Veterans Review and
Appeal Board Canada

Tribunal des anciens combattants
(révision et appel) Canada

Veterans Review and Appeal Board's Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028

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1. General

1.1 Introduction message

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB, the Board) is the arm's-length tribunal that provides an independent avenue of appeal for disability benefits decisions made by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC, the Department). When the *Accessible Canada Act* came into force in 2019, the Government of Canada demonstrated its commitment to having a barrier-free Canada by the beginning of 2040. Achieving this goal will involve identifying, removing and preventing barriers within federal jurisdiction in seven areas:

1. Employment
2. The built environment (public buildings and spaces)
3. Information and communication technologies
4. Communication, other than information and communication technologies
5. The procurement of goods, services and facilities
6. The design and delivery of programs and services, and
7. Transportation (airlines, as well as rail, road and marine transportation providers that cross provincial or international borders)

The Act requires Federal organizations, including VRAB, to develop and publish Accessibility Action Plans and related progress reports to identify, prevent and remove barriers in the areas listed above.

It should be noted that while VRAB is responsible for publishing and maintaining its own Accessibility Action Plan, the Board has a long-standing service relationship with VAC for internal services under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU outlines the agreement between the two organizations regarding their shared resources. The MOU supports the Board's operations through the provision of internal services by VAC to the Board. Accordingly, the Board benefits directly from VAC's efforts to improve accessibility in many areas. Some of the services the Board receives from VAC under the established MOU include:

- Human Resources Management
- Information Technology
- Procurement
- Finance

The VRAB recognizes the importance of meaningful consultation with persons with disabilities. To ensure employees with disabilities had a voice in shaping this plan, we engaged the Veterans Affairs Accessibility Network; an internal employee network that supports accessibility and inclusion by sharing lived experience, providing advice, and helping identify and remove barriers in its workplace and services.

Through this Accessibility Action Plan (the Board's second), we aim to continue building upon what we started in our first Plan, as we work towards creating an environment where persons with disabilities can fully participate and contribute. We will do this by identifying, preventing and removing accessibility barriers so that Veterans and their family members can fully participate in Hearings, and Board employees or Members with disabilities can be better supported in their work, resulting in enhanced service to Canadians.

In this Plan, we will analyze each of the seven priority areas noted above, outline the barriers identified and the specific actions to address them, as well as the timelines, roles and responsibilities for each of the actions. Lastly, we will outline a means of ongoing monitoring and accountability toward the intended outcomes in a detailed list of performance indicators provided in Appendix A.

1.2   Building on our progress

This 2025–2028 Accessibility Action Plan builds on the foundation established in our first Plan, the 2022–2025 Accessibility Action Plan. Over that previous cycle, we made significant strides toward creating a barrier-free organization. Key achievements included:

Employment

Introduced inclusive hiring practices and launched bias-reduction tools for managers.

The built environment

Completed accessibility audits for the Board's head office facilities and implemented priority upgrades.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Members of the Accessibility Network were invited to review the Board's website and noted its user-friendly, information-focused design. Looking ahead, opportunities will be explored to engage persons with disabilities in user testing to help inform future improvements to the website.

Communication (other than ICT)

Introduced accessible videos that help inform Veterans and their families about the Board's Hearing process. These included closed captioning and plain language.

The procurement of goods, services and facilities

Employees and management from the Board's Administration and Systems units attend sessions offered by VAC Procurement regarding accessibility-related requirements in procurement and contracting.

The design and delivery of programs and services

The Board worked with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) and VAC to establish a process to communicate a client's accommodation requirements in advance of their Review Hearing.

Organizational culture

The Board established an Accessibility Lead to guide the development and implementation of the VRAB's Accessibility Action Plans and Accessibility Progress Reports.

Training

89% of staff attended events, trainings or webinars related to accessibility in 2024.

In this plan, we build on this progress and focus on areas where barriers still exist, as well as introducing new actions that respond to emerging needs and reflect feedback from persons with disabilities.

1.3   Process for receiving and dealing with accessibility-related feedback

The *Accessible Canada Act* ("Act") and the Accessible Canada Regulations ("Regulations") requires the Board to establish a process for receiving and actioning accessibility-related feedback. This feedback process can be used to provide feedback on:

- The implementation of this Plan
- Accessibility barriers at VRAB
- Preventing or removing such barriers
- Accessibility best practices and or
- Success stories related to accessibility at VRAB

An accessibility barrier is anything that does not allow persons with disabilities to be included and take part in all areas of life and society. Barriers prevent persons with disabilities from participating in the same way as persons without disabilities. The Act identifies several types of accessibility barriers:

- Physical
- Architectural
- Technological
- Attitudinal
- Information
- Communications

- Policy
- Practice

VRAB can receive feedback or suggestions related to accessibility submitted in any of the following ways:

By mail:

Director General, Veterans Review and Appeal Board
P.O. Box 9900
Charlottetown PE, C1A 8V7

By email: VRABAccessibility-AccessibilitéTACRA@vrab-tacra.gc.ca

By phone or fax:

Toll free in Canada and the U.S.: 1-800-450-8006
From all other locations, call collect 0-902-566-8751
Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD): 1-833-998-2060
Fax: 1-855-850-4644

Please note that all feedback will be acknowledged in the same manner it was received, unless it was provided anonymously.

