

Accessibility Progress Report 2024  
Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21

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## General

The Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 consulted with staff, volunteers and stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, for this second progress report. Information about accessibility at the Museum, our plan and a description of our feedback process are available here <https://pier21.ca/accessibility-plan>.

## Contact Us

To provide feedback, request alternate formats of the Accessibility Plan or for more information, please contact Ashley MacPherson, Vice-President, Operations.

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### **Video Relay Service:**

<https://srvcanadavrs.ca/en/>

### **Other Formats:**

Contact us for alternate formats of the Report, Plan or feedback process description.

## Accessibility Statement

Our Museum is for everyone.

We are respectful and welcoming. We focus on including people.

We build accessible spaces.

We work to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

We strive for:

- a barrier-free workplace;
- a safe and accessible site;
- easy-to-use websites;
- accessible exhibits, programs and services.

We'll never stop working on these goals.

## Message from the CEO

I am pleased to share the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21's second annual progress report.

Since 2021, we have worked with persons with disabilities to evaluate and update museum spaces and services. We use feedback to plan and design for accessibility and make exhibitions and museum spaces better for everyone.

We completed 40 action items this year. Each action item was informed by the "Nothing Without Us" principle.

Highlights from this year included improved wayfinding onsite and on the web, and improving accessibility in exhibition design through the use of technology. We worked with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) to improve door signage throughout the facility. The new signage has high-contrast raised lettering and uncontracted grade 1 braille. We made a site plan for the website with a map and text explanation of our spaces. A major activity this year was the development of a new travelling exhibition, called *eat make share*. Accessibility consultants helped ensure the design of this new exhibition, is inclusive and engaging. Our new content management system incorporates Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 standards and supports the use of accessibility apps, which we plan to install in 2025.

Together, staff and volunteers are reducing barriers at the Museum. Our working group ensures our action plan goals are on target. From identifying and planning to integrating and evaluating, staff and volunteers are constantly finding ways to make the Museum more accessible.

I am pleased to share our progress and look forward to giving more updates in the years to come.



Marie Chapman, CEO

## Executive Summary

We addressed all 39 of our accessibility goals for this year. We also addressed a goal from last year for a total of 40 actions in 2024. We continued to review and update accessibility measures. After consultation, we revised how our permanent exhibitions are experienced to ensure sensory-friendly visits are always possible (a goal from 2023).

Using the “Nothing Without Us” principle, we worked with members of the disability community in decision making. Examples included:

- Work with consultants from Left Turn Right Turn to evaluate accessibility and visitor experience for our new travelling exhibition, *eat make share*; and
- Work with the CNIB to create wayfinding signage with raised, high-contrast lettering and uncontracted grade 1 braille.

We also learned. Staff and volunteers did online and in-person training. Sessions included:

- overviews of the *Accessible Canada Act*,
- working with/hiring persons with disabilities, and
- customer service.

We spoke to organizations across Canada about accessibility. We shared ideas and discovered new ways to remove barriers. This year, we focused on language, resource management, and measurement tools.

The Accessibility Champions group, with people from a range of disciplines, used their experience to lead our organization. Quarterly meetings were held to discuss short and long term goals.

Staff and volunteers responded to our third annual survey. We used the feedback to understand the barriers that remain at the Museum. The response rate was lower this year. Approximately 55% of staff and volunteers answered the survey, down from 81% the previous year. We will work to understand the lower response rate and provide other opportunities for feedback in the future.

We had one formal accessibility feedback response this year. The person requested lap belts for all of the Museum's wheelchairs. There are two wheelchairs for public use. Only one had a lap belt. We made the change immediately and now, both do.

Removing barriers is a learning process. The Museum continued to include stakeholder consultation to identify and address barriers. In addition to consulting with the disability community, we continue to speak with the other national museums and portfolio members to review best practices. This creates a supportive and inclusive work culture. Inclusion is at the core of who we are at the Museum. All of us have a stake in making Canada more accessible.

We receive no additional funding to address accessibility at the Museum.

## Progress

This report is a status update on our Accessibility Plan. We have also included new barriers that were identified this year.

## Employment and Culture

We commit to providing fair and equal access to employment and advancement opportunities. We inform staff, volunteers and trustees of policies and resources to support persons with disabilities. We build an inclusive work culture, which is important for hiring, retaining and promoting employees.

