

Canadian Forces Morale and  
Welfare Services

# **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

## **2022-2025**





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## Foreward



**Ian Poulter,**

Chief Executive Officer, Staff of the Non-Public Funds, Canadian Forces and Managing Director of Non-Public Property, operating together as CFMWS

This first Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) Accessibility Plan is a significant step for our organization and will go a long way in setting the course for a work environment that truly recognizes the needs of employees who may have a disability, whether visible, non-visible, or process-oriented.

The CFMWS Accessibility Plan was not developed in isolation, it was created with valuable and inclusive employee feedback across all of our geographical locations. Only by hearing about challenges, improvements or new areas of consideration can we truly hope to meet the evolving needs of our employees. To continue to live our values of caring and working as one team, it is critical to our success as an organization to engage our employees in constructive feedback.

I would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the 2022 Accessibility Survey, along with all those who have contributed to drafting the CFMWS Accessibility Plan.



**Robin Ross,**  
Chief Human Resources Officer

I am proud of our commitment to accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. Employment Equity (EE) strategies are an integral component of the organization's mission, vision, policies, programs, and decision-making processes. These pillars support a diverse and inclusive workforce and provide a healthy, safe, and respectful work environment for all individuals.

In 2021, we issued the Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021-2024. This plan includes specific actions to allow CFMWS to further improve the representation of underrepresented groups through recruitment, talent selection, training and education. We have completed year one of our action plan, and we continue to implement meaningful initiatives to reach the goal of identifying and eliminating systemic barriers in our workplace. Our [Strategic Vision 2030](#) and our [Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) emphasize how we will be an employer of choice that focuses on creating an engaged and diverse workforce who are enabled to serve those who serve. As we look to the future, we continue to take the necessary steps to strengthen our commitment to an accessible workplace, to empower, and to support employees with disabilities in their success.



**Scott Johnson,**  
Champion for Persons with  
Disabilities & Associate VP, Corporate  
Development, Support Our Troops

I have the wonderful pleasure of being a part of Support Our Troops, the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) official charitable cause. It allows me the humbling opportunity to meet with Corporate Canada and present our mission to support our CAF community. One of the key pieces of our message is the support for those who face both physical and non-visible barriers and accessibility challenges.

As the CFMWS Champion for Persons with Disabilities, I lead a truly inspirational group of Allies who help guide our direction toward presenting the most inclusive, adaptive, and accessible workplace environment possible. What does accessibility mean? By definition: "The quality of being able to be entered or used by everyone, including people with a disability." What does this mean to CFMWS? We will provide an environment that is inclusive of all needs and aim to continue to provide the best delivery of service to all of you who are, "serving those who serve." For those who took the time to take our "Accessibility Survey," we thank you. Your voices were heard. We have developed this action plan based on the observations you identified. We are **committed to you**.

## The Accessible Canada Act (ACA)

According to the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, it is estimated that 6.2 million Canadians aged 15 and over (22% of the population) have a disability, and it is estimated that the actual numbers are likely higher.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the physical, administrative, institutional, technological, and attitudinal barriers that exist in the workplace, persons with disabilities are underrepresented in the Canadian labour force. Only 59% of Canadians with disabilities aged 25 to 64 are employed, compared to 80% of Canadians without disabilities.<sup>2</sup> Canadians with disabilities earn less than Canadians without disabilities (12% less for those with milder disabilities and 51% less for those with more severe disabilities) and are more likely to live in poverty.<sup>3</sup> It is estimated that increases in output and productivity associated with a higher level of labour-force participation and associated earnings of persons with disabilities could raise Canada's gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 3.2%.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of the Accessible Canada Act (ACA), found in Section 5 of the ACA, is to benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities, through the realization of a Canada without barriers, on or before January 1, 2040, particularly by the identification and removal of barriers, and the prevention of new barriers, in the following areas:

- employment;
- the built environment;
- information and communication technologies;
- communication, other than information and communication technologies;
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities;
- the design and delivery of programs and services; and
- transportation.

1. <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2021/2021-12-22/html/sor-dors241-eng.html#fn1>

2. <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2021/2021-12-22/html/sor-dors241-eng.html#fn2>

3. <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2021/2021-12-22/html/sor-dors241-eng.html#fn3>

4. <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2021/2021-12-22/html/sor-dors241-eng.html#fn4>

The [Accessible Canada Regulations](#) (regulations) require that federally regulated entities prepare and publish accessibility plans, progress reports on the implementation of their plans, and descriptions of their feedback processes. The regulations establish the foundational requirements that such entities must meet to fulfill their planning and reporting obligations under the ACA.

