



NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS

Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

National Arts Centre

Accessibility Progress Report, 2025

Message from the National Arts Centre

Located in the National Capital Region on the unceded territory of Anishinabe Algonquin Nation, the National Arts Centre (NAC) is Canada's bilingual, multi-disciplinary home for the performing arts. We present, create, produce, and co-produce performing arts programming, with a focus on nurturing the next generation of audiences and artists from across Canada.

The NAC is committed to building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive future for the performing arts in Canada. We seek to deliver an exceptional and welcoming environment for all our visitors, performers, employees, and members of our communities. To help ensure that everyone can fully participate in society, the NAC continues to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for persons who identify as Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent.

As part of our commitment to meeting our requirements under the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) and as part of our goal to increase accessibility in our organization, we have prepared this 2025 Accessibility Progress Report. This Progress Report will serve as a status update on the goals in our 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan. It will also help the NAC continue to work towards becoming a more diverse and inclusive organization.

We value the collaboration and input of members of the disability community, including visitors, volunteers, performers, and community members. The NAC welcomes feedback on an ongoing basis on how we provide accessible programs, services, and opportunities. During development of this Progress Report, we invited additional feedback through outreach to NAC individual contacts and organizations working with the disability community. Content also has been reviewed by the NAC Accessibility Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from over seventeen NAC departments and teams. The NAC senior management team is responsible for approving and publishing the final Progress Report.

We commit to reviewing the NAC Accessibility Plan annually, to providing progress reports as required by the ACA, and to updating our Accessibility Plan a minimum of every three years. We use our Accessibility Plan and progress reports as resources to help us comply with accessibility and human rights legislation and to help us meet accessibility goals established by the NAC and our stakeholders.

Annabelle Cloutier
President and CEO
National Arts Centre

Table of Contents

National Arts Centre	1
Accessibility Progress Report, 2025	1
Message from the National Arts Centre	2
Table of Contents.....	3
General	1
National Arts Centre Statement of Commitment to Accessibility	1
NAC Accessibility Policies, Plans, and Procedures	1
Progress in Achieving Accessibility Plan Goals	2
Consultations	14
Feedback	15
Summary and Next Steps	17
New Barriers Identified in 2025.....	20
Lessons Learned and Next Steps in 2026	21

General

As part of our commitment to meeting our requirements under the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) and as part of our goal to increase accessibility at the National Arts Centre (NAC), the NAC consulted with employees, visitors, and other stakeholders to prepare our Accessibility Plan and our annual progress report.

To provide accessibility feedback or request information in an alternate format, contact the NAC Visitor Experience Team by email, phone, mail, or in person. Feedback can also be provided using our online Accessibility Feedback form at <https://nac-cna.ca/en/visit/accessibility>.

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National Arts Centre Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

Engaging people in the performing arts is our passion. As Canada's home for the performing arts, we make space for a diversity of voices, perspectives and lived experiences both on the national stage and within all the circles of people we touch, including audiences, artists, arts workers, and volunteers. The National Arts Centre is committed to providing a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone. We believe in integration, equality of opportunity, independent access, and participation for persons with disabilities. We ensure compliance with all applicable accessibility legislation by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility. We are committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner.

NAC Accessibility Policies, Plans, and Procedures

The NAC's Accessibility Plan, Accessibility Policy, and Accessibility Feedback form are available on our website on our Accessibility page: <https://nac-cna.ca/en/visit/accessibility>.

Our Accessibility Policy includes information related to service animals, support persons, assistive devices, and how to provide accessibility feedback and accommodation requests. Contact us at for a copy of our Accessibility Policy in alternate formats, available upon request.

For more information on National Arts Centre accessibility services, or to request any of our public documents in an alternate format, email us at accessibility@nac-cna.ca. The NAC will make every effort to provide this information in an alternate format, upon request.

Alternate print, large print, plain text, and electronic formats for most documents can be provided within 15 days of a request. Requests for braille or audio format for content may require longer to arrange, however information will be provided in as timely a manner as possible.

Progress in Achieving Accessibility Plan Goals

The NAC Advisory Committee and NAC management and staff, in consultation with visitors and community members who identify as Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent, identified accessibility goals for inclusion in its Accessibility Plan. These stakeholders also assist in monitoring and assessing the progress of accessibility goals, provide accessibility feedback on an ongoing basis, and contribute to progress report status updates for each Accessibility Plan goal.

