Canadian Race Relations Foundation

ACCESSIBLE CANADA ACT
PROGRESS REPORT 2024

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SUMMARY

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) is a Crown corporation and a registered Charity. We are owned by the government, but operate at arms length from the government. Our goal is to end racism in Canada. We do this through education, providing grants, and hosting events. We work with other organizations to learn more about and address racism in Canada.

We published our first accessibility plan in 2023. This progress report shares how we improved accessibility in 2024. We had four goals and we completed all of them:

- Train all employees on accessible communications.
- Make an accommodations policy.
- Host hybrid events so people can attend in-person or online.
- Make our evacuation plans accessible and tell all employees.

We also started working on one of our 2025 goals: to partner with organizations working on race and disability issues and consult with them.

Employees and managers across the CRRF worked to complete these goals. We trained all managers on the new accommodations policy. We also hired accessibility experts to support us from the company Left Turn Right Turn. These experts include people with disabilities and racialized people with disabilities.

GENERAL

Statement of Commitment

The CRRF knows how important it is that all people are free from all forms of discrimination and can participate fully in society. We know that ableism is historic and systemic. To fight discrimination, we engage in educating the public, listening to the communities who face discrimination, and taking action. Our 2023 – 2025 accessibility 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 also understand that different types of discrimination can impact people in intersecting, or combined, ways. For example, someone can be impacted by ableism, racism, and homophobia in a different way than someone else may be impacted by ableism and sexism.

Directly related to our work, we know that racialized people with disabilities have intersectional lived experience. We want to make sure to listen to their voices. In preparing our accessibility 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. This 2024 progress report documents what we have done in the past year.

The CRRF will always follow the Accessible Canada Act ("the Act"), the Canadian Human Rights Act ("CHRA"), and the Canada Labour Code ("CLC"). If we find that any part of our plan does not follow the Act or the CHRA, we will change it.

Description of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation

The CRRF is a federal Crown corporation. As a Crown corporation, we are owned by government, but we operate at arms length from the government. We are also a registered Charity. 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. 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 has about 30 employees across Canada, there are two offices: one in Toronto and one in Montreal.

Process for Feedback and Contact Information

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 our Director of Finance and Administration at:

- **E-mail address:** accessible@crrf-fcrr.ca
- **Telephone number:** +1 (416)-441-1900 Ext 203
- **Mailing address:** 6 Sakura Way
  Suite 225
  Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Z5

Alternative Formats

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

- **E-mail address:** accessible@crrf-fcrr.ca
- **Telephone number:** +1 (416)-441-1900 Ext 203
- **Mailing address:** 6 Sakura Way
  Suite 225
  Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Z5

The CRRF will provide the following alternative formats as soon as possible. While we will aim for sooner, we commit to sending them by the deadlines in the Accessible Canada Act. Those deadlines are within 15 days of the initial request for print and large print. Or within 45 days of the initial request for braille grade 1 and braille grade 2 or audio.

Context

The Accessible Canada Act is a law to make Canada more accessible. Starting December 2022, federal organizations must make plans on how they will be more accessible. The CRRF published our first Accessibility Plan in August 2023 and it details actions we planned to do in 2023, 2024, and 2025. In December

2025 we will write a new plan about what we will do for the next three years. Every year when we don't write a new plan, we will share a report on our progress for that year. This Progress Report shares updates on all the accessibility changes that we planned to do in 2024. It also shares what we learned from any feedback received in the last year and in consultations with people with disabilities.

If you would like to learn more about what we did in 2023, please look at that report.

AREAS DESCRIBED UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE ACA

Our goals are organized under the seven priority areas of the ACA and a section on organization-wide initiatives:

1. Organization-wide Initiatives
2. The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services
3. Employment
4. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
5. Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies
6. The Built Environment
7. The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities
8. Transportation

Organization-wide initiatives

We have started work on one goal in this priority area this year.

Goal: 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.

