

2024

Accessibility Progress Report

Introduction

In 2022, the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) published its first Accessibility Plan. The plan was created in collaboration with:

- the Champion for Person with Disabilities and Network of Allies;
- employees surveyed;
- the Human Resources Programs and Services Directorate team; and
- leadership teams across the organization.

In 2023, CFMWS started implementing its Accessibility Plan. The 2024 Accessibility Progress Report presents the progress made in each of the areas of focus under the Accessible Canada Act:

- Employment;
- The Built Environment;
- Information and Communication Technologies;
- Communication (other than Information and Communication Technologies);
- The Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities;
- The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services; and
- Transportation.

As we look to the future, we continue to take the necessary steps to strengthen our commitment to an accessible workplace, to empower, and to support employees living with disabilities in their success.

General

The CFMWS 2024 Accessibility Progress Report (Report) is available, upon request, in the following formats:

- ✓ Print;
- ✓ Large print (extra large words);
- ✓ Braille (written language where people read by feeling raised dots with their fingertips);
- ✓ Audio (recording of someone reading the text out loud); and
- ✓ Electronic (text that an electronic device designed for persons with disabilities can read).

Requests can be submitted:

- to receive the report in an alternate format;
- to request descriptions of feedback process in an alternate format; and
- to give general feedback.

Addressed to: CFMWS Human Resources Program Manager, Legislated Programs

By email anytime: equity.employment@cfmws.com

By phone toll free: 1-855-245-0330

By mail at address: 4210 Labelle Street, Gloucester, ON, Canada K1J 1J7

Persons who are Deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired who uses sign language may also use Video Relay Service at [Canada VRS](#)

Progress

Employment

Recruitment: Careers Board

Accessible job advertisements and recruitment strategies build the foundations for a positive employment experience. CFMWS implements the following measures in our recruitment strategies:

- ✓ ensures Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliance on our career site;
- ✓ allows candidates to self-identify as a person with a disability;
- ✓ allows candidates to apply for job postings in an alternate format;
- ✓ allows candidates to identify whether they require accommodations or additional support during the recruitment process; and
- ✓ promotes CFMWS as an equal opportunity employer with an emphasis on providing an inclusive and equitable workplace.

Recruitment: Candidates

The recruitment process has been made accessible for Candidates who are selected to move forward in the recruitment process:

- ✓ candidates are provided with interview questions and assignments in advance so they can prepare, particularly beneficial for candidates with mental health, developmental and cognitive disabilities; and
- ✓ interview questions and assignments are sent in an electronic format that can be modified by the candidate to support e-readers, font changes, and other needs.

Here are examples of accommodations implemented by CFMWS for Candidates in 2024 upon request:

- ✓ provide extra time to complete assignments or Second Language Evaluations;
- ✓ accommodate in-person or virtual interview processes;
- ✓ for in-person interviews;
 - select a quiet, and welcoming space, and
 - consider the accessibility to the space to support candidates with various ambulatory or mobility requirements,
- ✓ contract Sign Language interpreters; and
- ✓ rephrase interview questions to use clear language, offer additional time to answer and provide extra explanations if needed.

Employees: General

Upon hire CFMWS is committed to provide ongoing support and resources to ensure a smooth transition into the workplace, that fosters an inclusive environment where all employees can thrive. Resources include onboarding/orientation programs, access to professional development, employee assistance programs, and flexible work options that promote well-being and work-life balance. Accessibility measures taken to support CFMWS employees include:

- ✓ our onboarding/orientation includes;
 - discussions about potential workplace accommodations that can support new hires,
 - support to employees with communication barriers complete important documents such as benefits enrollment forms, and
 - offer virtual onboarding,
- ✓ for professional development:
 - at an enterprise level, training that is delivered virtually can be provided in alternate formats upon request, and
 - at an enterprise level, training that is delivered in-person, CFMWS has upon request, contracted interpreters or used voice-to-text technology in meetings and professional development, and
- ✓ the CFMWS Employee Assistance Program is accessible in various formats and offers support for a variety of needs; and
- ✓ flexible, hybrid, and remote work arrangements may be available to employees to mitigate workplace barriers.