Employment

The National Arts Centre is committed to providing fair and accessible employment opportunities at all stages of the employment cycle. This includes ensuring accessible recruitment and selection processes, creating individualized workplace emergency response plans, and providing formal written accommodation and return to work plans. The NAC is also committed to informing all employees of policies and procedures that support employees with disabilities.

Status	Accessibility Goal	Action Owner	Completion Date
Ongoing	Review job descriptions prior to posting to ensure requirements are accurate and potential accessibility barriers are removed where possible.	People and Culture	Dec-25 Takes place annually.
Ongoing	Include accommodation request information and commitment to	People and Culture	Dec-25

	accessibility in job applications, when scheduling interviews, and at all stages during the recruitment process.		
Ongoing	Increase outreach and collaboration with disability organizations, recruitment agencies, and job boards for persons with disabilities, to increase promotion of employment opportunities in the disability community.	People and Culture, DEIA	Continued engagement with the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN); participated in Accessible Employment webinar series. Participated as NAC rep. as part of leadership group. Consultation with Open Cognitive Accessibility regarding web accessibility for people living with cognitive disabilities or who are on the autism spectrum.
Ongoing	Ensure that employee accessibility and accommodation requests are addressed and reviewed on a regular basis, upon request by employees, and during annual performance reviews.	People and Culture	Dec-25, as new staff are onboarded, with individual annual reviews
Ongoing	Ensure that individual accommodation plans including emergency and evacuation procedures are in place for employees who request support.	People and Culture	Dec-25 As staff are onboarded
Ongoing	Ensure NAC DEI strategy and initiatives related to “equity-seeking groups” clearly define and describe persons with disabilities as part of such initiatives.	DEIA Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)	Jun-23 Found in our action plan and posted on web site under Definitions section.
Ongoing	Ensure emergency floor wardens and emergency response teams review and are aware of individual accommodation plans for individuals requesting support during emergencies or evacuations.	Health & Safety Coordinator, HR, DEIA, Emergency Response Team	Dec-25 As staff are onboarded

Training

The National Arts Centre is committed to ensuring that its employees and volunteers receive training on NAC accessibility policies and procedures. Refresher training is provided when changes are made to accessibility legislation or to NAC accessibility policies and procedures.

Status	Accessibility Goal	Action Owner	Completion Date
Ongoing	Provide training resources for NAC content creators regarding how to create accessible information and communication.	Audience Engagement, DEIA	Dec-26 Incorporation of National accessibility standards (Digital Accessibility Toolkit).
Ongoing	Provide customer service training incorporating accessibility and accommodation information, including training on NAC assistive devices, to new customer service employees.	People and Culture, Visitor Experience, DEIA	Dec-26 Part of staffing policy update, during onboarding for new employees
Ongoing	Provide managers and HR team members with training to communicate with employees to help develop and maintain effective individual accommodation plans and emergency and evacuation procedures.	People and Culture, DEIA, Health & Safety	Jun-26
Completed	Develop an updated NAC Volunteer Manual and Ushers' Manual to incorporate new policies and procedures, best practices, plain language, and accessible format.	Visitor Experience	May-25, May-26 Review to take place in 2026
Completed	Review NAC team responsibilities and requirements to provide mental health first aid training to designated employees as needed.	Health and Safety, Facilities, Visitor Experience	2024 Select members from Security were trained in mental health first aid.
Ongoing	Develop and provide employee training to help increase sensitivity and awareness of barriers, appropriate language use, the need for inclusion, unconscious bias, and other content related to attitudinal barriers.	DEIA, HR, AAC	Spring-25 Facilitated by Performance Plus Rehabilitative Care Inc.
Ongoing	Provide "lunch and learn" sessions on accessibility and DEI topics (for example, training	DEIA, AAC	Dec-25