Alternate Formats

Please note that requests can be made through the above contact information for the following documents in alternative formats:

- VRAB's Accessibility Action Plans
- VRAB's description of its accessibility-related feedback process
- Annual progress reports on the implementation of VBAB's Accessibility Action Plans and how feedback will be taken into consideration.

Alternate formats include:

- Print
- Large print (increased front size and clarity)
- Braille (a system of raised dots that individuals who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers).
- Audio recording (a recording of someone reading the text out loud)
- Electronic (an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology that is intended to assist persons with disabilities).

1.4 Message from the Chair

I am pleased to share with you the Veterans Review and Appeal Board's 2025-2028 Accessibility Action Plan.

At the Board, we strive as an organization to ensure that Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP members, and their families can fully participate in the redress process and that our employees and Board Members are supported in providing that service.

Building and supporting a strong culture of accessibility is a central part of who we are – from the way we design our spaces and systems, to how we communicate, learn and engage with one another. A recent survey of employees and Members shows that our team feels supported in having their accessiblity needs met and in expanding their accessibility-related knowledge.

As part of our efforts to continue improving and ensure Veterans have a voice in this, in Spring 2025, we launched an updated Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire. The updated questionnaire includes questions about any barriers that Veterans may have encountered when dealing with the Board during their Review Hearing process. To date, the results of this questionnaire indicate that Review Hearing participants' accessibilty needs are being met in most cases, but that there is still room to improve.

We will continue to seek feedback from Veterans and staff, through these and other mechanisms, to ensure the Board continues to foster and strengthen a culture of accessibility and inform our next steps in this space.

This Accessibility Action Plan outlines the actions we will take over the next three years to further this work and ensure the Board remains an inclusive, barrier-free environment for all – both within our workplace and in our service to Veterans and their families.

Thank you,

Christopher J. McNeil,
Chairperson

1.5   Accessibility Statement

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is committed to providing inclusive and accessible service through the following fundamental principles:

- Everyone is treated with dignity.

- Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally.

- Laws, regulations, policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the ways that different kinds of barriers and discrimination intersect.

- Persons with disabilities must be involved in developing and designing laws, policies, programs and services.

The Board will update this Plan every three years or as specified by regulations and will prepare and publish annual progress reports. This process will include feedback to the Board and input from persons with disabilities. The Board's goal is to ensure that all Veterans can fully participate in the redress process, and to provide a barrier-free, inclusive workplace for all employees and Board Members.

1.6   Executive summary

The Board's 2025–2028 Accessibility Action Plan sets a clear direction for advancing accessibility and inclusion across all areas of the organization. Developed under the Accessible Canada Act, the plan emphasizes removing barriers, improving programs and services, and integrating accessibility into organizational culture as part of the long-term goal of becoming barrier-free by 2040.

Building on progress from the previous plan, this Action Plan continues work on initiatives that remain in progress and introduces new actions to address emerging needs. Where appropriate, actions have been refined to reflect lessons learned and evolving best practices.

Accessibility and inclusion guide how the Board operates and serves Veterans and their families. Our policies, tools, and practices are designed to remove barriers and create equal opportunities for employees and Veterans. This approach reinforces our commitment to continuous improvement—recognizing that accessibility is not a single initiative, but an ongoing responsibility requiring collaboration, innovation, and accountability. It is embedded in our culture and informs every decision we make to ensure an inclusive experience for all.

2. Areas described under Section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*

2.1 Employment

Desired outcome

- Job seekers with disabilities see the Board as a workplace of choice.

- Job seekers and public servants with disabilities have access to employment opportunities at the Board and can contribute to their full potential.

Barriers in employment

1. **Inconsistent manager readiness for duty to accommodate:** While the Board made progress in 2024 by adopting the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport and promoting it through VAC-led information sessions, there is still no formalized internal learning pathway to ensure managers consistently receive training on accessibility and duty to accommodate. Without a structured approach, knowledge transfer and retention may vary, which could affect manager readiness to apply accommodation practices effectively and consistently across the organization.

2. **Systemic and cultural shortcomings to supporting employees with disabilities:** Representation of employees with disabilities is improving, however the 2024 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES), highlights that employees with disabilities report lower scores in feeling valued, recognized, and psychologically healthy compared to others. This gap indicates that accessibility and inclusion are not fully integrated into The Board's organizational culture and employee experience, creating a barrier to retention and career advancement.

Note: For the PSES data, we used the VRAB subset for employees who identify as persons with disabilities. This ensures the barrier reflects their real experiences in our organization.

