



Canadian
Race Relations
Foundation

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2023-2025

August 31, 2023

EASY READ SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation is a Crown corporation and a non-profit organization. As a Crown corporation, we are owned by the government, but we are not part of the government. Our goal is to end racism in Canada. We do this through education, events, and by providing grants to collectively learn more about and work towards addressing racism across the country.

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To build this plan we looked at seven different areas of the CRRF. We looked for ways that we could make it more accessible.

We looked at:

- Built environment (buildings)
- Employment
- Technology
- Communications
- Buying goods, services, and facilities
- Programs and services
- Transportation (for passengers)

We talked to our employees and people who have come to our events. We then thought about how we could remove these barriers and wrote down goals as part of this accessibility plan.

OUR PLAN

Over the next 3 years we will:

- › Train all employees on disability and accessibility.
- › Work with groups that work on disability and race.
- › Look for ways we can work on disability and race.
- › Look at our evacuation plans to keep employees with disabilities safe.
- › Work with the landlord of our office in Montreal to make it more accessible.
- › Write an employee accommodations policy.
- › Review our internal policies to make them more accessible.
- › See if we can write our internal policies in simpler language.
- › Make our policies and public documents accessible.
- › Review our job postings and our hiring process to make it more accessible.
- › Make our website more accessible.
- › Make our public newsletter more accessible.
- › Train staff on accessible communications.
- › Use simpler language.
- › Work on our voicemail to make it clearer.
- › Develop an accessible communications guide.
- › Develop accessibility guidelines for videos.
- › Make sure we think about accessibility when we buy things.
- › Make a checklist for planning accessible events.
- › Think about accessibility when we decide who to partner with.
- › Make our grant application process more accessible.
- › Ask grant applicants how they are thinking about accessibility.
- › Look into making the grant contract language simpler and easier to understand.

FEEDBACK

We are open to feedback on our plan and about accessibility at the CRRF. The person responsible for collecting and managing feedback is the Director of Finance and Administration. To provide feedback about this plan or about accessibility at the CRRF, you can contact us at:

- **Contact:** Director of Finance and Administration
- **E-mail:** accessibilite_accessibility@crrf-fcrr.ca
- **Phone:** 1-888-240-4396
- **Mail:** 6 Garamond Court
Suite 225
Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Z5

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1. GENERAL

1.1 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) knows how important it is that all people are free from discrimination in all forms and can participate fully in society. We know that ableism is historic and systemic. To fight discrimination, we need to educate the public, listen to the communities who face discrimination, and take action. This plan represents the CRRF's commitment to listening to people with disabilities and working with them to remove barriers in the programs and services we provide. We know that racialized people with disabilities have unique, intersectional experiences, and that their voices are especially important in the work we do. In the preparation of this plan, we looked for barriers in our organization and in the programs and services we offer to remove them. We will continue to work with people with disabilities to identify, remove, and prevent barriers.

The CRRF will at all times abide by its obligations under the *Accessible Canada Act* ("the Act"), the *Canadian Human Rights Act* ("CHRA"), and the *Canada Labour Code* ("CLC"). Any part of this plan that does not respect the Act or the CHRA will be modified or removed.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE CRRF

The CRRF is a federal Crown corporation. As a Crown corporation, we are owned by the government, but we are not part of the government. We are also a non-profit organization. Our goal is to work towards a Canada that is free of systemic racism and hate. We aim to do this by sharing knowledge and supporting community. We put on events, do research, develop policies and training, connect with governments and other organizations, and occasionally provide grant funding.

We understand that Canada has a racist history and that many forms of racism, including systemic racism, are still present today. We want to make space for important conversations, education, and policy change to end racism in Canada.

The CRRF was created in 1996 by the Canadian government as part of the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement. This agreement was where the government apologized for how Japanese Canadians were treated during and after World War II. This agreement inspired the CRRF's work to end racism for all in Canada.

The CRRF has around 30 employees all over Canada, many of whom were hired to work remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are two offices: one in Toronto and one in Montreal.

1.3 CONTACT INFORMATION & FEEDBACK PROCESS

The CRRF understands that listening to people with disabilities is important in becoming a more accessible organization. We welcome feedback from our employees, partner organizations, and members of the public about accessibility at the CRRF and about this plan. Feedback can be shared anonymously, without giving a name or contact information. We are committed to reviewing the feedback we receive in good faith and taking steps to address barriers that are identified through this feedback.

You can share feedback about accessibility at the CRRF or this plan by contacting:

- **Contact:** Director of Finance and Administration
- **E-mail:** accessibilite_accessibility@crrf-fcrr.ca
- **Phone:** 1-888-240-4396
- **Mail:** 6 Garamond Court
Suite 225
Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Z5

Information about how to submit feedback to the CRRF is also available on the [2023–2025 Accessibility Plan](#) page of our public website.