This CFMWS Accessibility Plan is the first official accessibility plan issued by CFMWS. This plan is created in collaboration with the Champion for Person with Disabilities and Network of Allies, who act as our Employee Resources Group (ERG), employees, the Human Resources Programs and Services Directorate team, and leadership teams across the organization. This plan has received the full support of the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Management Board. The Human Resources Programs and Services Directorate, under the leadership of the Chief Human Resources Officer, is responsible for the management, implementation, monitoring, and coordination of the Accessibility Plan. Through organizational-wide consultations, CFMWS has gathered information on identified systemic barriers and developed Goals and Desired Results to address these within the next three years.

## General

### Enquiries, Feedback and Alternative Formats

Requests for CFMWS Accessibility Plan in one of the alternate formats described in [subsection 8\(2\) of the regulations](#), requests regarding the description of CFMWS' feedback process in one of the alternate formats described in [subsection 9\(5\) of the regulations](#), and general feedback and information requests regarding this plan should be addressed to:

#### Human Resources Legislated Programs team

Email: [hr-programs-inquiries-demands-programmes-rh@cfmws.com](mailto:hr-programs-inquiries-demands-programmes-rh@cfmws.com)

Phone: 1-819-271-8728

Address: 4210 Labelle Street, Gloucester, ON, Canada K1J 1J7

This plan is available on CORE, CFMWS' employee intranet, and on [www.cfmws.ca](http://www.cfmws.ca) (CFMWS website) for public access.

# About CFMWS

## Who We Are

Working on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and under the authority of the Minister of National Defence, CFMWS is an administrative construct that links the Non-Public Property regime created under the National Defence Act with the SNPF,CF, a Separate Agency of the Government of Canada listed in Schedule V of the Financial Administration Act. SNPF, CF employs more than 4,000 people. All SNPF, CF employees belong to the public service, but they do not belong to the core public administration, nor are they subject to the Public Service Employment Act.

Acting on behalf of the CDS, CFMWS contributes to the operational readiness of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) by delivering key support enablers that create real value for serving CAF members, veterans, and their families through an agile and efficient operational framework that is unique in Canada. Our programs and services make members stronger at the individual and community levels. Members who are stronger mentally, socially, physically, and financially are better prepared to serve our country and protect Canadian values. CFMWS has four operating Divisions: CANEX, SISIP Financial, Personnel Support Programs (PSP), Military Family Services (MFS), and five support Divisions: Information Services, Human Resources, Finance, Corporate Services, and Member Experience and Marketing.

We work closely with the CAF, the Department of National Defence, and other government partners to contribute to the larger Defence and security mission and the pursuit of common Government of Canada objectives. CFMWS provides services across Canada, the United States, and in Europe.

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## Our Vision

Improving lives at home and around the world.

## Our Mission

- We make our members stronger
- Healthier People
- Stronger Communities
- Better Canada

## Our Values

Our values demonstrate our commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards in support of one another, Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, and their families.

- We put our people first – we CARE for our members, our community, and one another.
- We act with INTEGRITY and strive to do the right thing – we say what we mean and do what we say.
- We are one TEAM – We have each other’s back and get it done together for our members.
- We constantly look for new ideas and find CREATIVE ways to provide our members with the best possible experience.

We recognize that our reputation is characterized by our ethical conduct. Our employees are expected to abide by our [Values and Ethics Policy](#) and the [Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector](#).

# CFMWS Accessibility Plan 2022-2025

Identifying and removing systemic barriers within the organization is part three of the CFMWS Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan that was released in 2021. In the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, CFMWS commits to fostering and maintaining an accessible, inclusive, healthy workplace, by identifying barriers that marginalized groups may experience within our workplace. The first step taken in developing this plan was to review our current processes. Through consultations with Divisional representatives, we identified the following current practices, and used employee consultations to develop the CFMWS Accessibility Plan for the next three years.

Our Accessibility Plan includes information on our organization's policies, programs, practices, and services in relation to the identification and removal of barriers, and the prevention of new barriers, in the areas described in [Section 5 of the ACA](#):

- employment;
- the built environment;
- information and communication technologies (ICT);
- communication, other than ICT;
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities;
- the design and delivery of programs and services; and
- transportation.

## Employment

### Current Assessment

Offering an accessible, equitable, and safe workplace for all starts at the recruitment stage. CFMWS continues to be an active partner in initiatives that actively support persons with disabilities such as participating in the Canadian Armed Forces' Second Career Assistance Network (SCAN) seminar for CAF members and our active offer of employment for injured members. We also deliver the Soldier On Program, a program that contributes to the recovery of ill and injured CAF members and Veterans by providing opportunities and resources through sport, recreational, and creative activities. Additionally, we are an active participant in the Invictus Games, an international multi-sport event for injured and ill military members and Veterans. Soldier On also actively employs members who have been injured, and/or been medically released.