Actions to remove barriers in employment

Table 1: Action items for employment

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Inconsistent manager readiness for	Integrate concrete and measurable accessibility and duty-to-accommodate objectives into managers'	2027	Strategic and Corporate Services	Employees

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
duty to accommodate	PMAs to reinforce accountability and continuous learning. This could include requiring managers to: • complete duty to accommodate training as part of their annual learning commitments, • demonstrate application of inclusive practices in team management and performance reviews within their teams, and/or • report on actions taken to support accommodations in their PMA discussions.			
Barrier 1: Inconsistent manager readiness for duty to accommodate	Implement a formalized training pathway to ensure all managers consistently receive the knowledge and skills required to apply accessibility and duty-to-accommodate practices effectively.	2027	Strategic and Corporate Services	Employees
Barrier 1: Inconsistent manager readiness for	Establish a regular process to monitor and review representation trends of persons with	Ongoing	Strategic and Corporate Services	Employees

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
duty to accommodate	disabilities across the employment lifecycle (e.g., hiring, development opportunities, promotions), and report findings to senior leadership annually.			
Barrier 2: Systemic and cultural shortcomings to supporting employees with disabilities	Promote Government of Canada (GoC) career shadowing and career advancement opportunities for persons with disabilities, such as Mentorship Plus program, to support career development and foster an inclusive workplace culture.	2026	Strategic and Corporate Services	Employees
Barrier 2: Systemic and cultural shortcomings to supporting employees with disabilities	Promote an inclusive workplace culture by integrating GoC training resources (e.g. the JLP Duty to Accommodate workshop, etc.) to enhance staff awareness and competency on accessibility and duty-to-accommodate obligations.	2027	Strategic and Corporate Services	Employees

2.2   The built environment

Desired outcome

- VRAB's head office location and Hearing spaces across the country are fully accessible.

Barriers in the built environment

1. **Limited inclusive workplace design:** Accessibility gaps within the Board's head office continue to create barriers for employees. Findings from the August 2025 accessibility pulse survey indicate that staff, particularly those with disabilities, face challenges that impact comfort, inclusion, and full participation in the workplace. Areas for improvement identified within the feedback included:

    a. Enhancing meeting accommodations for neurodivergent employees, such as reducing glare and minimizing background noise

    b. Enhancing physical accessibility by modifying entryway doors for individuals with mobility challenges

    c. Addressing concerns that not all workstations are height adjustable to support ergonomic needs

2. https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pses-saff/2024/results-resultats/en/bq-pq/dem/61/112**Inconsistent hearing room design:** The Hearing Room Project, which aims to create a more consistent and efficient in-person hearing experience, has found that accessibility barriers remain in Hearing Rooms across the country, affecting the comfort, safety, and full engagement of participants.

    These persistent barriers, including excessive furniture and loose cables that hinder independent movement, and artwork that depicts combat scenes that make a Hearing Room feel triggering, demonstrate that the spaces are not yet fully accessible and require attention and action from the Board.

Actions to remove barriers in the built environment

Table 2: Action items for the built environment

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Limited inclusive workplace design	Connect with VAC's Real Property team to explore installing an automatic door opener on the key-pass-enabled secure door to the public Hearing space at the Board's Head Office.	2026	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members Veterans and their families
Barrier 1: Limited inclusive	Explore improvements to the sensory accessibility of Head Office environments and	2028	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
workplace design	continue to engage staff in this so the Board can identify and implement practical solutions.			
Barrier 1: Limited inclusive workplace design	The Board continues to offer an ergonomic equipment library to employees that provides an assortment of the most commonly requested ergonomic accessories. The Board will further promote this resource to staff.	2027	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees
Barrier 2: Inconsistent hearing room design	Enhance Hearing Room accessibility by addressing barriers identified through the completed phase 2 of the Hearing Room Project and creating environments that are safe, fully accessible, and inclusive for all participants. Identified barriers included excessive furniture, doors requiring significant push-pull force, tripping hazards from cords, inadequate lighting, and artwork that may not support (or be insensitive to) the mental wellbeing of some Veterans.	2028	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members Veterans and their families

2.3 Information and communication technology (ICT)

Desired outcome

The Board's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be easily used by all.

Barriers in ICT

1. **Limited knowledge of available accessibility tools:** Employees may not know about the adaptive computer technologies that are available, which makes it harder to apply accessibility practices in everyday ICT tasks. A December 2025 review of software licenses usage showed that no VRAB employees are currently using accessibility tools to support their work.

2. **Lack of early integration of accessibility in ICT planning and design:** Most IT projects supporting VRAB are led by VAC, and accessibility considerations are sometimes introduced later in the process rather than fully integrated from the outset. This timing can lead to additional work and may create barriers for Veterans and employees who rely on assistive technology. VAC's 2024 Accessibility Progress Report acknowledges these challenges. While audits, fixes, and the development of an Accessibility Framework have driven progress, these improvements are not yet applied consistently across all projects.

Actions to remove barriers in ICT

Table 3: Action items for ICT

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Limited knowledge of available accessibility tools	Leverage the Board's Innovation Team to seek ways to inform employees and Members about accessibility features and assistive technologies in AI systems.	2026	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members
Barrier 1: Limited knowledge of available accessibility tools	Promote Tech Talks to showcase accessibility tools and assistive technologies and share recordings of these sessions.	Ongoing	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Limited knowledge of available accessibility tools	Provide information to employees and Members about accessibility features and barriers in Microsoft tools.	Ongoing	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members
Barrier 1: Limited knowledge of available accessibility tools	Make software upgrade messages (MS Teams and email) clearer by pointing out changes that might affect accessibility settings and providing guidance on how to how to fix them.	2026	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members
Barrier 2: Lack of early integration of accessibility in ICT planning and design	All VRAB IT employees will complete the CSPS course Accessibility Fundamentals for the Web, which focuses on digital accessibility principles, including compliance with WCAG standards. This training will equip employees with the knowledge to design and maintain web content that is inclusive and improves usability for all users.	2026	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members Veterans and their families
Barrier 2: Lack of early integration of accessibility in ICT planning and design	Apply VAC's Accessibility Framework to embed accessibility in VRAB's IT modernization initiatives, such as CSA (Client	2027	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
	Services Application) development.			Veterans and their families

2.4 Communications (other than ICT)

Desired outcome

- The VRAB employees and Members are equipped to design and deliver accessible communications in all forms.