Employees: Workplace Accommodations

An accessible workplace will reduce the requirement for workplace accommodations, by proactively implementing positive practices that support the inclusion of all employees in the workplace. In 2024, CFMWS conducted a review of our Accommodations Program, which supports an accessible workplace. Through this review, we have identified, recommended and are piloting the following:

- ✓ partnership and engagement with Government of Canada Accessibility Passport team to share resources on best-practices;
- ✓ addition of informal documentation pathways;
- ✓ updated accommodation request form that reflects a social model*;
- ✓ implementation of a new filing and tracking system;
- ✓ identify a data collection process to track the cost and number of accommodation requests; and
- ✓ provision of additional informational resources to HR staff, leadership and employees.

*A social model focuses on the barrier being experienced and the solution, and moves away from the focus being on the condition.

Employees: Benefits

A comprehensive employee benefits package has a direct impact on accessibility to healthcare. By offering a wide range of benefits, CFMWS ensures that employees have the necessary resources to maintain their health and well-being. To address barriers that impact employees' access to healthcare, in 2024 CFMWS procured a virtual health platform that includes a telemedicine option that enhances our total compensation package which includes:

- ✓ virtual primary care services that give access to qualified healthcare professionals from anywhere in Canada;
- ✓ fast, real-time access via chat, phone or video to a multidisciplinary medical team to help treat non-urgent health concerns;
- ✓ availability to support employees with alternate formats and communication supports;
- ✓ the provision of specialized mental health support, including online self-therapy and virtual coaching and therapy (until the point of functional remission) ensuring comprehensive care for all members; and
- ✓ short-term and acute counselling needs.

The built environment

CFMWS operates primarily on military bases and wings (B/W). The buildings and properties on B/Ws are owned by the Department of National Defence (DND) and the investment, control, and structural modifications fall within their responsibility. Accessibility measures for DND owned buildings are outlined in the DND Accessibility Action Plan and reported on in the DND Accessibility Progress Reports located on their website.

CFMWS owns and operates the building and properties within our headquarters in Ottawa. This building was renovated in 2024, and the following accessibility measures were taken into consideration:

- ✓ accessible entrances and emergency exits inclusive of;
 - ramps and step-free access, and
 - accessible doorways including wider and automatic,
- ✓ accessible washrooms have;
 - signage in both Official Languages, with images, and braille,
 - stalls and showers include accessibility measures inclusive of wider dimensions, grab bars, wheelchair accessibility and other features,
 - gender neutral options, and
 - menstrual products in all washrooms,
- ✓ a commitment to a scent free environment is supported by guidelines and posters;
- ✓ a private multifunctional room accessible for nursing, prayer, meditation and other functionalities; and
- ✓ Emergency and Evacuation Plan has been drafted and inclusive of measures for individuals requiring assistance.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs)

In 2024, the CFMWS Data and Information Asset Management team, continued their Records and Information Asset Management System (RIMS) project with a commitment to promoting a barrier free Information Asset Management* environment for CFMWS staff.

*An Information Asset is anything like data, documents, messages, images, or any other type of content that helps track or complete tasks for CFMWS.

To ensure an inclusive workplace where all users, regardless of their abilities, can access and use RIMS effectively, CFMWS has/is implementing the following measures:

- ✓ ensure compliance with Accessible Canada Act legislation;
- ✓ utilize assistive technologies such as Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including but not limited to;
 - blindness and low vision,
 - deafness and hearing loss,
 - speech and communication disabilities,
 - learning and developmental disabilities,
 - limited movement, and
 - photosensitivity,
- ✓ in September 2024 a call for action was shared on our internal employee website, seeking CFMWS volunteers to participate in accessibility feature testing within RIMS;
 - 11 volunteers with accessibility needs have come forward, and
 - in December 2024, the RIMS project team will be working with Human Resources Legislative Programs to develop an action plan to engage the volunteers for accessibility testing in the new calendar year,
- ✓ development of documentation to enable reuse of proven solutions for users that require the solution; and
- ✓ inform policy development which in turn will impact accessibility compliance within CFMWS.

Communication

The CFMWS Brand Style Guide (Guide) is conceptualized, developed and monitored by the Marketing and Communications (MarCom) division and implemented in collaboration with all CFMWS divisions.

CFMWS uses WCAG principles in digital, video, print media and all managed national MarCom channels. Our national websites are built to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Communications standards, which is based on the latest version of the WCAG.