### Completed Employment Actions for 2024

- Continued to remove barriers from job descriptions by using inclusive language and accessibility tracking technology in Word and PDF documents.
- Continued to build relationships with disability community. Attended community sessions including:
  - *Access Changes Everything*, Halifax Chambers of Commerce, March 19, 2024
  - *Sea Change CoLab*, Halifax Chambers of Commerce, March 27, 2024
  - Easter Seals, Halifax Chamber of Commerce, April 11, 2024
  - *Accessible Procurement*, Shared Services Canada event, June 11, 2024

- Quarterly meetings with the Government of Canada Accessibility Community of Practice group
- Quarterly meetings with the National Museums Accessibility workgroup
- Continued to encourage the community to apply to work at the Museum through the *Welcome Home to Canada* program and attendance at community, volunteer and job fairs including:
  - *Bluenose Bienvenue*, September 7, 2024
  - Saint Mary's University *Volunteer Fair*, September 25, 2024
  - HRM Fall Job Fair, Nova Scotia Works, October 18, 2024
- Trained staff and volunteers with online and in-person sessions, including a session on successful interaction with guide dogs, September 23, 2024.
- Trained managers on hiring and managing employees with disabilities through three round-table discussion sessions in December, 2024.
- Created accessible documents, like job postings, for hiring processes. Descriptions of volunteer positions were updated for accessibility.
- Created accessible document for Museum newsletter sign ups for use at external events like volunteer expos and job fairs. The document includes a QR code link with NaviLens software for access to additional information.
- Continued to make accessibility part of the fabric of the Museum by including accessibility in performance plans.
- Made sure our Champions group was active and involved in decision-making through quarterly meetings and regular updates with the Senior Leadership Team.
- Offered ongoing ergonomic training and resources through the intranet.
- Provided accessibility plan progress updates, resource links for additional accessibility training and highlighted National AccessAbility Week 2024 in our internal newsletter to staff and volunteers (May, July and August 2024).

### **Employment Barriers Identified in 2024**

- Staff and volunteer training for accommodated and differentiated working/learning styles.

### **Employment Actions for 2025**



- Keep offering lived-experience workshops to train staff and volunteers about working with persons with disabilities.
- Keep training staff on Museum policies and procedures for accessibility.
- Create a guide on accessible language and intersectionality.
- Keep making accessibility a part of the fabric of the Museum by including accessibility in performance plans.
- Keep encouraging the disability community to apply to work and/or volunteer at the Museum.

### Built Environment

The Museum’s building is a national historic site and is almost 100 years old. We lease our space from the Halifax Port Authority (HPA). HPA provides accessible parking at the entrance to the Museum. The Museum only has one public entrance. Administrative offices are accessible from the parking lot and by elevators. In 2021, the Museum received certification by the Rick Hansen Foundation.

### Completed Built Environment Actions in 2024

- Added contrasting colours in places where there is a change in height (like ramps, fire exit stairs and uneven flooring).
- Added uncontracted grade 1 braille wayfinding signage with raised, high-contrast lettering throughout public and private office spaces.
- Added automatic doors in the passageway between 1099 and 1055 Marginal Road (staff offices).
- Posted ergonomic training resources on the intranet.
- Built new accessible display housing for the “Building Communities” interactive exhibit.
- Built new accessible display housing for the “Second World War” artifact case, interactive and bench.
- Installed a floorplan and guidebook for the Pier 21 model.
- Tested tactile floor tiles in stairwells.

### Built Environment Barriers Identified in 2024

- Passenger elevator was temporarily out of service.

- Sometimes public areas were crowded.
- There were no hooks in the washroom stalls.
- No elevator access to ground floor mezzanine levels (Gift Shop and Scotiabank Family History Centre).

### **Built Environment Actions for 2025**

- Adjust the counters in public service areas.
- Update the staff mailbox system in mail room.
- Replace passenger elevator.
- Install hooks in washroom stalls.
- Add automatic door in common passageway (Lower Annex).
- Install tactile floor tile in public areas.