- All Board communications, both internal and external, are accessible by design and reflect diverse perspectives, use plain language, and provide formats that meet the needs of all audiences.

Barriers in communications (other than ICT)

1. **Limited feedback from persons with disabilities:** Communication materials (outside of information and communication technology) are not regularly tested or reviewed by persons with disabilities. As such, feedback is not systematically gathered to help inform enhancements and ensure accessibility standards are met.

2. **Inconsistent accessibility in content and design:** While progress has been made and the Board's Communications team has developed fully accessible templates for use across the organization, the Board does not yet have a clear and consistent process to ensure all communications, such as templates, videos, training materials, signage, reports and briefings meet accessibility standards. This gap can result in variations in compliance and user experience, and may unintentionally create barriers for persons with disabilities.

Actions to remove barriers in communications (other than ICT)

Table 4: Action items for communications (other than ICT)

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Limited feedback from persons with disabilities	Promote the Board's anonymous accessibility feedback form to staff and Members as a way for them to provide feedback on communications materials.	2026	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members
Barrier 1: Limited feedback from persons with disabilities	Invite the Accessibility Network to review key communication materials and use their input to improve clarity and accessibility.	2027	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members
Barrier 2: Inconsistent accessibility in content and design	Develop and apply a standard accessibility statement for all digital products to help create a structured and transparent approach.	2026	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members
Barrier 2: Inconsistent accessibility in content and design	Leverage Government of Canada resources such as Making	2028	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
	document accessible and Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible (TBS) to guide the introduction of a pre-publication list that ensures content is published to align with accessibility standards.			

2.5   Procurement of goods, services and facilities

Desired outcome

- The goods and services procured by the Board are accessible.

Barriers in procurement of goods, services and facilities

1. **Lack of internal framework for accessibility in procurement:** VRAB staff have participated in VAC procurement sessions, which highlighted the ongoing need to integrate accessibility into procurement practices. Current processes do not include a weighted scoring system for accessibility. This can result in goods and services such as new equipment purchases or external facility bookings for events and training not meeting accessibility standards and creating barriers for employees and clients.

Actions to remove barriers in the procurement of goods, services and facilities

Table 5: Action items for procurement of goods, services and facilities

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Lack of internal framework for accessibility in procurement	Create an Analysis tool to support the VRAB in evaluating and choosing the best options for equipment, facilities, and services, from an Accessibility lens.	2027	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members Veterans and their families

2.6 The design and delivery of programs and services

Desired outcome:

VRAB employees and Members are fully supported and prepared to design and deliver an accessible appeals program.

Persons with disabilities are satisfied with the accessibility of the VRAB appeal program and associated services.

Barriers in the design and delivery of programs and services

> **Challenges in providing inclusive hearing experiences**: Veterans face challenges accessing clear information and support during Review Hearings. Feedback from the Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire (June to September 2025) highlights barriers such as technical issues with videoconferencing, lack of clarity on the process, and heavy reliance on phone-based communication.

Actions to remove the barriers in design and delivery of programs and services

Table 6: Action items for the design and delivery of programs and services

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Challenges in providing inclusive	As part of the Hearing Room Project, the Board will upgrade and refine speakers in all 22 Hearing	2026	Strategic & Corporate Services	Employees Members

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
hearing experiences	Rooms to remove barriers associated with audio for Veterans and their families who choose virtual Hearings.			Veterans and their families
Barrier 1: Challenges in providing inclusive hearing experiences	Create an action plan to respond to feedback received from Veterans and their families through the Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire. The plan will focus on finding and removing barriers in our Hearing processes and ensuring we provide clear information about what to expect, so the Hearing process is easier to understand and more supportive for Veterans and their families.	2026	Strategic & Corporate Services	Veterans and their families

2.7   Transportation

Neither applicable nor relevant to VRAB's operations.

3. Other focus areas

3.1 Organizational culture

Desired outcome

- The Board is a fully accessible workplace, where employees are supported in their own accessibility needs (if any), and are equipped with the awareness, empathy, knowledge and skills to support others with accessibility needs.

Barriers in organizational culture

1. Unclear path to support: While the Board has made progress in fostering a respectful organizational culture, persons with disabilities continue to face challenges in accessing clear information and support. The Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) 2024 results for the Board show that most respondents with disabilities feel respected and able to raise concerns with senior management. However, one-third of respondents who identified as persons with disabilities indicated uncertainty about where to seek help when facing an ethical dilemma, highlighting a gap in communication and awareness of available supports.