	on use of various accessibility resources; introduction of new accessibility features; inclusive communication and interviewing practices; planning accessible meetings or community events; presentations by guest speakers with lived experience).		Refreshers to take place, presentations by community partner organizations/agencies
Ongoing	Provide opportunities for employees to participate in training events, webinars, and conferences, to increase knowledge about accessibility resources and best practices, and to increase networking opportunities with disability arts organizations (for example, Arts and Disability Ireland's webinars and annual conference, the Kennedy Center's Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability conference, Tangled Art + Disability's Crippling the Arts annual event, Dance and Disability events, National access Arts Centre in Calgary, H'art Centre in Kingston, Propeller Dance professional development opportunities).	Senior Management Committee, DEIA, AAC	Fall-25 Accessible employment series facilitated by Employee Accessibility Resource Network (EARN)
Ongoing	Ensure accessibility training is part of regular Arts Alive professional development for teaching artists, for both in-person and virtual events.	DEIA, Arts Alive, Music Department	Winter-26 Accessible document creation, accessible learning event facilitation

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The National Arts Centre is committed to making information and communications accessible to all persons, including individuals who identify as Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent. This includes a commitment to ensuring both print and online information is accessible to employees and the public, including emergency and safety information and website content. The NAC is also committed to making every effort to provide information in alternate formats when requested.

Status	Accessibility Goal	Action Owner	Completion Date
Ongoing	Provide training resources for NAC content creators regarding how to create accessible information and communication.	Audience Engagement, DEIA	
Completed	Publish the NAC Accessibility Policy and Accessibility Plan online, ensuring that each version meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA-level success criteria (or the most recent version of WCAG that is available in both English and French).	People and Culture, Digital Experience, DEIA	Dec-25 Part of staffing policy update, during onboarding for new employees
Ongoing	Ensure that the NAC website is reviewed and updated to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA-level success criteria (or the most recent version of WCAG that is available in both English and French).	People and Culture, DEIA, Digital Experience	Jun-26
Completed	Create accessible templates for common document formats (Word and PowerPoint) for NAC content creators. Create an accessibility style guide and formatting checklist for use by NAC content creators. Provide training where needed for NAC employees on use of accessibility style guide, formatting checklist, and accessible templates.	Digital Experience and Communications	May-25, May-26 Review to take place in 2026
Ongoing	Ensure that the planning schedule for preparation and distribution of public documents includes adequate timing to create accessible content and format (particularly for public-facing documents such as annual reports, statements, and financial information).	Communications, Digital Experience and Finance	2024
In progress	Provide resources to ensure that National Arts Centre staff have access and training regarding the process to request and respond to employee and public requests for information in alternate formats.	DEIA, P&C, AAC, Communications and Visitor Experience	Dec-25
Ongoing	Ensure that new employee and customer software purchases include accessibility requirements and apply where possible, ensuring accommodation procedures are in place to provide similar access where software accessibility is not possible.	DEIA, AAC, IMIT	Review of accessibility features in procured software

			under way by IMIT and DEIA, to be completed 2026.
Ongoing	Ensure that closed captioning is available in public videos posted online, in the languages used in original content.	Senior Management Committee, DEIA, AAC, Digital Experience and Design	As new content is prepared for publishing.
Ongoing	Ensure that alt-text on images is available in public content posted online, in the languages used in original content.	DEIA, Arts Alive, Programming Departments, Communications, Marketing and Digital Experience and Design	As new content is prepared for publishing.
Ongoing	Ensure that described video is available where needed for pre-recorded public videos posted online, in the languages used in original content (not required for interviews or speech-to-camera videos).	Digital Experience and Design, Marketing and Communications	As new content is prepared for publishing.
Ongoing	Redesign the Resource sections of the ArtsAlive website to ensure accessibility for PDF documents, images, audio, and video content.	Digital Experience and Design, Arts Alive	As new content is prepared for publishing.

Information and Communication (other than ICT)

National Arts Centre management and staff are committed to maintaining and reviewing the NAC Accessibility Policy and Accessibility Plan annually. Reviewing the documents annually will help ensure that the NAC continues to work towards greater accessibility, diversity, and inclusion and accomplishes its accessibility goals as planned. It also enables the organization to produce accurate and informative accessibility progress reports when required.

In addition, any National Arts Centre policies that present barriers to accessibility, diversity, and inclusion will be revised to remove identified barriers.