General Materials

CFMWS uses and recommends:

- ✓ the use of WCAG principles in digital, video and print design which includes;
 - simple language,
 - typography considerations (including font, size, alignment, etc),
 - colour contrast, and
 - closed captioning in video,
- ✓ standardized text to graphics structure in documents which includes;
 - figure descriptions,
 - contrasts, and
 - legibility,
- ✓ standardized content format structure for documents posted on our websites include:
 - a format for headers,
 - sub-headers,
 - page breaks, and
 - footnotes.

CFMWS continues efforts to develop best practices for:

- ✓ design accessibility,
- ✓ document accessibility,
- ✓ content writing – including alt-tags & meta data, and
- ✓ plain language and grade level considerations.

Social Media

In April 2024, the *CFMWS Official Social Media Account Use Policy* and the *CFMWS Social Media Standard Operating Procedures* were published. This includes:

- ✓ policy that clearly outlines the CFMWS accessibility standards to ensure compliance with the latest version of the WCAG; and
- ✓ procedures were created as a resource document to support our employees who communicate on various social media platforms and provides guidance on best practices for achieving these standards.

Following the launch of the policy and procedures, CFMWS offered training to employees that are tasked with managing local or national social media platforms:

- ✓ one hundred and forty-two (142) employees were provided with socialmedia training in January through May 2024.

CFMWS will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our training and procedures, and the implementation of our policies to identify gaps which in turn will drive future decisions on CFMWS's practices for managing social media platforms.

Websites

Organization website (cfmws.ca):

- ✓ in 2024, one hundred twenty-seven (127) employees were identified as prime administrators (employees with access to update pages on the website). CFMWS provided these employees with accessibility standard training as part of the website administrator onboarding process; and
- ✓ following the delivery of the training, CFMWS began conducting a compliance audit to verify the successful implementation of accessibility standards. This compliance audit is currently thirty percent (30%) complete.

Fundraising websites (supportourtroops.ca, soldieron.ca, boomerslegacy.ca):

- ✓ the CFMWS fundraising websites were created in 2017. In 2024, CFMWS upgraded the content management systems on these websites and:
 - identified that the accessibility features were following outdated WCAG standards; therefore we
 - updated our fundraising websites to be fully compliant with the latest version of the WCAG standards.

Intranet & Extranets (CORE – cfmws-sbmfc.com)

- ✓ CFMWS provides prime administrators with accessibility standard training as part of the intranet/extranet onboarding process; and
- ✓ the MarCom Tech Team acts as a quality assurance team. All documents scheduled to be published on our Intranet and Extranet website are verified for compliance before publication.

The procurement of goods, services and facilities

CFMWS understands that accessibility should be embedded into the procurement process, as it will create a more inclusive environment that supports everyone. The following mechanisms were embedded to support accessibility within the procurement processes:

- ✓ procurement of goods that would meet the needs of personnel to support meaningful engagement in the workplace;
 - in consultation with ITSS and IT Procurement, Human Resources has created an Accommodation Hardware and Software request form, and
 - ergonomic equipment is provided as needed and may require a qualified assessment,
- ✓ work is underway to standardize accessibility contracting practices in the negotiation of services with external vendors;
 - CFMWS has identified the need to standardize language surrounding accessibility standards in the Statement of Work template,
- ✓ the procurement of facilities includes the following accessibility measures;
 - external venues are selected to ensure that they have accessible entrances, washrooms and facilities,
 - event invitations include a proactive request for accommodations.

Design and delivery of programs and services

The CFMWS mandate is “serving those who serve”, thereby offering programs and services to CAF members and their families. CFMWS aims to provide services tailored to meet the needs of its members, where possible providing the opportunity for the CAF Community to choose the way in which they would like to receive services or participate in programs. CFMWS has taken the following steps to implement accessibility in the development and delivery of its programs and services.

Inclusion Facilitators

CFMWS hired seventy-seven (77) inclusion facilitators who support barrier-free access to services for children living with disabilities. Inclusion facilitators supported the active participation of two hundred ninety-five (295) children in summer camps across the nation through individualized accommodations and modifications which include:

- ✓ modifications to the environment or equipment;
- ✓ the provision of support and assistance;
- ✓ adaptations to activities;
- ✓ the use of language that is inclusive and non-discriminatory; and
- ✓ the promotion of a culture of respect and acceptance.