Actions to remove barriers in organizational culture

Table 7: Action items for organizational culture

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Unclear path to support	Embed accessibility into the Board's culture by making it a visible and regular part of internal communications and leadership priorities. This will include • highlighting accessibility in organizational updates, • recognizing accessibility-related efforts, and • ensuring leadership messaging	2027	Strategic and Corporate Services Operations	Employees Members Veterans and their families

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
	reinforces. accessibility as a shared value.			

3.2 Training

Desired outcome

- Training sessions are designed to be inclusive of diverse sensory and cognitive needs, incorporating tools and strategies that support all participants.

- The online training platform and all associated materials are developed with accessibility principles integrated from the outset, ensuring full and equal participation for everyone.

Barriers in training

1. Limited sensory support: Current training practices do not include strategies to support sensory regulation or cognitive accessibility. The absence of sensory-supports may prevent some participants from engaging effectively.

2. Accessibility limitations in online learning platform: Although progress has been made in offering accessible training content, the current online learning platform for staff and Members does not fully meet accessibility standards. Some features and formats may create challenges for employees using assistive technologies.

Actions to remove barriers in training

Table 8: Action items for training

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
Barrier 1: Limited Sensory support	Create a sensory library for training events and meetings that offers a variety of tools and resources to support sensory regulation and cognitive accessibility for employees—for example, fidget tools, modeling clay, and coloring sheets.	2026	Strategic and Corporate Services	Employees Members
Barrier 2: Accessibility limitations in online learning platform	Identify and implement accessibility plug-ins and features within the Board's online learning platform such as ensuring images include descriptive alt text and improving navigation to enhance the user	2026	Strategic and Corporate Services	Employees Members

Barrier	Action	Target completion date	Responsible	Impacted Group
	experience for employees and Members.			

4. Measuring Progress

VRAB is committed to creating a positive and inclusive organizational culture where accessibility goes beyond compliance—it is part of how the Board operates and supports people. Our small size allows us to influence culture directly and achieve meaningful change more quickly than larger Government of Canada entities.

One way we track progress is by monitoring VRAB's workforce statistics on the representation of persons with disabilities. As of December 2, 2025, persons with disabilities represent 12.8% of the Board's workforce—up from 9.8% in 2022. This growth reflects our ongoing efforts to create an inclusive workplace and reduce/remove barriers and stigma around accessibility needs and related accommodations.

Representation alone does not tell the full story, but it is an important indicator of progress toward a workplace where persons with disabilities can fully participate and thrive. Measuring progress helps us confirm what is working, identify areas for improvement, and ensure accountability. The areas below demonstrate VRAB's approach to assessing progress toward an inclusive culture.

4.1 Accessibility Pulse Survey

The Board's annual Accessibility Employee Pulse Survey helps the Board understand how employees experience accessibility. It provides us with feedback on cultural aspects like awareness, comfort, and how easy it is for people to talk about accessibility. The survey focuses on lived experiences, which helps us understand how accessibility is showing up in our workplace every day.

Recent results show positive progress. Employees and Members reported a 57% increase in their understanding of what accessibility means in the federal government. They also reported feeling more comfortable talking about accessibility issues, increasing by 9.5%, to reach 81%.

These results suggest we are building a more open, informed, and supportive workplace when it comes to accessibility

4.2 The Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire

The Board's updated Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire was launched in June 2025. The updated questionnaire allows all Veterans, regardless of their chosen Review Hearing delivery method (in-person, tele-conference or videoconference), to provide feedback. We look forward to continue to observe these results throughout the cycle of this Action Plan.

The first review of feedback provided by questionnaire respondents indicated a theme of respect and professionalism provided by Members during Review Hearings but also helped identify tangible areas for improvement. Valuable input from a Veteran who shared a barrier they experienced, in included below:

"I have a lot of trouble concentrating on the phone. I need multiple avenues and still I have trouble concentrating as well as others. This is due to my other service related injuries (mental). So I am not sure if I was able to relay my situation accurately. It took me a while to listen AND understand and I still may have missed stuff. I am not certain how we can deal with mental concerns when Hearing is about physical issue. And we're not supposed to talk about anything else other than what issue at hand is."

We appreciate the honest feedback provided through the Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire, It helps us identify real barriers and meaningful opportunities for improvement. This feedback will be prioritized and integrated into our ongoing efforts to enhance the participant experience.

4.3   The Accessibility Network

As mentioned earlier, the Accessibility Network provides insight from employees with disabilities and their allies to inform accessibility work across the Veterans Affairs portfolio. It is an employee-led group made up of people with disabilities and their allies.

The Network helps identify barriers, provides feedback on accessibility plans and actions, and supports efforts to make the organization more confident in preventing and removing barriers for employees, Members, and Veterans.

Including the Network in this Accessibility Action Plan process ensures that accessibility is shaped by those with direct experience. Their insights help guide planning, and implementation so that accessibility is embedded in how we work.

4.4   Workplace Commitments

In October 2025, the Board launched its Workplace of Choice Commitments to staff and Members. These commitments reinforce the values that guide how we work and support one another. Accessibility is one of seven commitments the Board has made through this initiative.

Within the context of measuring progress on this Accessibility Action Plan, the Workplace Commitments provide a picture of how the Board's organizational culture continues to evolve and helps show how accessibility is being integrated into everyday practices and interactions across the Board.