Status	Accessibility Goal	Action Owner	Completion Date
Completed	Ensure that the National Arts Centre Statement of Commitment to Accessibility is shared broadly within the organization and made available to the public.	DEIA, AAC	Posted on web site in accessibility plan and progress updates, Dec-22.
Ongoing	Ensure that current facility emergency evacuation plans are in place and available in an accessible format for both employees and members of the public.	Operations, Health, and Safety	Jan-28 Source, design, create and deploy emergency tactile maps for evacuation
In progress	Review existing NAC policies and procedures with an accessibility, diversity and inclusion lens and develop and implement action plans to address identified barriers.	DEIA, AAC, P&C	Dec-26
Ongoing	Review the NAC Accessibility Plan and status of accessibility goals annually.	DEIA, AAC	Completed Dec 2025.
Completed	Update the NAC Accessibility Plan minimum of every three years and notify the ACA regulator when updated accessibility plans are published.	DEIA, AAC	Completed Dec -25.
Ongoing	Provide ACA progress reports based on stated deadlines in the ACA. Notify the ACA regulator when updated accessibility progress reports are published.	DEIA	Dec-25, Annually and when plan is updated.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The National Arts Centre is committed to providing its programs and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all persons, including individuals who identify as Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent. The NAC is also committed to ensuring that it provides people with disabilities with integrated and equitable services and access to our goods and services in the same place and in similar way as other members of the public.

Status	Accessibility Goal	Action Owner	Completion Date
Ongoing	Provide resources to all NAC program designers and developers regarding how to create and deliver accessible programs, services, and events (for example, accessible meetings, community consultation and engagement, procurement, marketing, and promotion).	Communications, Audience Engagement and National Events	Dec-26 National standards on accessible procurement, digital services, and technology to be integrated,
Ongoing	Create and maintain an Accessibility Resources folder on Teams for all NAC departments.	DEIA, AAC	As new material is created; upload to EDIA folder on Share point.
In progress	Coordinate with NAC departments and collaborate with disability arts organizations and contacts to develop, promote, and deliver National Accessibility Week activities and awareness events annually.	DEIA, AAC, Communications, Audience Engagement	Promotion of Empower Arts summit in spring 2025; hosting summit in 2026.
Ongoing	Ensure equity and accessibility in pricing of accessible seating for NAC-hosted events.	Visitor Experience	Discussions regarding Accessible pricing for people with disabilities; pricing to be decided in 2026 to address inequity gaps in pricing for PWD.
Completed	Broaden and clarify criteria for those eligible for accessible programs and services; clarify descriptions of services available; increase marketing, promotion, and training to ensure greater awareness of accessible programs and services available.	Visitor Experience, Audience Engagement, Programming Departments	Defined in Accessibility policy; to be updated 2026
Ongoing	Follow up, where possible, on previous research results to address areas of inequity and areas rated lower for inclusion (for example, diversity of voices, perspectives, experiences, and abilities on and off the stage); set measurable goals and objectives to improve areas of concern.	DEIA, Audience Engagement, Senior Management	2026 accessibility barriers experienced by people who travel for work activities.
In progress	Include accommodation request information and commitment to accessibility in content for visiting	DEIA, AAC, Health & Safety,	Dec-25

	performers and companies, school visits, and event information and ticket sales (online, at box office).	Programming Departments, Audience Engagement, Visitor Experience, Arts Alive	Modification of contract language to include statement of commitment to accessibility by NACO.
Ongoing	Ensure that the NAC website Accessibility page (and other online content, where appropriate) is updated regularly to include current, accurate information.	Digital Experience and Design, DEIA, Audience Engagement	Fall-26 Update for home page to take place from spring to fall 2026 Launch of accessible programming web site
Ongoing	Develop pre-assessment and post-event feedback tools to help identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers.	Production, Programming Departments, DEIA, Visitor Experience	Dec- 25 (Indigenous Theatre) Dec 2026 (Production Feedback and checklist to be created for production)
Ongoing	Develop and share checklists and resources to address common accommodation requests where accessibility currently is not in place for performers or visitors.	Production, Programming Departments, DEIA, Visitor Experience	Spring-26 Production checklists
Ongoing	Review fellowships and funding programs (for example, ThisGen Fellowship, National Creation Fund) to identify and remove barriers, to ensure programs are as accessible as possible.	Programming Departments, National Creation Fund and Professional Department Team	Dec-25 The Creation Fund has brought onboard a francophone Deaf curator, who is now part of all the department's francophone investment decisions. This has allowed the Creation Fund to offer an even more informed and robust curatorial response to the proposals they receive.
Ongoing	When developing artistic programming or events, ensure that teams are considering accessibility at the planning, budgeting, and design stages; engage with	Programming Departments, National Creation	2025-2026 See programming for 2025-26 season as the NAC has

