# Microsoft
# Microsoft Canada's
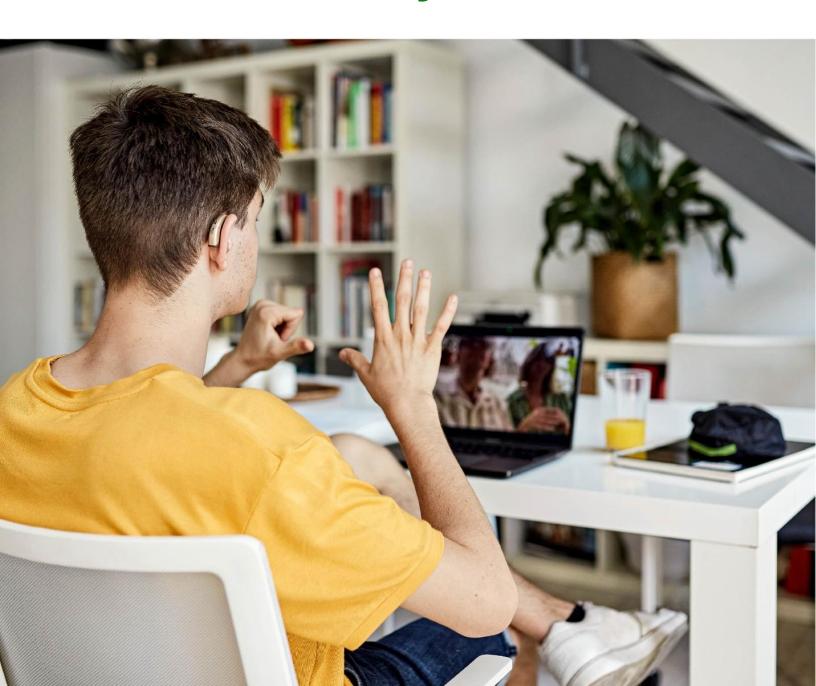# Accessibility Plan

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# Our accessibility commitment

We're living in a changed world. Inflation is at record levels, supply chains are stretched, geopolitical conflicts and tensions are increasing, and the impacts of climate change are accelerating. At the same time, we're entering a technological era with the potential to power awesome advancements across every sector of our economy and society. This places us at a historic intersection of opportunity and responsibility to the world around us. Our actions must help solve the world's problems, not create new ones.

Microsoft's mission to empower every person and every organization on the planet has never been more urgent and, as we innovate, we must also commit to creating an accessible and inclusive future for everyone. To do this, we focus on: support inclusive economic growth, protect fundamental rights, create a sustainable future, and earn trust.

We unequivocally support fundamental rights, from defending democracy, to protecting human rights, to addressing racial injustice and inequity. And, as education, healthcare, and other critical services become increasingly dependent on technology, we recognize that access to accessible technology and the internet are also fundamental to a more equitable future.

At Microsoft, we've been on a journey for more than two decades to design technology that is both accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities. Accessibility is part of our company culture – from creating innovative and inclusive technology solutions, to adapting our hiring practices, to working with partners to raise the bar for how technology can make the future more accessible and inclusive. Accessible technology can help level the playing field for people with disabilities, and we are uniquely positioned to help decrease what the World Bank calls the disability divide – the gap in societal inclusion for people with disabilities.

Microsoft remains committed to empowering people across the spectrum of disability. By working with our global ecosystem of people with disabilities, partners, and customers, we will increase awareness and usage of accessible technology, expand skilling and hiring opportunities, and advocate for policies that advance accessibility as a fundamental right.

Together, we can build a more equitable and accessible future.

# Our approach

Our approach, centres on 4 core pillars:

- **TECHNOLOGY:** Develop innovative, inclusively designed accessible technology

- **PEOPLE:** Expand opportunities for people with disabilities to thrive at work, school, and home

- **PARTNERSHIP:** Grow usage and awareness of accessible technology through community partnerships, customer engagements, and product support

- **POLICY:** Advocate for policies that advance accessibility as a fundamental right

## Consultations

In keeping with the principle "Nothing about us, without us", it is critical to constantly listen to persons with disabilities and those with lived experience which ultimately helped in the development of this plan. Microsoft Canada consulted and engaged with several groups of stakeholders regarding existing challenges and barriers and methods to help improve accessibility:

- Employees with and without disabilities across all levels in the organization
- Partners, customers, and community organizations

The input was received across a variety of engagements such as dedicated internal sessions, anonymous feedback forms, events, and customer interactions which were tailored to align with the priority areas of the Accessible Canada Act.