The Board's Workplace of Choice Commitments will be shared with new staff as part of the onboarding program. Strengthening knowledge and skills like this across the Board enhances our capacity to identify and remove barriers. It also helps build a workplace culture grounded in awareness, shared responsibility, and support for employees, Members, and the Veterans and families we serve.

5. Consultations

5.1 Accessibility Network

Accessibility Network

The Board obtained the views of persons with disabilities in the development of this Accessibility Action Plan through consultation with the Accessibility Network.

A draft version of this plan was distributed to all Accessibility Network members for their feedback before finalizing and publishing the plan. The option to contact the Board through email or telephone to discuss the plan was also made available.

What we heard

- The Plan is really good, and the sincerity in it is noticeable on first read.
- The Plan has accessibility barriers. These barriers will impact perceivability, operability, and understandability for People with Disabilities.

How feedback was incorporated

To address the accessibility concerns raised, we consulted with an accessibility expert and made several improvements to help people find, use, and understand the information in the document:

- Corrected table captions by applying the proper Caption Style and using the Insert Caption feature for accurate linking.
- Fixed alignment issues in lists to prevent confusion.
- Added page numbers to improve navigation.
- Adjusted table formatting to reduce crowding.
- Corrected skipped heading levels

6. Budget and resource allocation

To the greatest extent possible, items identified in this Plan are specific and actionable over the Plan's three-year timeframe.

Notably, for some barriers identified in this 2025-2028 Plan, actions over a longer duration may be required to remove the barrier entirely. As such, some actions included in this Plan may carry forward into the Board's future Accessibility Action Plans.

As the Board continues its journey to become barrier-free by 2040, we will ensure that actions designed to remove and prevent accessibility barriers are included as part of the Board's financial and business planning considerations and process.

7. Feedback

In December 2022, the Board established three mechanisms through which accessibility-related feedback can be submitted to the Board: by mail, email, or telephone. In 2023, the Board launched an anonymous online accessibility feedback form, making it easier for individuals to share their experiences and suggestions.

To date, the Board has not received any formal accessibility-related feedback through these mechanisms. However, accessibility insights continue to be gathered through other channels, such as the annual Accessibility Pulse Survey of employees and Members, which focuses on accessibility awareness and workplace barriers; and the Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire, which includes questions about the accessibility of Veterans' Review Hearings and overall experience with the Board.

Feedback collected through these channels is reviewed annually to identify emerging themes or potential barriers and to inform updates to the Accessibility Action Plan and subsequent progress reports. The Board remains committed to enhancing and refining its feedback mechanisms and encouraging employees, Members and Veterans and their families to share their perspectives to help us build a more inclusive and accessible organization.

8. Conclusion

8.1 What we have learned

The Board has completed its first cycle of accessibility reporting and has made progress during the 2022–2025 period. In this cycle, we have made the Veterans Review and Appeal Board more accessible in the way we serve Veterans and their families and we have begun to remove barriers for our employees and Members, who work every day to serve them.

We are encouraged by the progress that we see in our organizational culture as we begin the 2025-2028 accessibility reporting cycle. This action plan offers our continued commitment to provide opportunities for feedback from persons with disabilities. We understand the responsibility we have to remove the barriers identified in our work.

8.2 Looking forward

As our work evolves, so do the needs of Veterans, their families, and our employees and Members. Through this Accessibility Action Plan, and those that follow, the Board is committed to creating a workplace and service experience where everyone can participate without barriers.

We are embedding accessibility into how we serve Veterans and their families, and how we support employees, guided by lived experience and ongoing feedback. These efforts are not just about meeting standards—they are about building a culture where we keep accessibility at the heart of our decisions and interactions.

This work moves us closer to the goal of a barrier-free Canada by 2040 and ensures that Veterans, their families, and our employees and Members experience service and a workplace that is inclusive, respectful, and responsive to diverse needs.

9. Glossary

For more definitions, please refer to the [Glossary of the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#) and the *Accessible Canada Act.*

9.1 Definitions

Accessibility – The degree to which a product, service, program or environment is available to be accessed or used by all (Source: [Glossary: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#)).

Accommodation – This term refers to the design and adaptation of a work environment to meet the needs of a diverse workforce, and do what is required in the circumstances of each individual, to avoid discrimination up to the point of undue hardship.

Barrier means anything — including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is 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 – means 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 evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

Duty to accommodate (DTA) – Employers have a duty to accommodate employees to avoid discrimination based on the eleven grounds identified in [section 2 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (CHRA)](#). Employers must accommodate employees who fall into the groups protected by the CHRA up to the point of undue hardship (Source: VAC's internal Employment Equity and Diversity Action Plan 2017-2022).

GC Workplace Accessibility Passport – The Accessibility Passport is a tool that promotes collaboration between public service employees and managers. It will allow them to promptly identify and implement the devices, tools, and support measures that will enable employees to succeed in their job. The Passport is owned by the employee and will document adjustment needs, possible solutions, devices or supports received in the past, and adaptive tools that the employee would like to bring with them, should they change jobs or organizations.

Plain language – This refers to clear, straight-forward writing. It avoids obscure vocabulary and complex sentences. Writing in plain language does not mean over-simplifying or leaving out critical information. Using plain language makes critical information accessible and readable for everyone.

