accessibility requirements, with a specific focus on accommodating privacy considerations. This review aims to enhance the efficiency of accessibility-related procurement processes.
- **Resource Utilization:** The Accessibility in Procurement Toolkit and Checklist continue to serve as essential resources for CER staff, ensuring procurement activities are aligned with accessibility objectives.

5. Leveraging the AACT Program

- **Incorporation into Processes:** The CER has revised procurement practices to incorporate the [Accessibility, Accommodation, and Adaptive Computer Technology](#) (AACT) program as a viable option for meeting accessibility requirements. The AACT program is now recommended during the planning and execution phases of procurement activities.

These accomplishments demonstrate the CER's dedication to creating an inclusive environment through accessible and equitable procurement practices. By embedding accessibility considerations into all stages of procurement, the CER is demonstrating leadership in advancing its accessibility goals under the ACA and contributing to a barrier-free Canada.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The CER recognizes the importance of embedding accessibility into the design and delivery of its programs and services. Substantial progress in this area reflects the CER's commitment to fostering full participation for all individuals, including those with disabilities. **The two commitments identified under this Priority Area have been completed.**

1. Applying a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) Lens

The CER consistently applies a GBA Plus lens to the design and delivery of its programs and services, ensuring accessibility is a core consideration. This approach helps the CER understand and address the diverse impacts of its programs and services, particularly for individuals with disabilities, while promoting equity across all segments of the population.

2. Human Resource Policies Review

As part of an ongoing three-year review of Human Resource policies, initiated in early 2022, the CER is rigorously evaluating policies to integrate principles of GBA Plus, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Key policies that have been reviewed and updated include:

- Talent and Performance Management Policy
- Policy on Employment Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Recognition Policy

These updates reflect the CER's commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace that supports equitable opportunities for all employees.

3. Self-Identification Campaign and Representation Progress

The CER has implemented an annual Self-Identification (Self-ID) campaign, which plays a critical role in tracking and enhancing representation of employees with disabilities. This campaign has yielded significant results, reducing the representation gap for employees with disabilities from 29 in 2022 to just 6 in 2024, as compared to Labour Market Availability (LMA).

The Self-ID campaign provides valuable data that informs organizational decisions, supports equitable practices, and strengthens the CER's workplace inclusivity. Recognizing the importance of accurate data, CER continues to encourage staff participation in the Self-ID process to further improve representation and remove barriers.

4. Innovative Approaches to Engagement: Oral Indigenous Knowledge Sessions

The CER recognizes the importance of meeting stakeholders where they are to ensure equitable access to its regulatory processes. A notable example includes Oral Indigenous Knowledge sessions conducted for two Imperial Oil applications in a remote Northern community.

These sessions addressed significant barriers to participation, such as:

- **Language barriers:** Translation was provided into local Dene dialects to ensure inclusivity.
- **Travel and timing constraints:** Sessions were held in person in Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories, and virtually for participants across Canada.
- **Cultural considerations:** Ceremonies, including opening and closing prayer songs, were incorporated to respect local traditions.
- **Internet access issues:** Though local internet was disrupted due to forest fires, Starlink technology provided by an audio/visual contractor ensured sessions could continue.

Additional measures included live video and audio feeds in English and Dene Xedə, as well as transcripts available after the hearing. Flexible scheduling further enhanced accessibility.

Feedback highlighted the value of in-person engagement, with participants expressing satisfaction with the Commission's presence in their community. However, technical challenges with virtual sessions underscored the need for further refinements in remote engagement practices.

5. Embedding Accessibility in Future Program Design

The CER is committed to ensuring that future programs and services are designed with accessibility as a foundational principle. Efforts are underway to integrate accessibility considerations into every stage of program development, guided by insights from the Self-ID campaign, Human Resource policy reviews, and feedback from stakeholders involved in our regulatory processes.

This proactive, data-driven approach allows the CER to identify and address accessibility challenges early, ensuring programs and services are inclusive, responsive, and aligned with the needs of all stakeholders. By leveraging improved datasets and fostering transparency, the CER is poised to create a more accessible and welcoming environment.