Internally, we continuously leverage signals to listen and learn about experiences and views on accessibility at Microsoft and potential solutions. Our disability employee resource group (ERG) is key in understanding accessibility challenges across different areas of the business.

Across our ecosystem, Microsoft engages with a network of partner organizations and customers to deliver solutions. In addition to business relationships, we have also been developing community relationships with accessibility driven organizations to understand where our opportunities lie.


## Microsoft Canada's Accessibility Plan

The Microsoft Canada Accessibility Plan outlines actions we will take over the next 3 years to improve accessibility in the priority areas outlined in the Accessible Canada Act:

- Employment
- Built environment
- Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- Communication, other than ICT
- Design and delivery of programs and services

# Priority 1:

# Employment

Having a diverse workforce that includes people with disabilities is paramount to our mission and enables us to better serve our customers. Fostering a hiring process that seeks candidates with disabilities and provides an environment in which they can thrive can help mitigate current staffing gaps, power innovation, and support a strong organizational culture.

To support this mission, we host inclusive interviews, train, and educate our teams on disability etiquette before conducting interviews and provide accommodations during all stages of the employment process including during interviews and after being hired.

## Objectives for 2023-2025

1. Increase recruitment, hiring, and retention of candidates with disabilities.

2. Review and refresh systems, processes, and tools to improve the employee experience end-to-end.

3. Streamline resource offerings for accommodations, best practices, and training to continue identifying and removing barriers across the employment process.

## Actions we're taking

1. Design and integrate strategies to support the hiring, onboarding, and provisions relative to departmental goals.

2. Leverage our neurodiversity hiring program to attract talented neurodivergent candidates and provide the training and support needed for career growth and success.

3. Encourage voluntary Self-ID program and achieve a truer understanding of the communities that represent Microsoft Canada.

4. Collaborating with partner organizations to educate our leaders and individuals in hiring positions through meaningful and inclusive training opportunities.

5. Create a feedback mechanism to gain a better perspective of current practices and areas of improvement.

## Priority 2:

# Built environments

Microsoft is dedicated to creating exceptional spaces designed with our culture in mind – one that will result in a connected, sustainable, and accessible workplace that empowers and celebrates innovation, collaboration, diversity, and employee wellness. We also recognize the important role that digital infrastructure plays in the built environment including the use of sensors, data analytics, and other digital technologies to monitor and manage in ways that improve efficiency, safety, and sustainability.

Microsoft leverages its own internal standards that meet and exceed certain legislative regulations, in addition to incorporating municipal, provincial, and federal requirements. With the opening of our new Toronto HQ, we are committed to continuously revising and understanding the improvements to make within our space.

Many considerations have been taken into the design, implementation, and construction of newer real estate portfolios to create an inclusive and accommodating experience for many; however, we heard the need to create a visible and streamlined feedback mechanism on improving existing structures and/or adapting the built environment to support employees and customers.

## Objectives for 2023-2025

1.  Further incorporating accessibility considerations and consultations with persons with disabilities into the planning and design of our extended retail portfolio.

2.  Revising and improving the Microsoft Accessibility Standards (MAS) pertinent to local legislation.

3.  Improve processes and information sharing for employees, partners, and customers to support the planning of their visits.

## Actions we're taking

1.  Channeling feedback and accessibility considerations to consistently improve and enhance the employee and guest experiences.

2. Understanding and incorporating new technologies to not only improve the experience of our Microsoft offices, but the navigational experience to enter our offices through shared lobbies.

3. Revise virtual systems and process to increase accessibility in booking rooms and expanding on the meeting and event room experience.

## Priority 3:
# Information and communication technologies

A successful digital workplace is designed to empower employees to maximize their productivity. At Microsoft, it's critical that our employees are connected to and across teams and organizations, as well as with our customers, partners, vendors, suppliers, and guests. Those connections need to be available whether they are physically in the office, working from a remote location, or doing a bit of both.

ICT accessibility ensures that people with and without disabilities can access the same information, perform the same tasks, and receive the same services using information technology that includes hardware, software, voice communication, video capabilities and digital content.

A priority is to support internal conformance awareness and product knowledge on accessible requirements and features, and work towards internal documents having an accessible standard, particularly as the number of co-editors increases.