	the community to offer more inclusive performances and events (for example, delivering relaxed performances; working with Deaf, disabled, or neurodiverse performers and artists; providing tactile information and exhibits in public spaces; delivering additional performances with ASL and LSQ interpreters; ensuring accessibility of production, scripts, stages, and effects; increasing promotion and marketing of accessibility features and awareness of how to make accommodation requests).	Fund, DEIA, AAC, Audience Engagement, Marketing, Digital Experience and Design	many accessible performances this season
Ongoing	Ensure that all new and existing teacher resources on the ArtsAlive website meet WCAG accessibility standards within the next two years. Make accessibility part of the standard resource development and evaluation process for Arts Alive.	Digital Experience and Design, Arts Alive	Dec-24 and Beyond
Ongoing	Include accessibility feedback and accommodation requests as part of ongoing front-of-house reports.	Visitor Experience, DEIA	Monthly Meetings with Front of House Manager
Ongoing	Ensure accessible emergency and safety information for visitors is available; ensure that information on emergency evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities is provided on the Accessibility page; ensure that Visitor Experience team members are trained in how to provide emergency evacuation support for persons with disabilities.	Visitor Experience, Digital Experience and Design	2026 Updated statements on emergency procedures in accessibility policy to be published.

Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

The NAC is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, accessibility of goods, services, and facilities is considered when procuring items and services. Accessibility requirements will be included in NAC NFPs, service agreements, and other documents related to procurement.

Status	Accessibility Goal	Action Owner	Completion Date
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Not started	Review NAC legal agreements regarding procurement of accessible goods, services, and facilities and incorporate wording on accessibility requirements into NAC agreements.	Finance Department	Dec-26 Review of technical guides on accessible procurement in progress and due to be integrated
Not started	Ensure managers and RFP developers and assessors understand how to describe and assess accessibility requirements related to procurement of goods, services, and facilities.	Finance, DEIA, AAC	Dec-26 Review and integration in progress
Not started	Add questions or requirement options to production riders to help ensure that Production and other NAC teams are trained and provided with resources to create thorough risk assessments that include accessibility and other DEI areas (for example, understanding and knowing in advance areas of concern and knowing when and how best to communicate to production team, performers, and visitors).	Programming Departments, DEIA, Finance, Production, Health & Safety	Dec-26
Not started	Review requirements and policies related to Union hiring practices and accessibility and inclusion for crews and performers.	People & Culture, DEIA	Dec-26 Review not started
Ongoing	Ensure new CRM, Finance, Payroll, HR, SharePoint, Teams, and other employee communication systems are accessible and meet WCAG standards; ensure staff are aware of and trained in accessibility features available.	Senior Management Committee, Information Management Systems, DEIA	Dec-26 Review in progress

Built Environment

The NAC is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, newly constructed or redeveloped built environments are designed in a way that takes into consideration the prevention or removal of barriers.

Status	Accessibility Goal	Action Owner	Target Completion Date
In progress	Improve wayfinding and signage to create a more accessible visitor experience.	Visitor Experience, Digital Experience and Design, Operations	A new signage installation is in the process of being installed in the Canal lobby to assist in wayfinding to our theatre spaces and amenities. Accessible features to be integrated by January 2027. The NAC is exploring digital wayfinding solutions to allow for a more accessible and seamless experience for persons living with wayfinding, vision and learning barriers. Dec-28, (digital wayfinding) Dec- 27 (Signage)
Ongoing	Ensure that TTY (tele-typewriter) and telephone relay services are available, and that staff are trained on use of hardware and software and how to respond to requests for TTY use.	Visitor Experience, IM/IT	2023, Jul-26 Exploration of Canada Video Relay Service as alternative to TTY services.
Not started	Install tactile attention indicators for walking surfaces (TWSIs) where the design of artwork in public spaces might present a hazard.	Visitor Experience, Facilities, Archives	Installation of tactile indicators for stairs in the Babs Asper Theatre to be completed Dec-25, Tactile indicators for path of travel in 4th Stage from ramp to washrooms taking place by Sept-26. P1 Path of travel tactile indicators to be installed 2026. Implementation of accessibility enhancements to