The CER's achievements in Priority Area Six demonstrate its dedication to embedding accessibility into the core of its program design and delivery. Through a combination of inclusive practices, robust data collection, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the CER is building a barrier-free future for its workforce and stakeholders.

Transportation

The CER recognizes the critical importance of accessible travel policies in fostering an inclusive work environment. With regional offices and a nationwide mandate requiring employee travel for inspections and other duties, ensuring equitable access to transportation is essential. **This Priority Area includes one ongoing commitment focused on advancing accessibility in travel policies and practices.**

1. Exploratory Efforts in Travel Policy Accessibility

In 2024, the CER initiated discussions to integrate accessibility considerations into its travel policies, aligning with the **National Joint Council (NJC) Travel Directive** and the **Directive on the Duty to Accommodate**. These initial steps aim to identify and address barriers that employees with disabilities may encounter during work-related travel. By embedding accessibility into its travel policies, the CER seeks to create a strong foundation for continuous improvement in the years ahead.

2. Collaboration and Oversight

To enhance the accessibility of travel policies, the CER's Duty-to-Accommodate team has partnered with the accounting and finance teams to better understand and address specific accessibility needs during travel. This collaborative approach ensures that accessibility considerations are factored into every stage of travel planning and execution. Insights gained from this collaboration will inform future policy updates and operational practices, ensuring travel processes support all employees equitably.

3. Commitment to Transparency and Future Reporting

Although in the early stages, the CER is dedicated to maintaining transparency in its progress toward accessible travel policies. Updates on advancements in this area will be featured in future annual reports, underscoring the CER's commitment to developing travel processes that are inclusive, equitable, and supportive of all employees.

This section demonstrates the CER's proactive approach to ensuring accessibility in travel while reflecting its commitment to collaboration, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Culture: Fostering Accessibility and Inclusion

While not a mandated priority under the ACA, the CER recognizes that cultivating an inclusive and accessible workplace culture is essential for removing barriers and empowering employees with disabilities. In 2023, several initiatives were launched to reinforce this commitment, focusing on values, resources, and systemic improvements.

Exploring Core Values Through a Culture Assessment

To align culture with strategic objectives, the CER launched a **Culture Assessment** initiative. Through confidential focus groups and an organization-wide survey, employees shared insights about current and aspirational values, shaping a "What We Heard" report. This feedback informs the CER's efforts to close cultural gaps and strengthen alignment with initiatives such as the Diversity & Belonging Roadmap, Employment Equity Plan, and Strategic Workforce Plan.

Empowering Employees Through Accessibility Resources

The CER introduced **AccessCER: Your Guide to Accessibility and Inclusion**, an online resource offering practical tools, guidance, and information to embed accessibility into daily work. This initiative fosters a disability-inclusive environment and supports employees in advancing accessibility efforts.

Strengthening Policies to Support Well-being

Recognizing the link between culture and well-being, the CER reviewed misconduct-related policies, resulting in:

- Trauma-informed, user-centered redesigns of reporting and resolution processes.
- Evidence-based training for staff and leaders.
- Publication of aggregated data on incidents and actions taken.

These updates align with recommendations from the Diversity and Belonging Roadmap and ensure a safe and respectful workplace.

Accessibility Advocacy and Community Engagement

To champion accessibility, the CER appointed Srikanth Venugopal, Director of Energy Markets, as its first **Accessibility Champion**. Srikanth collaborates with the Persons with Disabilities Champions and Chairs Committee and the Ability and Barrier Circle to drive progress on accessibility initiatives.

Additionally, the CER partnered with the [CNIB](#) to raise awareness about the sight-loss community, provide hiring managers with access to CNIB's talent pool, and explore resources for employees. This partnership supports the Government of Canada's goal to increase the recruitment, retention, and advancement of persons with disabilities.

Consultations

The CER recognizes that meaningful progress in accessibility requires the active involvement and input of employees with disabilities and key stakeholders. Guided by the [ACA](#) and the [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#) – both of which are grounded in the principle of “[Nothing about us without us](#)” the CER has actively consulted individuals with disabilities to shape its accessibility initiatives and assess progress.