9.2 VRAB terminology and other references

For more information on VRAB, please refer to Quick Facts on VRAB's webpage.

Accessibility Network – The Network provides the opportunity for employees with a disability, as well as their allies, to help identify accessibility barriers within the Department, and to provide feedback on the plans under development for a more accessibility-confident VAC. This group provides feedback and input based on their lived experiences and help guide VAC towards being a more accessibility-confident Department.

Accessibility progress tool – This tool, used by the Application Management Directorate, refers to automated and manual methods to track applications in scope; accessibility assessments completed on those; and EN 301 549 compliance status of each application as improvements are made over time.

Assyst Web – An online tool used to submit IT requests/report IT issues.

Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN) – This is an aging integrated system that supports VAC employees in delivering Departmental benefits and services.

Corporate Services Directorate – This is the unit in VRAB that consists of the corporate support functions, such as: Information Technology/Systems, Access to Information and Privacy and Information Management (ATIP and IM), Communications, Strategic Planning and Administrative Services.

European Standard (EN 301 549) – EN 301 549 is the European Standard for Digital Accessibility that the Government of Canada is adopting for ICT. The industry standard for web accessibility is W3C WCAG (World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). EN 301 549 includes WCAG plus accessibility standards for all other digital products, including mobile phones, electronic documents, software, and hardware.

GCcase – This is an integrated system that supports VAC employees in delivering Departmental benefits and services.

GCworkplace *model* – A Government of Canada workplace design that is based on providing a modern and flexible work environment that is adaptable to various employees' needs and situations.

Let's Talk Veterans *(LTV)* – LTV is an online accessible consultation and engagement platform launched in 2021 to give Canadians, Veterans and their families the opportunity to provide direct feedback to VAC.

My VAC Account – This tool is a public-facing client portal that enables Veterans to apply for benefits, send secure messages, and track applications online with VAC.

***VRAB Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire* –** A questionnaire tool designed to capture feedback from Veterans and their families, following a VRAB Review Hearing with the Board.

***VRAB's Workforce Statistics* –** Reports on VRAB personnel

10. Appendix A: Accessibility results framework

Many actions listed in the Board's 2025-2028 Accessibility Action Plan will be aligned with a performance indicator allowing us to better track our progress. These performance indicators can be found in the tables below, organized by priority area of *the Accessible Canada Act*.

Employment results framework

Table 9: Results framework for employment

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Inconsistent manager readiness for duty to accommodate	Integrate concrete and measurable accessibility and duty-to-accommodate objectives into managers' PMAs to reinforce accountability and continuous learning. This could include requiring managers to: • complete duty to accommodate training as part of their annual learning commitments, • demonstrate application of inclusive practices in team management and performance reviews within their teams, and/or • report on actions taken to support accommodations in their PMA discussions.	Number of managers that complete at least one of the following	Strategic & Corporate Services

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Inconsistent manager readiness for duty to accommodate	Implement a formalized training pathway to ensure all managers consistently receive the knowledge and skills required to apply accessibility and duty-to-accommodate practices effectively.	The completion of a formal learning pathway	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 1: Inconsistent manager readiness for duty to accommodate	Establish a regular process to monitor and review representation trends of persons with disabilities across the employment lifecycle (e.g., hiring, development opportunities, promotions), and report findings to senior leadership annually.	Annual report completed and presented to senior leadership	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 2: Systemic and cultural shortcomings to supporting employees with disabilities	Promote Government of Canada (GoC) career shadowing and career advancement opportunities for persons with disabilities, such as Mentorship Plus program, to support career development and foster an inclusive workplace culture.	Number of employees that participate in career shadowing, tracked annually.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 2: Systemic and cultural shortcomings to supporting employees with disabilities	Promote an inclusive workplace culture by integrating GoC training resources (e.g. the JLP Duty to Accommodate workshop, etc.) to enhance staff awareness and	Percentage of staff completing GoC accessibility and duty-to-accommodate	Strategic & Corporate Services

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
	competency on accessibility and duty-to-accommodate obligations.	training annually.	

Built environment results framework

Table 10: Results framework for the built environment

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Limited inclusive workplace design	Connect with VAC's Real Property team to explore installing an automatic door opener on the key-pass-enabled secure door to the public Hearing space at the Board's Head Office.	Automatic door opener installed and operational	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 1: Limited inclusive workplace design	Explore improvements to the sensory accessibility of Head Office environments and continue to engage staff in this so the Board can identify and implement practical solutions.	Number of sensory accessibility improvements implemented annually	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 1: Limited inclusive workplace design	The Board continues to offer an ergonomic equipment library to employees that provides an assortment of the most commonly requested ergonomic accessories. The Board will further promote this resource to staff.	Awareness initiative launched	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 2: Inconsistent hearing room design	Enhance Hearing Room accessibility by addressing barriers identified through the	Number of Hearing Rooms with identified barriers addressed	Strategic & Corporate Services

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
	completed phase 2 of the Hearing Room Project and creating environments that are safe, fully accessible, and inclusive for all participants. Identified barriers included excessive furniture, doors requiring significant push-pull force, tripping hazards from cords, inadequate lighting, and artwork that may not support (or be insensitive to) the mental wellbeing of some Veterans.		

