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Instituts de recherche
en santé du Canada

Accessibility Progress Report 2024 Year 2 Annual Report

Canada 

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Executive Summary

In December 2022, CIHR published its [Accessibility Plan 2023-2026](#), in support of the Government of Canada's goal to achieve a barrier-free Canada by 2040. The launch of the CIHR Accessibility Plan was the first step toward a more accessible CIHR and will evolve over time. The Accessibility progress report 2023 – Year 1 Annual Report, published in December 2023, highlighted the organization's commitments and achievements from April 1, 2023, to September 30, 2023.

The Year 2 Annual Report outlines CIHR's progress made on priority areas and actions identified in the Accessibility Plan between October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024.

The CIHR priority areas are as follows:

- Organizational Culture
- Employment
- Built Environment
- Information and Communication Technology
- Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies
- Design and Delivery of Programs and Services
- Procurement of Goods, Services, and Delivery

Through meaningful consultations with diverse interest groups and concrete goals and actions, CIHR has made incremental improvements on accessibility. Ongoing action and engagement, most importantly with persons with disabilities and experienced allies, will allow for continued progress on the Accessibility Plan over the coming years.

General

Feedback on the CIHR Accessibility Plan

The CIHR Accessibility Plan contact is Lindsay Carlson, Deputy Director, Strategic Programs and HR Analytics, in the Human Resources Branch.

CIHR would like to receive feedback on the way that it is implementing its accessibility plan.

Employees may provide feedback about barriers they are experiencing within CIHR.

Persons (clients, suppliers, members of the public) other than employees, who deal with CIHR, may also provide feedback about barriers at CIHR.

CIHR employees and persons (clients, suppliers, members of the public) may provide feedback as follows:

- Email
 - AccessibilityPlan-PlanAccessibilite@cihr-irsc.gc.ca
- Telephone
 - Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time
 - Telephone: 613-954-1698
 - Toll Free: 1-888-603-4178
- Mail
 - Attention: Lindsay Carlson
Human Resources Branch
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
160 Elgin Street, 9th Floor
Ottawa, ON. K1A 0W9
- Online (anonymous)
 - Complete the [online form](#) to share feedback anonymously

Feedback will be collected, processed, and addressed by a member of the Strategic Programs and HR Analytics team.

Feedback will be compiled, tracked, and monitored by the Strategic Programs and HR Analytics team. A member of the team will ensure follow-up with appropriate internal interest groups.

Feedback will remain confidential.

Acknowledgement of receipt will be sent following reception of the feedback, unless feedback received was anonymous.

The feedback received will be acknowledged in the way it was received unless it was received anonymously.

This contact information enables CIHR employees and the public to:

- request the CIHR Accessibility Plan in one of the alternate formats described in [subsection 8\(2\) of the regulations](#).
- request the description of the CIHR feedback process in one of the alternate formats described in [subsection 9\(5\) of the regulations](#).

What we have learned

In the second year of implementing the CIHR Accessibility Plan 2023-2026, we have gained insights that will guide future efforts in creating a more accessible environment.

Collaboration: Collaboration across CIHR has been instrumental in addressing accessibility barriers comprehensively. Ongoing and meaningful consultation with internal and external working groups continues to be key to driving progress. Additionally, CIHR announced a new Champion for the CIHR Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (CARELIA) committee, who will play an important role in bringing visibility and leadership to accessibility. This new Champion appointment reinforces CIHR's commitment to accessibility and will support inter-departmental linkages.

Meaningful progress: Fifteen action items were set for completion by the end of 2024. Nine actions were successfully implemented and six are ongoing. While this progress demonstrates that we are making strong strides, unforeseen challenges can arise that may necessitate a review of initial timelines for some initiatives. By allowing for some flexibility, we ensure that action items are not only completed but are done in a way that meaningfully reduces barriers and contributes to sustainable change. Meaningful review and flexibility in methods are essential to maintaining a thoughtful and effective approach to accessibility.

Tracking Progress: There is a need for more concrete indicators to track progress effectively. As we move forward, establishing a performance measurement framework to ensure clear and consistent measurement of accessibility actions is imperative.

Consultations

The CIHR Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 and Year 2 Annual Report are the outcomes of consultations with the following committees, networks, and groups. Throughout the year, these consultations gathered valuable feedback on several action items, including the launch of the internal Accessibility Hub which provides resources and tools that will enhance understanding of accessibility and promote a more inclusive workplace where everyone can fully engage and thrive. Additionally, both members of the public and employees have ongoing opportunities to provide feedback through the various channels outlined in the General section of this report.