The feedback received through these consultations has been invaluable in identifying barriers, shaping strategic activities, and building an inclusive workplace. As the CER continues to implement its [Accessibility Plan](#), ongoing consultation will remain a cornerstone of its efforts, ensuring voices of persons with disabilities are heard, reflected upon, and incorporated into decision-making.

Whom We Consulted

The CER prioritized engaging employees with disabilities and worked closely with the **Ability and Barrier Circle**, an employee group representing diverse perspectives across CER business units. This group hosted regular open meetings to encourage broad participation and provide a platform for employees to share their insights and lived experiences.

In this second year of the Accessibility Plan’s implementation, consultations have been instrumental in co-developing initiatives that address barriers and advance accessibility goals. Bi-weekly **Accessibility Committee** meetings established shared objectives, gathered stakeholder input, identified engagement opportunities, and aligned efforts to meet accessibility commitments. Members of the **Ability and Barrier Circle** also contributed actively to corporate working groups on accessibility, providing essential subject matter expertise.

Key themes identified through these consultations include:

- A need for improved access to training and internal accessibility resources.
- Greater subject matter expertise in accessibility across business units.
- Streamlined processes for accommodations and medical certification requirements.

This feedback has directly informed the CER’s activities and efforts to enhance accessibility competence and address identified gaps.

Inclusive Consultation Format

To ensure equitable participation, the CER adopted a hybrid consultation approach, offering both in-person and virtual engagement options. This format accommodated diverse preferences and accessibility needs, breaking down barriers to participation and fostering meaningful dialogue. By removing logistical and physical barriers, the CER ensured that all employees could contribute to accessibility discussions.

Valuable Insights

Participants provided critical insights into existing barriers and proposed practical solutions to improve the CER's accessibility efforts. Feedback was meticulously documented, analyzed, and integrated into the CER's accessibility progress report, shaping the direction of future strategies and initiatives.

This inclusive and consultative approach reinforces the CER's commitment to continuous improvement and transparency. By placing persons with disabilities at the center of accessibility planning and implementation, the CER is building a workplace that is inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the needs of all employees.

CER's Persons with Disabilities Network: Ability and Barrier Circle

The **Ability and Barrier Circle (ABC)** is a dynamic, employee-led network dedicated to advancing accessibility and fostering a workplace that embraces inclusivity and diversity. Established by employees with lived experiences of disability-related barriers, the ABC provides a safe, confidential space for collaboration, advocacy, and change.

What Does the ABC Do?

The **ABC** brings together employees with diverse identities and experiences to identify and address barriers whether interpersonal, intrapersonal, structural, or sociocultural while advocating for meaningful improvements. By creating a supportive community, the **ABC** empowers employees with disabilities and raises awareness of accessibility needs across the organization.

Key Roles and Membership

Supported by CER leadership, the **ABC** is composed of:

- **An Executive Champion** who advocates for accessibility at the highest levels of the organization.
- **An Accessibility Working Group** with representatives from various business units who contribute their expertise and insights.
- **A Communications Advisor** who ensures accessibility initiatives and achievements are effectively shared within the CER and beyond.

This dedicated team collaborates on departmental and government-wide initiatives, supports the community of persons with disabilities, and develops actionable proposals to enhance workplace conditions for all employees.

Impact and Contributions

Through its efforts, the **ABC** has:

- Built awareness of accessibility needs and opportunities for improvement.
- Played a critical role in shaping accessibility initiatives under the CER's Accessibility Plan.
- Provided lived-experience insights to help identify and remove barriers.
- Fostered a culture of inclusion through outreach, awareness-building, and collaboration.

The **ABC's** work reflects the CER's commitment to ensuring that all employees, regardless of their abilities, can thrive in an inclusive and accessible environment. By championing these principles, the **ABC** helps the CER evolve into a workplace that values and empowers every individual.

Feedback

The CER actively seeks input from employees, advocacy organizations, subject matter experts, and the public about barriers they encounter in accessing CER programs, services, or employment. These consultations and feedback mechanisms are essential to assessing the effectiveness of our Accessibility Plan and identifying opportunities for improvement.