Status: In progress

Description of progress: We have identified several organizations that work at the intersection of disability and race. We are reaching out to them to explore what partnership and consultation could look like. We want to make sure that these partnerships are beneficial for both parties and that the relationships are built on respect and genuine understanding. Therefore, it will take time to develop and build these relationships. We will continue to talk with organizations we have identified and also be open to connecting with other organizations.

Next year, we plan to:

- Review our activities and finding opportunities to work at the intersection of disability and race.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

We completed one goal in this priority area this year.

Goal: 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.

Status: Complete

Description of progress: We've considered and determined that the feasibility of hybrid events will vary depending on the event. There are budget and practical implications which are not always in our control. In the future, we will continue to think about if we can make an event hybrid on an event-by-event basis. Over this past year, we hosted virtual, hybrid, and in-person events. We used the accessible event checklist we developed previously to make sure our events are as accessible as possible.

Next year, we plan to:

- Work with partners to make sure their events are more accessible.
- Review our grant application process and grant contract language to make it more accessible and ask applicants to reflect on how they are incorporating accessibility.

Employment

We completed one goal in this priority area this year.

Goal: 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.

Status: Complete

Description of progress: The CRRF hired accessibility experts from the company Left Turn Right Turn to develop a formal accommodations policy and train managers and employees on it. They are made up mostly of people with disabilities and include racialized people with disabilities.

The accommodations policy is for all employees, candidates, volunteers, and Board of Directors. The policy covers accommodations for accessibility reasons, as well as for other reasons, like religious accommodations. It is available in English and French, and we will publish it on our website. We also trained managers on the new policy and made sure that they knew how to implement it. We presented the new policy to all employees and had a meeting where they could ask any questions about it.

Next year, we plan to:

- Review our internal policies to make them more accessible, including writing them in plain language and making them available in accessible formats.
- Review our job postings and our hiring process to make it more accessible and avoid unintentionally discouraging people with disabilities from applying.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

We did not have any goals in this priority area for this year. Next year, we plan to:

- Develop accessible website guidelines and accessible newsletter templates to avoid creating new barriers.

Communication, other than ICT

We completed one goal in this priority area this year.

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

Status: Complete

Description of progress: We hired accessibility communication experts at the company Left Turn Right Turn to develop training on accessible communications. Three sessions were developed to cover different topics like:

- Communication barriers
- Assistive technology
- Accessible text and document formats
- Alternative text and image description
- Tools for checking accessibility
- Digital accessibility
- Plain language

While the training was developed for the communications team at the CRRF, all staff were invited to participate. Each training had between 10 and 20 participants.

We want to make sure that any employee, including new employees, has access to this training in the future. So we are recording a version of the training that can be accessed in the future. These recorded trainings will be available to all staff in early 2025.

Next year, we plan to:

- Review our public-facing language to make it simpler and easier to understand.
- Review our automated interactions with public to make it more accessible.
- Ensure we share documents with the public in an accessible format.
- Develop an accessible communications style guide for all our communications.
- Develop accessibility standards for all videos we make, including meeting recordings.

The Built Environment

We worked on one goal in this priority area this year.

Goal: 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.

Status: Complete

Description of progress: We worked with accessibility experts from the company Left Turn Right Turn to help review our evacuation plans and make sure they are accessible for anyone who may be in our offices (e.g., employees, visitors). Plans have been revised for both our Toronto and Montreal offices that include clear instructions for people with disabilities and we shared these plans with all employees. We are working with building management of each office to make sure that appropriate resources and evacuation aids are available in case of an emergency.

Next year, we plan to:

- Familiarize all employees with the new evacuation procedures.
- Work with our landlord of the Montreal office to identify and remove barriers in the office space.

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

We did not have any goals in this priority area for this year.

Next year, we plan to:

- Develop guidance on accessible procurement.

Transportation

We do not have goals in this area. We thought that only organizations that deliver transportation services had to develop goals related to this area. We have since learned that we should think about how people travel to our workplace and events. We will consider this in our next Accessibility Plan.