### Objectives for 2023-2025

1. Continue to monitor our digital platforms to establish inclusive product and web experiences that meet and exceed benchmark standards.

2. Review internal processes to provide barrier free opportunities to leverage and use adaptive technologies, tools, and strategies.

3. Promote modern work and hybrid solutions to enhance user experience and support customers and partners to create inclusive workplaces.

4. Evangelize Microsoft features, tools, and workflows across customer and partner organizations and support equitable consumption and utilization of solutions relative to their environments.

### Actions we're taking

1. Sustaining our centralized employee accommodations capabilities.

2. Partnering with customers and industry to support them in meeting their responsibilities through our published Conformance Reports.

3. Leveraging our Disability Answer Desk and our Enterprise Disability Answer Desk as a means for consumers and customers, and our Ability Employee Resource Group, to ensure ongoing opportunities to receive input/feedback.

## Priority 4:

# Communication, other than ICT

Communication relates to products and services that can be used by two or more people to communicate in real time, in addition to the operation and day-to-day business practices to support individuals in fully participating in meetings and alternate methods of communication with co-workers.

Furthermore, accessible communication also extends to marketing, which is about making it easy for everyone to experience your content, receive and understand your communication, and have the opportunity to invest in or become a fan of your product, service or brand. Digital inclusion provides opportunities and access to services, products, data, information, and education for all.

We learned that there continues to be an opportunity to improve and streamline our communication across English and French audiences to ensure equitable access to information and marketing.

### Objectives for 2023-2025

1. Establish bilingual approach towards Canadian and global audiences regarding the marketing and promotion of Microsoft resources and events.

2. Ensuring internal employees and external customer and partners have equal access to Microsoft content through supports, alternative formats, and accessible communications.

3. Continuing to foster inclusive meetings and events to empower internal engagement, and external accessibility.

4. Continuing to leverage our existing feedback tools such as our cdnaca@microsoft.com alias on accessibility recommendations and improvements.

### Actions we're taking

1. Adjusting communications to French language obligations pursuant of Bill 96.

2. Establishing and advocating mandatory internal Accessibility 101 course for employees and leaders to educate and become accessibility confident.

3. Create a refreshed curriculum and training when producing new content to follow specific guidelines and recommendations on inclusive experiences.

## Priority 5:

# Design and delivery of programs and services

At Microsoft, we strive to create the most inclusive experience for all employees and customers. Through this, we integrate inclusive design throughout our products, programs, and services: A design methodology that enables and draws on the full range of human diversity.

As technology continue to innovate and evolve, digital and hybrid engagements can be more inclusive, whether internal meetings or hosting events, to provide opportunities for all to engage and interact with the presentations and content. With features like Accessibility Checker, captioning services and screen readers among many others, Microsoft is constantly looking for ways to make its products and service more accessible to people of all abilities.

### Objectives for 2023-2025

1. Continue influencing internal culture on leveraging inclusive design methodologies through

design and delivery of services, products, programs, and processes.

2. Address barriers across services including in-person, phone, virtual & hybrid environments to create accessible interactions.

3. Ensure new and improved playbooks and services are developed in consultation with persons with disabilities, with considerations to virtual and in-person events.

## Actions we're taking

1. Empower internal teams to complete accessibility training and explore other available content that Microsoft has published.

2. Influence skilling leads to maintain mandatory Accessibility 101 course for all employees.

3. Build investments for closed captioning, ASL, QSL, audio-described videos, and other accessible format options for design and delivery of digital engagements.

4. Continue internal audits, including people with disabilities, to address any barriers and understand customer satisfaction.

# Alternate formats

Request alternate formats of our accessibility plan or descriptions of feedback process in the following formats: print, large print, braille, audio format, electronic format, or other agreed-upon formats.

- **Via web form:** Feedback can be provided anonymously, or you can choose to provide contact details at Accessible Canada Feedback form

- **Via Email:** You can send accessibility related feedback directly to cdnaca@microsoft.com

- **Via Phone:**

    - **English:** 1-800-936-5900 (Available Monday to Friday from 6 AM to 10 PM, and Saturday and Sunday from 7 AM to 6 PM Pacific Time)

    - **French:** 1-855-434-6807 (Nous sommes disponibles du lundi au vendredi, de 9 h à 21 h, et le samedi et le dimanche, de 10 h à 18 h (heure normale de l'Est))

- **By mail:** Microsoft Canada Head Office, 4400 - 81 Bay St., Toronto, Ontario, M5J 0E7