Employee Network for Persons with Disabilities

- The network is comprised of employees living with disabilities, and other staff members with close personal relationships to persons with disabilities.
- Network participants are CIHR employees working in various roles and areas within the CIHR.
- The network was consulted throughout the year on various commitments on the Accessibility Plan.
- The network was invited to provide feedback on the Year 2 Annual Report, with the option for personalized meetings to share their input.

CIHR Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (CAREDIA) Committee

- The CAREDIA committee is comprised of employees whose experiences and expertise ensure that a wide range of perspectives are considered when advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion at CIHR.
- The network was invited to provide feedback on the Year 2 Annual Report, with the option for a meeting to share their input.

CIHR Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committee

- The OHS Committee is made up of managers, employees, and subject matter experts from Human Resources, Facilities, and Security.
- The committee was sent targeted emails to obtain feedback on the Year 2 Annual Report and were given the option for personalized meetings.

External Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Systemic Ableism (EAC – ASA)

- The EAC – ASA, established in January 2022, is composed of health researchers living with disabilities, experienced allies, accessibility advocates, leaders from disability communities, and representatives from key interest groups, including Indigenous community members. The committee provides guidance on identifying barriers to accessibility within the health research funding system.
- The committee was consulted throughout the year to obtain feedback on the Accessibility Plan.

CIHR Accessibility Plan Working Group – Business owners of priority areas for action

- Each priority area for action in the Accessibility Plan (e.g., Employment, Built Environment), draws on one or more functional business lines within CIHR (e.g., Human Resources Branch, Finance and Administration Branch, Equity Strategy Branch).
- The business leads serve as subject matter experts for their respective functions. They are primarily responsible for the actions outlined in the plan and act as the main sources of guidance for other functions and branches.
- The working group was consulted throughout the year to obtain feedback on the Year 2 Annual Report and to track the status of priority items.

CIHR Internal Governance Committee

- The mandate of the Senior Operations Committee (SOC) is to provide leadership for operational planning and related decision-making for Agency-wide management areas including the CIHR Accessibility Plan.
- SOC also serves an advisory function to the Senior Leadership Committee (SLC), at the latter's request, on matters where cross-Agency perspectives could add value.
- The CIHR Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 remains a quarterly standing item at SOC to provide senior leadership with updates on action items, and an opportunity to provide feedback on program adjustments (as required).
- Progress on the CIHR Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 is also presented to the Senior Leadership Committee (SLC) as required.

Feedback Received

In accordance with [subsection 43\(1\) of the Accessible Canada Act](#), CIHR has established a process for receiving and addressing feedback regarding the implementation of our Accessibility Plan and any barriers encountered by individuals interacting with our organization.

For this reporting period, no official feedback was received on either the implementation of our Accessibility Plan or on barriers experienced by individuals dealing with our organization.

As a result, we will implement a communication strategy to remind CIHR employees and staff about the importance of providing feedback and the various mechanisms available to do so. Strengthening feedback channels will allow for more timely and effective input moving forward.

CIHR Progress in Priority Areas

Note: The progress identified in this section are actions scheduled for year 2 of the Accessibility Plan, from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024.

Organizational Culture

Goal 1: CIHR has an organizational culture in which persons with disabilities feel safe to openly disclose their disability without fear of it impacting their interactions with CIHR.

Action 1.1: Appoint joint leadership for accessibility.

Description

The President appoints joint leadership for accessibility to the Executive Vice-President (EVP) and the Vice-President, Learning Health System (VP-LHS).

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Action 1.2: Explore best practices and lessons learned from other government departments who have introduced the role of Chief Accessibility Officer

Description

A summary of findings is developed and submitted to the CIHR President for consideration.

Timeline

2023-2026

Status

Complete (Ongoing)

Additional information

CIHR continues to explore best practices and lessons learned from other government departments to further strengthen its commitment to accessibility. In addition, CIHR implemented the Champion program and appointed the CIHR Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (CAREDIA) Champion for a two-year term. This role participates in inter-departmental committees, provides leadership and visibility on accessibility and disability issues within the organization.

Action 1.3: Release a public message from the CIHR President on the launch of the plan, including external research excellence progress.

Description

A public message from the CIHR President is published and shared on CIHR’s various social media platforms.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Action 1.4: Establish a repository of information related to accessibility supports for staff and for applicants/researchers.

Descriptions

The repository is available at CIHR for both employees and those interacting with our programs and services.