CONSULTATIONS

We met with a group of eight people with disabilities from across Canada. We shared this progress report with them and asked them to give us feedback on our progress and on the accessibility of this report.

We made edits to this progress report based on the feedback we received. For some of the feedback, we will address them by making progress on our future goals and in our next Accessibility Plan.

Some of their feedback was positive. They appreciated that our writing was easy to understand and that we included a glossary. The acknowledgement of intersectionality was good.

Some of the constructive feedback they gave was:

- The original draft of this progress report included numbering for different sections and goals. The group gave us feedback that this was confusing and did not help organize the report and so we removed these numbers in the final report.
- Some sections had longer paragraphs that were more difficult to understand and follow. We modified the text of this progress report to make it easier to follow.

- It would be good to see more details in the report about what the CRRF did and what organizations they are hiring and working with to improve accessibility. We added some details where appropriate.
- More progress and details on how partnerships with intersectional organizations are being made would be helpful. We will consider this feedback as we move forward with this goal and continue to build partnerships with race and disability organizations.
- There were some inconsistencies in the report about how many goals were completed. We made changes to improve the clarity.
- There are some accessibility barriers that also come up when working from home. The group encouraged us to consider some of these potential barriers in the future, and we will consider them when planning for our next accessibility plan.
- There needs to be more quantitative measures and indicators to track improvements in accessibility. We will consider this feedback for our next accessibility plan and will write future goals in a way that will allow them to be tracked and measured more easily.

- There should be a toll-free phone number to reach out to the CRRF. We do have a toll-free phone number and will include it in our next accessibility plan.
- For alternative formats, the group pointed out that there are two different kinds of braille (grade 1 and grade 2) and that not all people who use braille can read both grades. We have modified this report to reflect this feedback and specified that individuals can request alternative formats of this progress report in either grade.

FEEDBACK

The CRRF understands that listening to people with disabilities is important in becoming a more accessible organization. We published our public feedback process in 2023. We have not received any feedback about accessibility at the CRRF this year.

We will continue to look out for feedback on accessibility and hope that our engagement with partner organizations will help us make progress. We will include future feedback, and how we considered it, in future progress reports and plans.

CONCLUSION

The CRRF completed all four goals we had planned to complete by the end of 2024. We are also making progress on one of our 2025 goals.

The CRRF will work towards our remaining goals in 2025. We will continue to seek and listen to feedback from people with disabilities on how to make the CRRF more accessible and incorporate these findings into our next Accessibility Plan.

GLOSSARY

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.

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.

Built Environment: This refers to structures made by people, including sidewalks, roads, buildings, and furniture.

Charity: A type of organization that has a community benefit as its main goal. Some examples of community benefits include reducing poverty and education.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO): This is a leadership position in an organization. It is their responsibility to make sure that the day-to-day activities of the organization work well. They are usually responsible for policies and employment.

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.

Federal Organizations: Various levels of government are responsible for different things in Canada. The federal government oversees the country as a whole. Federal corporations are companies for which the federal government is responsible. These include the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. These corporations also include things such as Air Canada, mines, and broadcasting.

Grants: Money given to an organization, usually for a specific reason. To receive a grant, an individual or an organization needs to write an application and explain what they will use the money for.

Hybrid Event: An event where an attendee can choose to join in-person or virtually through an online meeting platform.

Intersectionality: The unique experiences of discrimination and oppression that everyone has. We must consider anything that can marginalize people, including race, disability, Indigeneity, class, gender, and sexuality.

Procurement: To buy something or a service from someone outside of our organization. It usually involves a formal process.

Racism: Discrimination, or treating someone differently, based on their race.

Remediate: To fix something or make it right. In this case remediation refers to changing things to make them more accessible.

Systemic racism: When racism, or racist ideas, are part of policies and processes that result in discrimination based on someone's race.