How Feedback Was Collected

The CER provided multiple channels for feedback, ensuring accessibility for diverse contributors:

- **Public feedback** was welcomed through an online form on the CER's website, email, phone, letter, or fax.
- **Employee feedback** was gathered via an intranet form, direct email, one-on-one meetings, **ABC** meetings and **Accessibility Committee** discussions.

While no formal submissions were received via the online or email forms during this reporting period, valuable insights emerged from direct conversations and committee engagements. As awareness of the Accessibility Plan and Progress Reports increases, the CER anticipates greater participation in the future.

What We Heard

Feedback received was categorized into key themes, guiding the CER's ongoing and future actions to address identified barriers. This iterative approach ensures that proposed actions are realistic, actionable, and sustainable. These insights will inform updates to the Accessibility Plan and help refine and prioritize tasks in alignment with organizational resources and capacity. Key

functional areas will be engaged to assess resource implications and support planning for implementation.

1. Employment

Feedback emphasized:

- **Hybrid and Telework Policies:** While remote work supports accessibility, concerns were raised about limited telework accommodations and onerous medical certification processes.
- **Accessible Workplace and Accommodations:** Shared workspaces and accommodation processes were identified as needing improvement.
- **Career Development, Promotion, and Retention:** Employees with disabilities identified systemic barriers to equitable promotion pathways, citing inconsistent application of job ladders and technical leader roles. These issues impact the opportunities for career growth of highly qualified and experienced individuals with disabilities. Additionally, while French-language training is available through various resources, some employees expressed concerns about the lack of access to immersive training programs, which they view as critical for career advancement.
- **Leave and Return-to-Work Processes:** Requests for more responsive, individualized support were prominent for employees returning to work after a short- or long-term absence.
- **Inclusive Hiring Practices:** Managers expressed a need for better tools and training to support accessible hiring practices.

Proposed Actions:

- Streamline accommodation processes by integrating the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport.
- Support the federal commitment to hire 5,000 persons with disabilities within the Public Service.
- Partner with organizations such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and leverage Public Service Commission inventories to diversify talent pools.
- Develop tools and training sessions to enhance inclusive recruitment, retention, and promotion strategies.
- Consider and explore pathways for advancement for employees with disabilities, ensuring these opportunities are accessible and promoted within the organization.
- Consider and review job ladder implementation and career progression opportunities to ensure equitable access for employees with disabilities, based on feedback from consultations, and identify areas for improvement.

2. Built Environment

Feedback emphasized physical accessibility challenges, particularly workspace layout, lighting, and air quality.

Proposed Actions:

- Advocate for accessibility improvements in spaces managed by PSPC and landlords.
- Ensure CER facilities comply with federal accessibility standards, phase in LED lighting, and conduct regular air quality assessments, sharing results with relevant committees.

3. Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

Feedback highlighted the need to continue incorporating accessibility consideration into procurement practices.

Proposed Actions:

- Share feedback with PSPC to promote accessibility ratings in supplier evaluations.

4. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Participants identified barriers in digital accessibility:

- Limited accessibility in Government of Canada applications.
- Lack of a catalogue outlining the accessibility features of devices.

Proposed Actions:

- Provide feedback to PSPC regarding accessibility barriers in Government of Canada applications to advocate for improvements.
- Collaborate with IT to create an accessibility catalogue for software and devices.
- Participate in the Government of Canada's ICT Accessibility Standard and Accessibility Scorecard to ensure compliance with emerging standards.

5. Communications

Feedback highlighted the need for improved communication accessibility, including:

- Accessible document formats.
- Use of sign language and official language translation services for meetings and events.
- Providing speaker descriptions during meetings and events to ensure accessibility for individuals who are visually impaired.

By incorporating these practices, the CER aims to create inclusive communication strategies that meet diverse accessibility needs.

Proposed Actions:

- Promote accessibility training for employees and adhere to Government of Canada accessibility policies for communications.
- Explore opportunities to standardize accessibility practices in meetings, including:
 - Consistent use of sign language services for large staff and external meetings.
 - Incorporating pre-meeting accessibility inquiries to address specific needs of external invitees.
 - Assessing and standardizing the use of headsets for virtual meetings to enhance audio accessibility and consistency.