Timeline

2023-2026

Status

Ongoing

Additional Information

The internal Accessibility Website, launched in May 2024, serves as a repository of accessibility-related information for staff and will continue to be updated with relevant resources. Tools and references for applicants and researchers are available on the CIHR website. Additional documents and templates are in development and scheduled for updates in 2025-2026.

Action 1.5: Apply consistent public health measures to in-person activities.

Description

Municipal and provincial public health guidelines are followed by CIHR where in-person activities occur.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Complete (ongoing)

Additional Information

CIHR continues to monitor any changes to the guidelines and will implement them as required.

Goal 2: All employees are educated on what it means and how to contribute to an accessible organization.

Action 2.1: Launch an accessibility awareness campaign.

Description

Elements of an awareness campaign include explaining what a disability means. A series of "did you know" articles will be published emphasizing the importance of accessibility in our day-to-day work life.

A campaign also promotes available resources, how to access practical tools, where to find help, and mandatory learning requirements. The focus at first will be on bringing some of the most impactful resources forward and weeding through what can sometimes be an overload of useful information in need of 'packaging' for ready access.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Complete (Ongoing)

Additional Information

Awareness campaign was launched in May 2024 in conjunction with the National Accessibility Week. The campaign included various communication products to employees and interactive activities.

Government of Canada Learning events continue to be shared with staff as they become available.

Action 2.2: Deliver disability/accessibility/ableism awareness learning experiences for employees.

Description

The focus is on learning experiences that are interactive engagement opportunities which include expertise from staff and external interest groups.

Resources such as the Canada School of the Public Service (CSPS) and subject matter specialist organizations will be used to support awareness and learning needs.

Time will be allocated in individual employee learning plans so that all employees can devote attention to learning about accessibility.

Timeline

2024-2025 and ongoing

Status

Complete (Ongoing)

Additional Information

In January 2024 CIHR hosted an event, “Navigating barriers: A journey through accessibility with Martin Paquette.” A presentation regarding barriers faced by people with disabilities was presented to all CIHR employees. The presentation is available on the CIHR Accessibility intranet page.

CIHR will continue to host and promote events as they become available.

Action 2.3: Deliver disability/accessibility/ableism awareness training for managers/team leads/supervisors.

Description

Provide more focused learning for those who manage employees, as well as for subject matter experts who support the management of other resources.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Complete (Ongoing)

Additional Information

All CIHR employees are required to take mandatory training, which is based on organizational priorities, CIHR's Strategic Plan, and government-wide corporate priorities. Mandatory training is tracked (and senior management is notified) to ensure completion.

Mandatory training on “Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility,” focusing specifically on disability, accessibility, and ableism, has been incorporated into the 2024-2025 performance management framework for all staff, including managers, team leads, and supervisors.

Action 2.4: Promote Ombuds and wellness services.

Description

Number of promotional activities for the ombuds and wellness services at CIHR, through information bulletins and other communication strategies (such as town halls).

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Complete (ongoing)

Additional Information

The ombuds and wellness services are actively promoted using regular internal communication methods. Consultation rates for the first year will be used to establish target rates for the coming years.

Goal 3: An integrated governance structure supports the CIHR Accessibility Plan.

Action 3.1: Create an ongoing accessibility forum for employees.

Description

An Employee Accessibility Forum is set up that is open to all employees for regular consultation and engagement. Calls for interest to participate at this open forum occur during the year. Anyone who prefers to participate on an individual basis communicates with the Accessibility Contact in HRB to share their input on accessibility barriers.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Complete (ongoing)

Additional Information

The People with Disabilities Network, originally established as the Employee Accessibility Forum, is regularly engaged through meetings and various feedback channels. With the upcoming renewal of the CAREEDIA committee, members of the People with Disabilities Network will have the opportunity to join CAREEDIA under the leadership of a new Champion or continue to operate as an independent, anonymous entity.

Action 3.2: Maintain Accessibility Plan Working Group.

Key Performance Indicators

The Accessibility Plan Working Group remains active to support the implementation and monitoring of the Accessibility Plan.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Complete (ongoing)

Additional Information

Key branches supporting the actions in the CIHR Accessibility Plan are represented on the Accessibility Plan Working Group and coordinate work as required.

Action 3.3: Develop and implement an accessibility performance measurement framework (PMF).

Description

A performance measurement framework is developed and socialized to CIHR employees and communicated to the community.

Timeline

2023-2026

Status

Ongoing

Additional Information

The Government of Canada accessibility community has emphasized the need for enhanced support in establishing comprehensive accessibility measurement frameworks. In response, the Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and Statistics Canada hosted measurement workshops in September 2024, with CIHR actively participating. Work is ongoing to develop the PMF, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

Employment

Goal 5: CIHR addresses the purpose of self-identification and obtains a current picture of the diversity of accessibility needs in its workforce.