The Champion for Persons with Disabilities met with employees to understand the disabilities and barriers they face in the workplace. A series called "Our Stories" was shared on our employee intranet to give a voice to those who wanted to share their lived experience with other employees. By engaging in inspiring discussions and providing awareness sessions, the Champion for Persons with Disabilities and Network of Allies have helped create a work environment where all persons have barrier-free access to full and equal participation, regardless of their abilities. This year, we have reviewed the Accommodations training and have provided managers with training opportunities to

promote understanding of accommodations in the workplace. Additionally, in order to eliminate barriers during the recruitment process, CFMWS reworded the active offer of accommodations in its recruitment material.

### **Accessibility Goals and Desired Results**

CFMWS will continue to educate its employees on accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion and develop training on subjects related to disabilities such as Neurodiversity. The Divisions are active participants in writing accessibility policies and reviewing operational documents to reflect these principles. In turn, the HR Legislated Programs team will provide the Divisions with additional training opportunities on removing systemic barriers in the workplace. CFMWS will create a central intake and case management system within the HR Legislated Programs team to facilitate communication related to workplace barriers that employees may encounter.

## **The Built Environment**

### **Current Assessment**

CFMWS operates primarily on military bases and installations. Therefore, most of the buildings used to provide services are not owned or operated by CFMWS. This has an impact on CFMWS' ability to invest in, or control, structural modifications.

### **Accessibility Goals and Desired Results**

With these constraints in mind, we will provide assistive devices and tools for employees with disabilities, such as adjustable height desks, Assistive Technology, and quiet rooms. CFMWS will continue to monitor and identify structural barriers and report accessibility barriers to building owners.

In the few NPP owned and operated land and buildings, CFMWS will respect ACA principles in modifications and renovations to those lands and buildings. Through identification of workplace physical barriers, the organization will endeavor to develop strategies to implement modifications and renovations to physical workspaces, when feasible, to remove or reduce the impact of physical barriers.

## **Information and Communication Technologies**

### **Current Assessment**

The procurement process for all IM/IT-related equipment is governed by the IM/IT Procurement Policy. This policy requires employees to submit a procurement ticket to acquire adaptive technologies. Once the ticket is received, IS Division Procurement team works with the individual to procure the required hardware (or software). Various special systems (i.e. screen readers, speech-to-write software,) can be provided, and the same process applies for procuring any other type of non-standard IM/IT equipment.

## **Accessibility Goals and Desired Results**

In addition to the procedures already in place, the organization will respect ACA principles when procuring IM/IT goods and services. Training and appropriate tools will be provided to employees responsible for Information and Technology to promote ACA principles.

## **Communication**

### **Current Assessment**

The CFMWS Marketing and Member Experience team assists Divisions in listening to the voice of members, employees, and stakeholders and provides the tools, mechanisms, and campaigns to create a two-way dialogue with our target audiences. Our intranet employee platform, entitled CORE, is a great example of how new technology supports our endeavors to make our workplace more accessible to all.

The Marketing and Member Experience team also launched the new website (cfmws.ca) in October 2022. The site is built to meet the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Communications standards, which is based on the Web Content Accessibility Guides (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA. The organization now offers different communication media, such as video with closed captioning and transcripts, to maximize the accessibility of its products.

## **Accessibility Goals and Desired Results**

As CFMWS continues to develop innovative resources for its employees, it will continue to emphasize accessibility as a key requirement. The Human Resources Programs and Services Directorate team will work closely with the Marketing and Member Experience team in developing best practices to produce communications and media that respect ACA principles. This commitment includes providing training opportunities on specific consideration when developing communications.

## **The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities**

### **Current Assessment**

Procurement and Contracting (PC) is an essential activity in support of the delivery of Non-Public Property (NPP) programs and services. NPP PC activities involve a diverse portfolio of purchases that span a vast geographic area and occur in a number of CAF environments. The [NPP Contracting Policy](#) promotes adherence and consistency with established accessibility standards.

## **Accessibility Goals and Desired Results**

The organization will continue to respect ACA principles in the procurement of goods and services.

## The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

### Current Assessment

CFMWS aims to provide services tailored to meet the needs of its members, where possible providing the opportunity for the CAF Community to choose the way in which they would like to receive services or participate in programs – whether in person, virtually, or over the phone. CFMWS employees provide services in both official languages (when required), thereby minimizing the language barriers for service accessibility. Since 2020, the Military Family Services GBA+ Working Group has been developing resources to produce services provided to the military community that are inclusive and GBA+ compliant.

### Accessibility Goals and Desired Results

As we continue to develop programs and services, CFMWS will continue to respect inclusive principles such as accessibility in the development and delivery of its programs and services.

## Transportation

### Current Assessment

Although transportation is not a component of the CFMWS operational mandate, the organization seeks to minimize transportation from being a barrier to employment. In 2021, CFMWS launched its first Flexible Work Options policy. The pandemic has provided the organization with the opportunity to reassess the feasibility to have Flexible Work Options for employees. Enabling specific positions to exist remotely is another way CFMWS has worked to eliminate employment barriers for marginalized people who may not have access to transportation or have the mental or physical ability to commute to work daily. When operations permit, CFMWS also recognized the need to adjust work schedules so that employees can use public transportation.