Information and communication technologies (ICT) results framework

Table 11: Results framework for ICT

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Limited knowledge of available accessibility tools	Leverage the Board's Innovation Team to seek ways to inform employees and Members about accessibility features and assistive technologies in AI systems.	Number of awareness initiatives delivered and percentage of employees reporting increased knowledge of accessibility features in AI tools.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 1: Limited knowledge of available accessibility tools	Promote Tech Talks to showcase accessibility tools and assistive technologies and share recordings of these sessions.	Number of Tech Talks delivered annually and availability of recordings shared with staff and Members.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 1: Limited knowledge of available accessibility tools	Provide information to employees and Members about accessibility features and barriers in Microsoft tools.	Guidance on Microsoft accessibility features provided to employees and Members.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 1: Limited knowledge of available	Make software upgrade messages (MS Teams and email) clearer by pointing	Number of upgrade notifications for MS Teams and email include	Strategic & Corporate Services

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
accessibility tools	out changes that might affect accessibility settings and providing guidance on how to how to fix them.	accessibility impact details and guidance,	
Barrier 2: Lack of early integration of accessibility in ICT planning and design	All VRAB IT employees will complete the CSPS course Accessibility Fundamentals for the Web, which focuses on digital accessibility principles, including compliance with WCAG standards. This training will equip employees with the knowledge to design and maintain web content that is inclusive and improves usability for all users.	Number of VRAB IT employees that complete the course.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 2: Lack of early integration of accessibility in ICT planning and design	Apply VAC's Accessibility Framework to embed accessibility in VRAB's IT modernization initiatives, such as CSA (Client Services	Accessibility requirements from VAC's framework are applied in all CSA development activities.	Strategic & Corporate Services

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
	Application) development.		

Communications (other than ICT) results framework

Table 12: Results framework for communications other than ICT

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Limited feedback from persons with disabilities	Promote the Board's anonymous accessibility feedback form to staff and Members as a way for them to provide feedback on communication materials.	Promotion of the feedback form completed through internal channels.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 1: Limited feedback from persons with disabilities	Invite the Accessibility Network to review key communication materials and use their input to improve clarity and accessibility.	Number of communication materials reviewed annually	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 2: Inconsistent accessibility in content and design	Develop and apply a standard accessibility statement for all digital products to help create a structured and transparent approach.	Standard accessibility statement developed and number of new and updated digital products it has been applied to.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 2: Inconsistent accessibility in content and design	Leverage Government of Canada resources such as Making document accessible and Guidelines on Making Communications	Pre-publication guide implemented and verified through periodic compliance audits.	Strategic & Corporate Services

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
	[Products and Activities Accessible (TBS)](#) to guide the introduction of a pre-publication list that ensures content is published to align with accessibility standards.		

Procurement of goods, services and facilities results framework

Table 13: Results framework for procurement of goods, services and facilities

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Lack of internal framework for accessibility in procurement	Create an Analysis tool to support the VRAB in evaluating and choosing the best options for equipment, facilities, and services, from an Accessibility lens.	Creation and implemented usage of Best Value Analysis tool	Strategic & Corporate Services

Design and delivery of programs and services results framework

Table 14: Results framework for the design and delivery of programs and services

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Challenges in providing inclusive hearing experiences	As part of the Hearing Room Project, the Board will upgrade and refine speakers in all 22 Hearing Rooms to remove barriers associated with audio for Veterans and their families who choose virtual Hearings.	All 22 Hearing Rooms upgraded with refined audio equipment, confirmed through functionality testing and positive participant feedback.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 1: Challenges in providing inclusive hearing experiences	Create an action plan to respond to feedback received from Veterans and their families through the Review Hearing Exit Questionnaire. The plan will focus on finding and removing barriers in our Hearing processes and ensuring we provide clear information about what to expect, so the Hearing process is easier to understand and more supportive for Veterans and their families.	Developed and implemented plan to address feedback from Review Hearing Exit Questionnaires, with documented improvements.	Strategic & Corporate Services

Organizational culture results framework

Tableau 15: Results framework for organizational culture

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Unclear path to support	Embed accessibility into the Board's culture by making it a visible and regular part of internal communications and leadership priorities. This will include • highlighting accessibility in organizational updates, • recognizing accessibility-related efforts, and ensuring leadership messaging reinforces. accessibility as a shared value.	Accessibility is regularly included in internal communications and leadership messages.	Strategic & Corporate Services

Training results framework

Table 6: Results framework for training

Barrier	Action	Performance indicator	Responsible
Barrier 1: Limited Sensory support	Create a sensory library for training events and meetings that offers a variety of tools and resources to support sensory regulation and cognitive accessibility for employees—for example, fidget tools, modeling clay, and coloring sheets.	Creation of sensory library successfully being utilized by employees and Members.	Strategic & Corporate Services
Barrier 2: Accessibility limitations in online learning platform	Identify and implement accessibility plug-ins and features within the Board's online learning platform such as ensuring images include descriptive alt text and improving navigation to enhance the user experience for employees and Members.	Fully implemented accessibility plug-ins and features.	Strategic & Corporate Services