- **E-mail:** accessibilite_accessibility@crrf-fcrr.ca
- **Phone:** 1-888-240-4396
- **Mail:** Canadian Race Relations Foundation
6 Garamond Court
Suite 225
Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Z5

1.4 ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

You can request alternative formats of this plan, and a description of our feedback process by contacting:

- **E-mail:** accessibilite_accessibility@crrf-fcrr.ca
- **Phone:** 1-888-240-4396
- **Mail:** Canadian Race Relations Foundation
6 Garamond Court
Suite 225
Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Z5

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An electronic version of this plan that works with assistive technology can be accessed immediately on the [2023–2025 Accessibility Plan](#) page of our website.

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The CRRF will provide the following alternative formats within 15 days of the initial request:

- Print
- Large print (Increased font size)

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The CRRF will provide the following alternative formats within 45 days of the initial request:

- Braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or who have low vision can read with their fingers)
- Audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud)

1.5 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply throughout this plan:

- **Disability:** As per the Act, includes any impairment, or difference in physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, or communication ability. Disabilities can be permanent, temporary, episodic, evident or not, or can change over time.
- **Barrier:** As per the Act, can be anything that might hinder people with disabilities' full and equal participation. Barriers can be architectural, technological, attitudinal, based on information or communications, or can be the result of a policy or procedure.
- **Accessibility:** The design of products, devices, services, environments, technologies, policies and rules in a way that allows all people, including people with a variety of disabilities, to access them.
- **Remediate:** To fix something or make it right. In this case remediation refers to changing things to make them more accessible.

2. AREAS DESCRIBED UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE ACT

2.1 ORGANIZATION-WIDE INITIATIVES

Across the organization, accessibility has been considered in different ways. For example, we have incorporated accessibility considerations in our events and hiring processes, but need to use simpler language. We want to make sure that everyone at the CRRF has a good understanding of disability and accessibility. We will also continue to support other organizations that work at the intersection of disability and race and focus on the intersectional experiences of racialized people with disabilities.

Our organization-wide goals are:

- By the end of 2023, we will train all staff on disability and accessibility.
- Between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025, we will partner with existing organizations that work at the intersection of disability and race. We will work with them and consult with them on an ongoing basis to inform our work.
- By March 2025, we will review our current activities and find opportunities to work specifically at the intersectionality of disability and race.

2.2 THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

As part of our work, we design and deliver several programs and services, including the National Anti-Racism Fund (NARF) grant program, and in-person and virtual events. We also partner with other organizations to put on events, conduct research, and publish reports. We have made some progress in making our programs and events more accessible, but we know that we can make a more consistent effort in this. We are committed to incorporating accessibility more consistently into our programs and events.

Our goals to deliver more accessible programs and services are:

- By the end of 2023, we will develop a standard event planning process or checklist that includes accessibility considerations. This will include considerations such as checking for physical accessibility of space, scheduling breaks into the program, live captioning, decompression zones, and other ideas. The process will also account for appropriate timelines for event attendees to identify accommodations they may require.

- We will continue to host virtual events and by April 2024, we will consider hosting accessible hybrid events, meaning that people can attend in-person or virtually.
- By March 2025, we will add accessibility considerations to our partner decision-making process so that events put on by our partners are also more accessible.
- By the end of 2025, we will review the grant application process and consider how it can be more accessible. This will include developing an accommodations process for grant applicants, investigating our capacity to accept other types of submissions such as oral or video submissions, and providing direct support to applicants.
- By the end of 2025, we will add questions to our grant applications that ask applicants to reflect on how they have considered accessibility in their plan and application.
- By the end of 2025, we will review the grant contract content with legal counsel and try to make the content simpler and easier to understand. In this context, we will consider developing a guide that explains the contract in simpler language.

2.3 EMPLOYMENT

We have employees located all over Canada. Many of them were hired remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. While developing this plan, we started formalizing an accommodation plan for employees. We also noticed barriers in our internal policies that need to be updated to be more accessible in general. In consultation with people with disabilities, we learned about some potential barriers in our hiring process and want to make sure our hiring process is accessible for people with disabilities.

Our goals to improve the accessibility of employment are:

- By April 2024, we will develop a formal accommodations policy and process. This will clearly communicate how employees and candidates can make accommodation requests and how managers consider and respond to requests.
- By March 2025, we will review all internal policies to make them consistent, more accessible, and align them with the Foundation's culture.
- By March 2025, we will determine which of our internal policies can be rewritten in simpler language that is easier to understand and then rewrite them. If there are some that cannot be rewritten, we will make an easy read guide that communicates the key elements of the policies.
- By March 2025, we will make sure that all our internal policies are available in a more accessible format than PDF, such as Microsoft Word or HTML.

- By March 2025, we will review our job postings and consider which qualifications are critical for the job and which may be unintentionally discouraging people with disabilities from applying. We will revise our statement offering accommodations to applicants to be more detailed, with examples.
- By March 2025, we will review our hiring process and consider whether the series of interviews and assessments are required for all positions.