### [Information and Communication Technologies \(ICT\)](#)

The Museum launched new websites in 2022. They were built to WCAG 2.0 standards. This means we:

- Include text alternatives (alt text) for website images (not including the Collections Portal. Alternative text for Portal images continue to be drafted as time allows).
- Add transcripts in both official languages for audio and video assets.
- Included described video for the *Soft Landings* gallery.
- Include .srt files to make sure audio and video subtitling is accessible on our streaming platforms (not including the Collections Portal. Beginning in 2023 audio and video subtitling using .srt files were completed for new records added to the Portal).
- Use ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Applications) annotations to make website content more accessible.
- Review written content to make sure it is readable. We now include summaries of long articles. Headings are clearer and use information-bearing words. Long passages of text are broken up and have subheadings.
- Test web pages and address problems using online accessibility validators.
- Provide mini guide(s) on how to create accessible content for the web.
- Stay current with best practices for screen readers and validators.
- Use remote user testing for accessibility.

## **Completed Information and Communications Technology Actions in 2024**

- Updated the web page to include a site plan, both as a drawing and as text that tells where to find attractions, washrooms and emergency exits.
- Updated Preservica software to make it WCAG compliant.
- Recorded training sessions and shared them with staff and volunteers on the intranet.
- Tested and evaluated the new Timeline application to make sure tab navigation is available and Cooper Hewitt Alt Text guidelines are applied.
- Did extensive research into accessibility apps for wayfinding and exhibit content display.
- Regularly tested, reviewed and remediated all digital properties to be compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA.

## **Information and Communications Technology Barriers Identified in 2024**

- Access to digital museum content and donor plaque information while onsite.

## **Information and Communications Technology Actions for 2025**

- Keep testing, reviewing and remediating digital properties to be fully compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA (or the most current level at that time) by 2025.
- Put in place a new content management system and accessible app.

### [Communication, other than ICT](#)

The feedback process and the Museum's Accessibility Statement must be communicated for this plan to be successful. This includes updating and reporting on the plan and sharing future versions internally and publicly.

Using plain language in our communications remains important.

## **Completed Communications Actions in 2024**

- Made a handheld guide/booklet of the Pier 21 model.
- Worked on being consistent and clear in our wayfinding and signage strategy.

## **Communications Barriers Identified in 2024**

- Museum content is not presented in braille.
- Museum content is not presented in ASL.

### **Communications Actions for 2025**

- Share progress reports and updated plans.
- Keep collaborating on making wayfinding consistent.
- Integrate WCAG compliant content management system and accessibility app for museum content.

### [Procurement of goods, services and facilities](#)

We continue to address accessibility in our procurement process by:

- Offering optional site visits to bidders.
- Giving site visit notes to all bidders, regardless of site visit attendance.
- Giving answers to submitted questions to all bidders.
- Where appropriate, defining accessibility requirements under scope of work in procurement documents.
- Where appropriate, defining accessibility consultation services in procurement documents.
- Where appropriate, defining requirements in consultation with end-users or groups representing persons with disabilities.
- Where appropriate, using prototypes and product demonstrations to allow end-users to test features.

### **Completed Procurement Actions in 2024**

- Reviewed and revised standard language in RFX documents to include accessibility requirements.
- Included time for accessibility consultation in capital procurements.
- Ongoing updates to contract documents for plain language.

### **Procurement Barriers Identified in 2024**

The barriers identified in 2022 and 2023 surveys are currently being addressed or will be addressed in future years.

### **Procurement Actions for 2025**

- Keep reviewing all contract documents for plain language.

## Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The Museum continues to offer:

- Free admission for a support person accompanying person(s) with disabilities.
- Two wheelchairs, available at the ticket counter.
- Private museum tours at no additional cost for visitors with special needs.
- Private appointments with the Scotiabank Family History Centre for visitors with special needs.
- Wheelchair seating in the theatre.
- Fully accessible public areas for persons who use a wheelchair.
- Public programs that are either free or included with museum admission.
- When possible, online public programs with built-in support.
- Three-dimensional exhibition components and their content that are physically accessible.
- Exhibitions that include both video and audio content. Videos that are subtitled.
- Exhibitions that are designed and built to Ingenium Accessibility Standards for Exhibitions (2018).