Action 5.1: Launch a self-identification campaign.

Description

CIHR launches a self-identification campaign and promotes it using various communication channels. The participation rate to the self-identification campaign is monitored.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Delayed

Additional information

A self-identification campaign is expected to launch in the fall/winter of 2024/2025.

Action 5.2: Review and update the business process for administering the self-identification process.

Description

The business process for self-identification will be reviewed and clarified for onboarding new employees. The business process for self-identification of current employees will be reviewed and clarified.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

As part of the development of the self-identification campaign, the business process will be developed.

Goal 6: CIHR addresses gaps in policy/process/tools related to staffing for persons with disabilities.

Action 6.1: Establish and communicate how to request accommodation during the hiring process.

Description

A process to request accommodation during the hiring process is defined and approved by the Director General, Human Resources. Job posters are modified to include all relevant information, allowing every candidate to be aware of the process.

Timeline

2023-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Information on how to request an accommodation during the hiring process has been included on the Accessibility Internal Webpage. Resources can be found in the Toolkit for Managers and Accommodations for Second Language Evaluation (SLE) testing. Consultations with the appropriate working groups will continue to develop an accommodation process, which includes the desired end state, during the hiring process.

Action 6.2: Adopt the Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS) and barrier-free assessment tools available through PSRS.

Description

The Public Service Resourcing System and the barrier-free assessment tools are implemented.

The current recruitment system, Njoyn, is decommissioned.

Barrier-free assessment tools are made available to hiring staff.

Timeline

2023-2025

Status

Completed

Additional information

CIHR officially migrated to PSRS on January 1, 2024, and developed a comprehensive change plan that included communication and engagement across the organization. Presentations were conducted at the Managers Committee and Admin Forum, followed by individual training sessions with all Director Generals to ensure readiness for the change.

Goal 7: CIHR increases recruitment and promotion of persons with disabilities in its workforce.

Action 7.1: Prioritize appointment of qualified employment equity candidates for positions at all levels in the organization.

Description

As part of running staffing competitions, CIHR will access existing federal employment equity applicant inventories. This includes applicant inventories for persons with disabilities (e.g., Federal Internship Program for Canadians with Disabilities).

Hiring managers will assess candidates according to position requirements. CIHR will appoint employment equity group candidates who are assessed as qualified on a priority basis.

When a staffing process is internal to CIHR, qualified CIHR candidates from employment equity groups will be appointed on a priority basis.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Complete (Ongoing)

Additional information

Hiring managers are encouraged to collaborate with networks that promote the inclusion of diverse candidates and to utilize pools of qualified applicants from designated equity groups.

The intranet resources for hiring managers have been updated to include a Managers' Toolkit for Staffing and Recruitment, featuring various resources such as guides, toolkits, and training courses focused on Diversity and Inclusion in the hiring process. Additionally, CIHR has implemented a volume management

strategy for competitions with a high number of candidates, prioritizing the screening and appointment of employment equity candidates.

Action 7.2: Establish workforce representation targets.

Description

Targets are based on workforce representation gaps from self-identification data and labour market availability of persons with disabilities.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

2025-2026 – demonstrate increased representation to established target

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

CIHR reports annually to the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) on its Employment Equity data, based on Workforce Availability. A CIHR Employment Equity Action Plan is currently in development and will include the development of workforce representation targets.

Action 7.3: Use targeted recruitment processes in support of accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion in the organization.

Description

When vacancies arise, managers work with the Human Resources Branch to identify targeted recruitment opportunities based on employment equity representation gaps.

Timeline

2024-2026

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

CIHR's Human Resources Branch (HRB) continues to advise management on the importance of targeted recruitment processes to promote diversity and inclusion. HRB has redesigned CIHR's internal staffing resources to better support management, ensuring more effective recruitment practices and clearer guidance for inclusive hiring.

Action 7.4: Reflect employment equity recruitment/promotion expectations in performance agreements of CIHR executives.

Description

Development and inclusion of a commitment in performance management plan for CIHR executives.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Complete (ongoing)

Additional information

The 2023-2024 mandatory organizational commitments for all CIHR managers and executives (grades 12 and above) included a commitment to “take action to remove barriers to hiring, development and promotion of members of equity deserving groups, including the use of targeted recruitment activities.” CIHR will regularly assess and consider the need for new or updated training offerings.