### Accessibility Goals and Desired Results

CFMWS will continue to offer Flexible Work Options and accommodations to meet transportation-related needs of employees.

## Consultation Process

During the summer of 2022, the Champion for Persons with Disabilities and Network of Allies created an Accessibility Survey. The goal of this survey was to better understand our workforce demographic, our workplace barriers, and to gather employee recommendations on what CFMWS should focus on in its inaugural Accessibility Plan. The survey was available to all employees through the SurveyMonkey application. The URL was shared on CORE (CFMWS' intranet platform) and via CFMWS' all staff emails. The survey was available from September 20, 2022 to October 18, 2022, and approximately 10% of the CFMWS workforce responded. Both managers (31.92% of respondents) and employees (63.59% of respondents) took part in the survey, and nearly 15% of respondents identified as a person with disabilities.

*Respondents who identified as a person with a disability were encouraged to specify what disability (ies) they identify with. The most common responses were:*

- Mental health disability;
- Physical disability;
- Cognitive disability;
- Seeing disability;
- Hearing disability; and
- Intellectual disability.

The findings inform part of the Accessibility Goals and Desired Results relating to the areas described in Section 5 of the ACA.

## Actions and Implementation

CFMWS is committed to creating an accessible workplace for all employees. Our key actions for this plan are:

- The creation of processes to identify barriers in the workplace and support the application of the ACA will be operational by December 31, 2023.
- CFMWS' first Accessibility Strategy will be defined by September 2024, based on a collaborative effort with Divisional Stakeholders.
- By December 2024, Divisions will have been provided with additional training opportunities, resources, and tools to apply accessibility principles in their activities. Data on training completed and the measures taken by Divisions to promote workplace accessibility will be part of the bi-annual report.

In accordance with the Accessible Canada Regulations, the CFMWS Accessibility Plan is the first step in a three-year planning and reporting cycle:

- 2022: publish an Accessibility Plan
- 2023: publish annual Progress Report
- 2024: publish annual Progress Report
- 2025: publish a new 2025-2027 Accessibility Plan

# Monitoring and Reporting

This iteration of the Accessibility Plan builds on past and existing initiatives and progresses CFMWS' journey of growth and inclusivity. CFMWS will continue to align the Accessibility Action Plan with the Public Service Accessibility Strategy and Diversity and Inclusion initiatives in order to contribute to the Canada-wide goal of a barrier-free public service by 2040.

Further analysis will be required to assess which aspects of the plan have been successful, which areas require further action, and what steps are required to continue to grow in certain areas. Surveys of the CFMWS Team, as well as data gathered from the processes implemented to identify barriers in the workplace, will be used to assess progress. Additionally, annual trends in retention and representation of Persons with Disabilities will provide a measure of impact.

As this work proceeds, and accessibility issues and resolutions are better understood, future iterations of this plan may amend or change the strategies identified to achieve an inclusive, diverse, and barrier-free environment, improve retention and morale, and truly make CFMWS an employer of choice.

## Responsibilities

### Endorsement of the Plan:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Corporate Sponsor and Chief Human Resources Officer

### Executive Management Board members:

- Senior Vice-President, Personnel Support Programs (PSP)
- Senior Vice-President, Military Family Services
- Senior Vice-President, CANEX/NATEX
- Senior Vice-President, SISIP Financial
- Chief Experience and Marketing Officer
- Chief Information Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Corporate Secretary

### Creation of the Plan:

- a. Human Resources Programs and Services Directorate:
  - Director of Human Resources Programs and Services
  - Human Resources Legislated Programs Manager
  - Human Resources Legislated Programs Coordinator

**Implementation, coordination, monitoring and reporting (legislated compliance):**

- a. Human Resources Programs and Services Directorate:
  - Director of Human Resources Programs and Services
  - Human Resources Legislated Programs Manager
  - Human Resources Legislated Programs Coordinator

**Consultations and Guidance in the creation of this plan:**

- Champion for Persons with Disabilities and Associate Vice-President of Support Our Troops
- Network of Allies for Person with Disabilities (ERG)
- Employees surveyed

**Ongoing identification of systemic barriers (legislated compliance)**

- All employees
- All public users of CFMWS services
- Network of Allies

**Complaints and feedback process (legislated compliance)**

- a. Human Resources Programs and Services Directorate:
  - Director of Human Resources Programs and Services
  - Human Resources Legislated Programs Manager
  - Human Resources Legislated Programs Coordinator
  - National Manager Labour Relations
  - Senior Manager Center for Conflict Resolution and Ethics
  - Occupational Health & Safety Manager