### **Completed Design and Delivery of Programs and Services Actions in 2024**

- Attended a learning session presented by a person who uses a guide dog for National Guide Dog Awareness month.
- Looked for partnerships that prioritize the inclusion of persons living with disabilities, including the CNIB, Nocturne, and the Smithsonian American Art Gallery.
- Researched QR codes and beacon technology in Museum spaces for navigation, self-guided tours and accessing other Museum content such as bilingual transcripts for our movie.
- Made sensory kits available at the ticket counter.
- Created a descriptive tour of the Museum for visitors with low or no vision that can be booked on request.
- Found and met with accessibility advisors at school boards to discuss changes to improve the accessibility of school programs.

- Added signage to some spaces, like the bottom of the stairs to the staff-only area of the Scotiabank Family History Centre, to let the public know that areas are staff-only.

### **Design and Delivery of Programs and Services Barriers Identified in 2024**

- Lack of mainstream online ticketing.
- Lack of physical menu in café.

### **Design and Delivery of Programs and Services Actions for 2025**

- Ensure font sizes meet Ingenium Standards on artifact labels.
- Put in place the new content management system and accessibility app.
- Create printed café menus.
- Provide accessibility tools at the entrance of each exhibition.
- Make an accessibility app for the traveling exhibition.

### **Transportation**

Transportation is identified as a pillar under the *Accessible Canada Act*. The Museum does not provide transportation services. The parking lot and outside walkways are the responsibility of HPA.

### **Consultations**

We continue to consult with internal and external stakeholders. Internally, we consulted about observed barriers at the Museum . This included an anonymous survey, conversations and quarterly meetings of the Accessibility Champions group. We documented existing barriers and recommendations to remove and prevent future barriers to accessibility and shared what we learned with people across the organization.

We did our third annual internal survey with staff and volunteers. There were 37 responses. The response rate was only 55% this year. In previous years, the response rate was 80% or higher. We will review how we do the survey and how to improve engagement rates in the future.

Externally, we consulted with the CNIB, the Smithsonian Art Museum, and Left Turn Right Turn. Consultation helps us look at everything we do from the point of view of accessibility and inclusion. The Champions group will make sure we use

our limited resources well as we continue to work in the spirit of “Nothing Without Us”.

We will keep finding ways to remove and prevent barriers by asking for feedback on our website and doing consultation with external people and groups.

### Feedback

Our plan is shaped by consultation, feedback, training and shared learnings from our staff, volunteers and stakeholders. You can find information about accessibility at the Museum, our Plan, our progress reports, and a description of our feedback process at <https://pier21.ca/accessibility-plan>.

To provide feedback, request alternate formats of the Accessibility Plan or feedback process description, or for more information please contact the Vice-President, Operations:

- **Mailing Address:** 1099 Marginal Road, Suite 201 Halifax NS B3H 4P7
- **Email:** [accessibility@pier21.ca](mailto:accessibility@pier21.ca)
- **Phone number:** 902-425-7770 extension 295
- **Video Relay Service:** <https://srvcanadavrs.ca/en/>

### Training

As a learning institution, the Museum has a deep commitment to training and professional development. We completed the following training in 2024:

- *Access Changes Everything*, March 19, 2024
- *Sea Change CoLab*, March 27, 2024
- Shared Services Canada Event, *Accessible Procurement*, June 11, 2024
- Accessible Social Event, July 25, 2024
- Association of Municipal Administration, Nova Scotia, webinar, August 16, 2024
- Lived Experience Presentation with a Guide Dog handler and shared a resource for Guide Dog Etiquette 101-, September 23, 2024 [Note: this was a lived experience presentation, not an official CNIB Guide Dog Etiquette 101 presentation]
- Trained managers on hiring and managing employees with disabilities, December 2024.

We want to be an inclusive and welcoming place for all Canadians. It is important that Museum personnel are trained in recognizing and communicating effectively with people with disabilities. Ongoing training and consultation will help achieve this goal.



## Glossary

**Accessible:** Accessible refers to a physical or digital location that is easily navigated or a program or service that can easily be acquired or understood.

**Accommodation:** Accommodation is the personalized adaptation of a workplace to overcome the barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

**Barrier:** Barriers are anything that prevent people with disabilities whether temporary or permanent, from fully and equally participating in society. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological, communications based or attitudinal.

**Disability:** Disability means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination is an action or decision that treats a person or group badly or unfairly for reasons such as gender, race, age or disability. It imposes a disadvantage or limits access that is given to others.

**Nothing Without Us:** “Nothing Without Us” is the principle that persons with disabilities are to be consulted when developing laws, policies and programs that impact them.