Action 7.5: Support manager/team lead/supervisor awareness and ability to recruit persons with disabilities.

Description

Development and availability of tools and training to support hiring managers/team leads and supervisors in recruiting and hiring persons with disabilities.

Timeline

2023-2024 for awareness, centralized tools and inventories

2024-2026 for training and other supports for hiring managers

Status

2023-2024

Complete

2024-2026

Ongoing

Additional information

As part of this effort, CIHR’s Human Resources Branch (HRB) launched an Internal Accessibility webpage in May 2024. This page provides managers with valuable information on how to effectively recruit persons with disabilities. Additionally, HRB relaunched the Staffing and Recruitment webpage, which includes a comprehensive Managers' Toolkit. Both webpages offer a variety of resources, including guides, toolkits, and training courses designed to promote diversity and inclusion in the hiring process.

Goal 8: Every employee contributes to making CIHR an accessible organization.

Action 8.1: Set a performance expectation on accessibility for all employees.

Description

A performance expectation on what it means to contribute to an accessible workplace will be included in the performance agreement of all CIHR employees.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

ongoing

Additional information

As part of the mandatory commitments and training for 2024-2025, all employees are expected to take meaningful action to promote a culture of belonging in the workplace for all public servants, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. In addition, all employees are required to take the following training: Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility

Goal 9: A supportive program for employees and managers is in place for disability management and accommodation needs.

Action 9.1: Update the Duty to Accommodate Policy and related business processes.

Description

Review the CIHR Duty to Accommodate Policy and develop related guides and processes.

Timeline

2023-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

The Duty to Accommodate Policy is currently under review. An Accommodation form and detailed process is available to help evaluate each request in a fair and equitable manner.

Action 9.2: Establish an inventory of most used accessibility equipment. Raise awareness of the services of the federal Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology program (AAACT).

Description

An inventory of accessible equipment is set up on site for employees and CIHR visitors to use as needed (e.g., keyboards with braille, magnifiers, screen readers). Supply contracts will be set up for required equipment.

Raising awareness of the services of AACT is another example of a topic for the “did you know” series referenced in the Organizational Culture section of the plan.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional Information

The Internal Accessibility webpage provides information regarding the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology program (AAACT). This is available to all CIHR employees.

Action 9.3: Formalize the disability management program.

Description

The program applies when employees can remain at work in an adapted fashion to manage an illness or injury temporarily, when employees are on extended leave or when returning from extended leave (e.g., progressive return to work). It includes steps to follow to remove the uncertainty of what to do and when associated with being on long term leave or planning a return to work.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Initial internal discussions have begun, setting the stage for the next steps. With these conversations underway, the timeline requires to be adjusted to allow for a thorough communication strategy to promote the program.

Built Environment

Goal 10: Current office space includes accessible workstations for persons with mobility disabilities.

Action 10.1: Create multiple accessible workstations and closed offices.

Description

Sufficient accessible workstations and closed offices are created for employees with mobility disabilities.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Additional information

The Finance and Administration Branch ensures that the number of accessible workstations available meets the needs of CIHR employees with mobility disabilities.

Action 10.2: Create workspace with access to natural light and quiet space with dimmable lighting.

Description

Sufficient workspaces with natural light or with dimmable lighting are created for employees.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Additional information

The Finance and Administration Branch ensures that the number of workstations offering natural light or dimmable lighting available meets the needs of CIHR employees.

Action 10.3: Communicate with employees when new accessibility measures are implemented and remind employees how to submit built environment accessibility questions.

Description

Employees are informed of changes to work environment as appropriate, given CIHR's forthcoming move.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Additional information

The Finance and Administration Branch continues to inform employees of changes to the workplace as changes arise using regular internal communication channels.

Goal 11: CIHR future office space meets accessibility requirements.

Action 11.1: Design future office space based on the CSA-B651-18.

Description

The new space plan will meet the built environment accessibility standards established in the Canadian Standards Association's (CSA) Accessible Design for the Built Environment that were in place at time of design.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Goal 12: Employee engagement is part of managing the change to the new office location.

Action 12.1: Engage internal committees and the Employee Accessibility Forum as part of the accessibility work underway at CIHR's future office space.

Description

Internal committees/forum are briefed on accessibility measures.

Timeline

2023-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Consultations are underway with internal committees, and the Employee Accessibility Forum also known as the People with Disabilities Network.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Goal 13: Access to CIHR information (information management) is increased.

Action 13.1: Complete project to digitize CIHR paper records.

Description

CIHR's paper records are digitalized in accessible format in the Electronic Document and Records Management system.