6. Programs and Services

Feedback emphasized integrating accessibility into policies and program development:

- Improve processes for the Accessibility Passport and Accessibility Plan implementation.
- Leverage self-advocacy networks during the policy development phase to ensure lived experiences inform decision making.

Proposed Actions:

- Consult employees with disabilities, aligning with the "Nothing about us without us" principle outlined in the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada, to develop programs and policies.
- Develop a best-practice list for accessibility standards and updates.

7. Culture

Cultural barriers were a recurring theme:

- **Awareness:** A need for greater accessibility awareness across the organization.
- **Bias and Microaggressions:** Concerns about biases and harmful attitudes were emphasized, with employees calling for leadership to foster dialogue, learning, and accountability.

Proposed Actions:

- Establish mandatory accessibility training for all employees, with tailored modules for leaders to address biases and foster inclusion.
- Enhance visibility and utilization of accessibility resources such as the AccessCER - Accessibility Hub.

Canadian Human Rights Commission and Accessibility Commissioner

Additional recommendations from the Canadian Human Rights Commission's Accessibility Commissioner included improving consultation processes and reporting formats. The CER has incorporated these recommendations into its ongoing efforts, ensuring greater inclusivity and clarity in accessibility reporting.

Through these initiatives, the CER reaffirms its commitment to fostering a fully accessible and inclusive organization by 2040. Feedback remains a vital tool in this journey, driving continuous improvement and accountability.

Focus for the Upcoming Year (2025)

In 2025, the CER will focus on completing the remaining commitments from its Accessibility Plan and incorporating employee feedback to refine and prioritize new actions. Through a strategic and collaborative approach, the CER aims to foster a barrier-free workplace while supporting career and professional growth for all employees.

Key Priorities for 2025

1. **Completion of Accessibility Plan Commitments:** The CER will address outstanding actions to enhance accessibility across employment, built environments, communications, and transportation, as highlighted in the CER Accessibility Plan 2023-25 Action Tracker.
2. **Expanding the Accessibility Passport for a Hybrid Workplace:** Ensuring accessibility within our evolving hybrid work model, with a focus on support for employees navigating the accommodation process.
3. **Ongoing Accessibility Training:** Strengthening our commitment to accessibility awareness with training sessions provided to all staff.
4. **Integrating Accessibility into Policies and Processes:** Continuing to embed accessibility into CER's core policies, procurement processes, and program development.
5. **Promoting Disability Inclusion in the Workforce:** Prioritizing the hiring, retention, and career advancement of employees with disabilities, while actively removing systemic barriers to advancement, to foster a diverse and representative workforce. According to the **Employment Equity Report 2023-24**, the CER has made progress, increasing the number of employees with disabilities from 35 to 46. However, a gap of 6 employees remains compared to the national Labour Market Availability (LMA) of 52, based on

2016 Census data. Additionally, the CER has gaps of seven employees in the Professional group and two in the Clerical Personnel group, totaling nine employees. The CER will continue to develop and implement strategies to close these gaps and create a more equitable workplace.

6. **Integration of Feedback and Plan Refinement:** The CER will use 2024 feedback to refine and update its Accessibility Plan and prioritizing actions based on their impact and feasibility.

Conclusion

The CER is steadfast in its dedication to fostering an inclusive environment where all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can fully engage with and benefit from its programs and services. Our commitment to advancing accessibility is part of our core values that shape our organizational culture and strategic objectives.

To achieve this vision, we incorporate accessibility considerations into all aspects of our operations, from program design to training initiatives and policy development. By actively seeking feedback from diverse stakeholders, including employees with disabilities and advocacy groups, we ensure our strategies are responsive and effective in addressing accessibility needs. The CER thanks all respondents for their feedback on the Accessibility Plan and barriers faced, gathered through our feedback tool and direct discussions. Through future consultations and collaboration, the CER will continue strengthening its commitment to an accessible-by-default workplace where inclusion is paramount.