Training

Beyond Boundaries is a three (3) day virtual conference and training session for Personnel Support Program (PSP), Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC), Military Family Services (MFS) staff and stakeholders on topics that included:

- ✓ inclusion and adaptive programming; and
- ✓ supporting those living with disabilities.

Inclusive Play Leadership (IPL) certification training offered through Canadian Tire JumpStart and Respect Group was offered to all recreation staff and taken by two hundred thirty-three (233) employees:

- ✓ this training will train leaders about inclusion and accessibility, and how to develop play strategies that support children of all abilities; and
- ✓ helps coaches and youth activity leaders create inclusive sporting environments for kids of all abilities.

General

CFMWS conducted an evaluation of the inclusion process for families accessing services, seeking both participant and staff feedback. The feedback was leveraged to inform recommendations for future service improvements.

CFMWS developed and implemented a new verification tool for volunteer run clubs and organization groups that now includes:

- ✓ ratings related to inclusion, diversity and accessibility to the programming; and
- ✓ a feedback mechanism to inform recommendations for future improvements.

CFMWS includes an active offer of alternative formats to services which includes:

- ✓ in person, virtual, active offer of French and English, written, and use of adaptive services.

Transportation

CFMWS does not provide transportation services to the public, however, travelers may be required to travel to conduct business. Multiple modes of transportation may be accessed when travel is required. The coordination and administration of travel is supported at various levels depending on the nature and complexity of the required travel arrangements.

Public Travel Claims

For public travel arrangements, parking, and accessible public transportation, our travelers are subject to DND regulations.

- ✓ CFMWS may provide recommendations to DND to ensure their modes of transportation, travel policies, processes and documents are accessible in accordance with the DND Accessibility Action Plan and the Accessible Canada Act.

Non-Public Travel Claims

For non-public travel, the CFMWS Travel Office oversees the implementation of the NPF Travel Policy and other associated directives, guidelines, regulations and documentation. Mechanisms to assist travelers include the provision of flexible options and the ability to accommodate the unique needs of travelers with a focus on safety through:

- ✓ communication with travelers and expecting travelers through various methods inclusive of;
 - phone,
 - email,
 - MS Teams calls, and
 - messaging,
- ✓ travelers who experience barriers may request support for reimbursement of increased expenses on a case-by-case basis for example;
 - the reimbursement of additional costs associated with having a fridge in a hotel room to store insulin, and
 - the additional cost associated with a specific aisle seat selection for travelers with a prosthetic limb,

- ✓ the ability to request accommodations directly with the airline for commercial air travel;
- ✓ the ability to find suitable alternative transportation and lodging options to accommodate various requirements; and
- ✓ the mitigation of financial barriers so travelers do not experience a loss of funds by;
 - paying for commercial air transport, and
 - offering a cash advance.

Consultations

When developing the 2024 CFMWS Accessibility Progress Report, CFMWS consulted with their leadership team, who are responsible for implementing accessible workplace measures in the specified categories.

CFMWS is currently searching for a Champion for Persons with Disabilities and will leverage this new champion in ongoing consultations with employees with disabilities in the identification, conceptualization, implementation and monitoring of accessible workplace measures.

Feedback

In 2024, CFMWS did not receive any feedback from employees regarding the 2022-2025 CFMWS Accessibility Action Plan. We appreciate the diverse experiences of those with disabilities and are dedicated to addressing barriers to accessibility.

What to provide feedback on

You can submit feedback on:

- this progress report
- our 2022-2025 [Accessibility Plan](#)
- any other barriers you encounter
 - throughout your employment journey, or
 - when accessing our services, offices, website, and any other interaction

Why provide feedback

Your feedback is important and necessary, and it will:

- be used to achieve our goals set out in our 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan
- be used to improve our overall workplace accessibility
- be included in our 2025 progress report
- be used to create new commitments and goals for the 2026-2028 Accessibility Action Plan

How to provide feedback

Feedback should be addressed to the CFMWS Human Resources Program Manager, Legislated Programs and can be submitted by:

By email anytime: equity.employment@cfmws.com

By phone toll free: 1-855-245-0330

By mail at address: 4210 Labelle Street, Gloucester, ON, Canada K1J 1J7

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