Timeline

2023-2025

Status

Ongoing

Goal 14: Existing technology is adapted, where possible, and updated to improve accessibility. New digital systems and technology purchased best meet accessibility requirements.

Action 14.1: Seek out emerging advancements in accessible technology.

Description

New tools to test accessibility are identified and procured to support CIHR's accessibility efforts.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

The Digital and Security Services Branch monitors advancements in accessible technologies and assess the feasibility to include new accessible technologies where possible to CIHR's tools as required.

Action 14.2: Continue to review existing CIHR systems for accessibility compliance.

Description

CIHR systems are reviewed for accessibility and a plan is developed to address gaps in existing systems.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Systems are being reviewed for accessibility. This analysis will inform the development of a plan to address gaps in existing systems in the coming years.

Action 14.3: Confirm the accessibility compliance of the Tri-Agency Grant Management Solution (TGMS).

Description

The Tri-Agency Grant Management Solution (TGMS) development criteria are compliant to accessibility standards.

Tests performed during the development phase demonstrate compliance to accessibility standards.

Timeline

2024-2026

Status

Not initiated

Additional information

The TGMS project is not far enough along to begin this work.

Action 14.4: Assess the need for hands-on technical support for teleworking (outside NCR) employees.

Description

An assessment is conducted to identify the needs for technical support for teleworking employees outside the NCR.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Completed

Additional information

CIHR has established a system to provide a technician on a case-by-case basis for hands-on technical assistance related to accessibility.

Goal 15: Websites and Web-related tools and templates meet technical/functional accessibility requirements for use by employees and external users.

Action 15.1: Conduct an accessibility review of websites and templates.

Description

A workplan is developed to review CIHR’s website and communication templates to ensure compliance to accessibility standards. Guidance documents are also prepared to support CIHR employees in developing accessible products.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

CIHR is reviewing its website and communications template to improve accessibility. Guidance documents, including governance templates, are being developed as evergreen resources to help employees in the integration of accessibility best practices in their daily operations.

Action 15.2: Review and update accessibility testing and web content accessibility guidance documents.

Description

Guidance documents to test software and web content accessibility are developed and communicated to the employees concerned.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Ongoing

Additional Information

The Digital and Security Services Branch remains committed to continually assessing and improving system accessibility. Notably, enhancements to CIHR's grants management system (ResearchNet) are underway using the Web Experience Toolkit (WET), striving for compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA guidelines for Government of Canada sites as per Government of Canada standards.

Goal 16: Users of assistive technologies and IT employees are trained to make full use of assistive software and technologies.

Action 16.1: Identify and deliver training for users of assistive technologies. Identify and deliver training for IT employees who implement/support users of assistive technologies.

Description

Dedicated training opportunities are identified and delivered for employees requiring or supporting assistive technologies.

Timeline

2023-2024 to identify training opportunities

2024-2025 to deliver training

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

CIHR's collaboration tools, including the Microsoft suite, feature built-in accessibility tools, with training available as needed through CIHR's Intranet and Microsoft's training website.

Training for speech recognition software is provided by Shared Services Canada as part of the Accessibility, Accommodation, and Adaptive Computer Technology (AACT) program.

CIHR's Enterprise Resource Planning systems (SAP and MyGCHR) adhere to the Government of Canada's accessibility principles and are maintained by the Treasury Board Secretariat and Public Services and Procurement Canada.

Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies

Goal 17: Readability of CIHR documents is improved across internal and external communications.

Action 17.1: Develop and implement a Plain Language Strategy to raise awareness among all employees.

Description

A Plain Language Strategy is developed with tools to support employees in adopting this new approach. The strategy is socialized with employees. Reduced number of assistance requests or complaints regarding the readability of CIHR documents.

Timeline

2023-2025

Status

Ongoing

General Information

As part of its ongoing efforts, CIHR promotes the use of plain language in their communication products. CIHR also offers editing, proofreading, and translation services to support plain language in both official languages. CIHR plans to begin developing a more formal Plain Language Strategy in the fourth quarter of 2023-2024. Currently, the content has been drafted, with the goal of publishing and promoting it in Fall 2024.

Goal 18: Departmental events are planned to be inclusive and accessible by design.

Action 18.1: Promote and socialize guidance on accessibility best practices for events.

Description

Guidance documents are prepared to help event organizers in creating accessible events.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Ongoing

General Information

An event toolkit is in development that will address accessibility best practices. This is expected to be completed and promoted in Q4 2024-2025.

Goal 19: Resources and tips are available to support the creation and dissemination of accessible content.