2.4 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

Within our organization, we mostly buy software and technology that has accessibility features built in. When we spoke with members of the public with disabilities, they told us that there were barriers on our website and our newsletter. We know that we will need to continue to review these digital communications to make them more accessible.

Our ICT goals are:

- By the end of 2023, we will remove major barriers in our website that were identified by people with disabilities.
- By the end of 2023, we will remove major barriers in our newsletter that were identified by people with disabilities.
- By March 2025, we will develop accessible website guidelines to avoid creating new barriers.
- By March 2025, we will review the current newsletter template and develop an accessible template.

2.5 COMMUNICATION, OTHER THAN ICT

Communicating with the public is an important part of what we do. We publish written documents, social media posts, and videos. Our communications are sometimes directed to the public and other times are directed to governments and policymakers. We heard from people with disabilities that the accessibility of our communications was varied. Some people with disabilities found it difficult to understand who we are and the work we do. We have to learn more about accessible communications to address these barriers.

Our communications goals are:

- By April 2024, we will train all staff who are developing communications materials on accessible communications best practices.

- By March 2025, we will review our public-facing language to make it simpler and easier to understand. We will update how we describe the CRRF and its services. If we cannot use simpler language in some documents, we will consider developing an easy read guide.
- By March 2025, we will review our automated interactions with the public. This includes outgoing voicemails, the telephone tree, and the auto-response email. We will also re-record our outgoing voicemail messages and make sure the audio is clear.
- By March 2025, we will ensure that we share documents with the public in an accessible format, such as Microsoft Word or HTML.
- By March 2025, we will develop an accessible communications style guide for all our communications: documents, presentations, social media posts, and others. It will include guidance on accessible graphics, plain language, font and colour choices, and design and layout considerations. It will also consider accessibility specific to that type of communication. For example, guidance for slide presenters to describe visual elements and to send their script ahead of time. We will also review the current communications that are available and look for high priority ones to make accessible.
- By March 2025, we will develop accessibility standards for all the videos we make. These will include captions in English and French, and consideration for descriptive audio and sign language. When events are recorded and captions are auto-generated, we will also have someone review them for accuracy. We will also review the videos that are currently available and identify high priority ones to make accessible.

2.6 THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The CRRF has two office spaces: one in Toronto and one in Montreal. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been working virtually from home. When we talked to employees, some raised the issue that the Montreal office was not accessible. We know that the landlord of our Montreal office is planning on auditing the space and addressing barriers. We also identified gaps in our evacuation planning specific to the needs of employees with disabilities.

In our programming and events, we sometimes use physical spaces, and we want to make sure those are accessible as well. We discuss our accessibility goals in our programs and services later in this plan (Section 2.7).

Our goals related to the built environment are:

- By April 2024, we will revise our evacuation plans and include explicit instructions for employees with disabilities. We will then make sure all staff are familiar with the evacuation plans.
- By the end of 2025, we will work together with the landlord of our Montreal office and support their work to identify and remove barriers. We expect this to include an accessibility audit of the space, changes to the kitchen spaces, and making plans for other changes.

2.7 THE PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

We sometimes consider accessibility in procurement, but we know that we can better incorporate accessibility into our processes. Making sure that the new goods and services we purchase are accessible will prevent the creation of barriers for our employees and the public. Our goal for accessible procurement is:

- By March 2025, we will create a resource with guidance and a checklist of how accessibility should be considered in procurement. We will incorporate this guidance into our standard procurement processes. We will also make sure all staff who participate in procurement will be trained on these new resources.

2.8 TRANSPORTATION

We do not provide transportation and so we do not have goals in this area.

3. CONSULTATIONS

Hearing directly from people with disabilities was important in the writing of this plan and continues to be important for the CRRF. We put out a survey in English and French to all our employees and our Board of Directors to see if they experienced or noticed any barriers. Respondents identified barriers and shared ideas. We also put out a survey through our newsletter to event participants, grant applicants and recipients, and partner organizations. We got helpful feedback from them. We heard that our virtual events were accessible and that recent changes that we made for an event were appreciated. We heard that our in-person events and our grant application process could be enhanced to consider the intersectionality of race and disability.

We also met virtually with a focus group of 10 people with disabilities from across Canada. We asked them to look at our website, newsletter, social media, public documents and videos, grant application, and job postings. We received important feedback and we have already done work to address barriers they identified. Many of our goals in this plan were informed by their feedback and we are grateful for their work.

We know that continuing to consult with people with disabilities and racialized people with disabilities is critical to our work. We are committed to having ongoing conversations and partnerships that will inform our actions.

4. CONCLUSION

Removing barriers for people with disabilities and including them fully in our organization is important to us. This plan outlines the actions we will take in the next three years and how we plan to continue to consult with people with disabilities. We are committed to this plan and to proactively making our organization more accessible in the future.