Action 19.1: Promote the use of accessibility resources and tips.

Description

Guidance documents are prepared to promote the creation of accessible content.

Timeline

2023-2025

Status

Completed

General Information

CIHR has updated its intranet resources and will continue promoting existing guidance on creating accessible content. Future efforts will focus on identifying gaps in these documents. During National Accessibility Week, an interactive activity encouraged employees to identify barriers in a message, with resources and tips on accessible communication available on the internal website.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Goal 20: CIHR will become a leader in identifying and addressing barriers to accessibility and issues of ableism in the health research funding system.

Action 20.1: Conduct surveys with people who interact with the health research funding system on barriers and potential solutions.

Description

Number of surveys completed by persons with disability.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Additional information

Two surveys were conducted, one for persons with disabilities and one for allies of persons with disabilities. A total of 104 people responded to the first survey, and a total of 18 people responded to the second.

Action 20.2: Conduct engagements with relevant organizations on common barriers, lessons learned and potential solutions.

Description

Number of engagements (e.g., presentations, consultation sessions) with relevant organizations.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Additional information

Three engagements (e.g., presentations and consultation sessions) were held with health charities, other research funders, and representatives from post-secondary institutions in 2023-2024.

Action 20.3: Conduct consultations with CIHR staff responsible for the design and delivery of programs and services.

Description

Gather information from an internal perspective on feasibility of proposed actions, barriers to operationalizing proposed actions, and implementation of potential solutions.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Engagement activities have started and are ongoing through winter of 2024-2025.

Action 20.4: Co-develop an in-depth action plan that goes beyond barriers at CIHR.

Description

In collaboration with the External Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Systemic Ableism (EAC – ASA), CIHR will co-develop an in-depth action plan that goes beyond barriers at CIHR and aims to eliminate systemic ableism in the health research funding system.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

CIHR's External Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Systemic Ableism (EAC–ASA) has endorsed the draft action plan, with a target publication date set for 2024-2025.

Goal 21: CIHR will integrate principles of universal design and value diverse lived, learned, and professional experiences throughout all our programs, processes, and policies.

Action 21.1: Establish a permanent External Advisory Committee on Ableism and Accessibility to guide the design and delivery of programs and services.

Description

A permanent External Advisory Committee on Ableism and Accessibility is created.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Further discussions are required on creating a network of external partners to address Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion issues. In 2024-2025, additional meetings were scheduled with the EAC on Accessibility and Systemic Ableism to support this action.

Action 21.2: Establish a mechanism(s) for continued consultation when designing and implementing actions related to the design and delivery of programs and services.

Description

A consultation mechanism is placed to support the design and delivery of programs and services to the research community.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Further discussions are required following internal discussions on creating a network of external partners to address Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion issues.

Action 21.3: Explore ways to make recruitment processes and selection criteria for decision-making bodies (e.g., advisory committees, peer review committees) inclusive by default.

Description

CIHR will investigate and apply best practices in accessibility, inclusion, and universal design so that our recruitment processes and selection criteria result in membership with diverse lived, learned and professional experience.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

The application process for the Institute Advisory Boards includes a closed-captioned instructional video and accepts alternative formats, such as emailed applications or template CVs, to promote inclusivity for applicants from non-scientific backgrounds, including patient partners and individuals with lived experience.

The call for interest is being revised to ensure universal accessibility, and the ResearchNet application submission process is being streamlined to eliminate accessibility barriers. Scientific Directors are required to submit an Attestation Letter detailing how they considered equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in their member selection proposals.

For external members of Governing Council Committees, all Terms of Reference now mandate that EDI principles, including considerations for people with disabilities, be incorporated into the selection and appointment process. Selection panels are also equipped with the necessary information to uphold EDI principles throughout their selection process.

Action 21.4: Implement a self-identification questionnaire for members of decision-making committees.

Description

CIHR develops and launches a self-identification questionnaire for members of decision-making bodies. The participation rate to the self-identification questionnaire is monitored.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Complete (Ongoing)

Additional information

As mandated by the Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan for 2018-2025, a self-identification questionnaire is included in the application process to recruit external members of advisory boards and standing committees. This includes questions relating to the Accessible Canada Act and whether the individual

identifies as someone with a disability and the type(s) of disability that may apply to them.

Action 21.5: Undertake a review of application templates, instructional materials, and learning modules specific to grant and award processes.

Description

A workplan is developed to review CIHR’s application templates, instructional materials and learning modules specific to grant and award processes.

Timeline

2024-2025 and ongoing

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Updating the bias in peer review module that provides reviewers with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and mitigate bias that can affect the peer review process, with new content on systemic bias, intersectionality, and bias related to gender identity, race, disability, and sexual orientation, among others. Anticipated to be published in 2025.

Action 21.6: Based on identified barriers and guidance from the EAC – ASA (action 21.1) and consultations (action 21.2), CIHR will undertake a review of current peer reviewer eligibility, selection criteria, and responsibilities.

Description

A review will help identify and integrate impacts of disability on requirements to becoming a peer reviewer and completing tasks related to their role. CIHR will investigate and apply best practices in accessibility, inclusion, and universal design so that our recruitment processes and selection criteria result in participation of peer reviewers with diverse lived, learned and professional experience.

Timeline

2024-2026

Status

Completed

Additional information

CIHR has revised the "Join the College of Reviewers" webpage with more inclusive language and updated descriptions to better represent diverse researchers. In addition, the membership agreement and procedures are being updated to allow for more flexible acceptance options, addressing accessibility issues with the current system.

External documents, modules, and templates have been updated to enhance accessibility, supporting broader inclusion and compliance with accessibility standards.

Action 21.7: Integrate alternate ways of demonstrating knowledge and scholarship in the application and peer review processes.

Description

Development of a new Research Excellence Framework set to be released in 2024.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Additional information

CIHR finalized and published the new Research Excellence Framework.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Goal 22: Subject matter experts help with identifying industry standards, market research/analysis of specialized goods and services as needed.

Action 22.1: Continue to expand collaboration with Government of Canada (GoC) subject matter experts and the GoC procurement community of practice.

Description

Resources and best practices used in other Government of Canada departments are identified and integrated into CIHR practices.

Timeline

2023-2024 and ongoing

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

CIHR is participating in various communities of practice and exchanging tools and procedures with other Departments to improve existing practices.

Action 22.2: Secure third-party subject matter expertise.

Description

Engage with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) or Shared Services Canada (SSC) as needed, which have expertise in accessibility-related market research, analysis, and industry standards for highly specialized goods and services.

Timeline

2024-2025 and ongoing as needed

Status

Ongoing

Action 22.3: Establish a list of accessibility standards.

Description

A list of accessibility standards has been created and is applied to most used goods and services.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Ongoing

Goal 23: Documented business processes/tools are in place for including accessibility considerations when obtaining goods and services.

Action 23.1: Update the procurement business process.

Description

Guidance documents are prepared to help responsibility centre managers and procurement specialists with the inclusion of accessibility considerations in their procurement processes.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Completed

Additional information

CIHR has integrated accessibility into the procurement and contracting processes by including a section on accessibility in our Internal Requisition form. This ensures that accessibility requirements are considered during procurement.

Action 23.2: Update the procurement tracking and reporting tool.

Description

Accessibility requirements are integrated in the existing procurement tracking and reporting process.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

The Finance and Administration Branch is updating the acquisition card policy. Cardholders will now have a higher limit for processing low-dollar purchases. Additionally, we have created a one-page service contract template to improve accessibility with small and minority-owned businesses.

Goal 24: Procurement measures are in place for prompt access to accessible format goods and services, e.g., sign language services and CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) captioning.

Action 24.1: Simplify low dollar value purchases.

Description

Best practices are identified, and new procurement processes are developed for procurement of low dollar value purchases of accessible format goods and services.

Timeline

2023-2024

Status

Delayed

Additional information

CIHR is working to simplify procurement processes for low dollar value purchases and is integrating best practices based on their findings in the communities of practice in which they participate.

Action 24.2: Establish multi-year contract options for accessibility-related services.

Description

Contract options are set up for ease of access to commonly needed accessibility-related services across the organization.

Timeline

2024-2026

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

Work is ongoing to establish a standing offer on CART and ASL/LSQ services. Ongoing consultations are required to deliver a learning aspect for employees on best practices.

Goal 25: Procurement officers consider accessibility in all procurement actions, providing consistent guidance on applying considerations during the procurement process.

Action 25.1: Deliver training for procurement officers.

Description

Training delivered is focused on integrating accessibility requirements in contracting and purchasing processes.

Timeline

2024-2025

Status

Ongoing

Additional information

CIHR procurement officers attended a training session from Public Services and Procurement Canada's (PSPC) Accessible Procurement Resource Centre and Shared Services Canada's (SSC) Accessibility, Accommodation, and Adaptive Computer Technology program (AAACT) on "How to consider and integrate accessibility in procurement."

CIHR will continue to monitor and encourage its employees to attend training related to accessibility and procurement.