			Glenn Gould art installation Summer-27.
Ongoing	Work towards creating an accessible environment in all public, backstage or performances areas and employee spaces (for example, assistive hearing devices and support in all theatres, accessible seating and wheelchair accessibility in all spaces, accessible elevators, and washrooms).	Facilities, Visitor Experience, People & Culture, DEIA, Operations	Babs Asper Theatre accessible seating build, fall-25 Canal lobby signage installation build, spring-26 Tactile debit pin pad, summer-25 Box office new kiosk build, summer 2026 P1 parking path of travel to Southam lobby, Spring 2026
In progress	Review the September 2022 Accessibility Simplified audit report of the NAC built and landscape environments; develop a plan to address items identified as accessibility priorities (particularly remedial actions that impact the safety of building users).	Operations, DEIA	Winter-26.

Transportation

The NAC is committed to ensuring that any transportation it manages or controls will be accessible, upon request. Currently, management of transportation services for visitors is not an NAC area of operation.

Status	Accessibility Goal	Action Owner	Target Completion Date
N/A	N/A with current services; however, the NAC is committed to ensuring that any transportation it manages, or controls will be accessible, upon request.	Visitor Experience	Ongoing

Consultations

National Arts Centre Accessibility Advisory Committee

The NAC Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) has been an active advisory committee since 2022, with broad representation of NAC departments and stakeholders. The Committee is responsible for providing guidance to NAC management and teams and helping ensure that the NAC meets all ACA compliance requirements.

In 2025, Accessibility Advisory Committee members met monthly to discuss ongoing ACA requirements and current and planned NAC accessibility initiatives. During the second half of 2025, the AAC was involved in creating the NAC Accessibility Feedback Process document. This document explains how visitors, donors, volunteers, employees and performers can provide feedback about accessibility at the NAC. It explains how feedback is received and the timeline and manner for responding to feedback. This process will be published on our web site along with our new 2026-29 action plan. This requirement is part of our commitment to the Accessible Canada Act.

Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholder feedback has been incorporated in this Progress Report to assess and document the status of specific goals assigned to NAC departments. Assessment of goal status includes consultation with NAC department owners related to target dates and success or barriers in progress and activity of departmental goals. Individuals with lived experience and organizations serving disability communities were also invited to provide feedback on accessibility goals, target completion dates, status descriptions, and summary information.

Feedback

The NAC welcomes and responds to accessibility feedback on an ongoing basis. Numerous feedback methods are available and promoted to stakeholders and the broader community. We recognize and appreciate that this feedback – particularly from visitors, employees, and others with lived experience addressing accessibility barriers – assists the NAC in identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers.

Ongoing Feedback

Several of the Artistic Disciplines regularly reach out to visitors and artists who identify as Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent to request feedback (for example, through informal discussions and formal evaluations) on their program participation and NAC accessibility. This feedback is used to develop and improve future programming.

The NAC maintains a confidential list of contacts (for example, NAC visitors, guests, employees, artists) with lived experience who have offered to provide accessibility feedback about our spaces, our programming, our web site and our services.

For example, members of this group of contacts contributed feedback following a brief survey and review of accessibility features of two areas of the NAC built environment: the Babs Asper accessible seating build and the P1 Parking to Southam vestibule path of travel. Input was gathered from these consultations and incorporated where possible, with comments retained for considerations of the possible barriers posed by specific elements of these new constructions.

We are in ongoing consultations with people with relevant lived experience and accessibility professionals. Some examples of feedback included a request to program the NAC lobby elevator doors to remain open longer to accommodate people in scooters, and a request to add curb cuts to the sidewalk under the bridge. Elevator doors are now programmed to remain open longer, as requested. The request to add curb cuts has been noted but deferred (due to budgetary and planning constraints).

Progress Report Consultations

Progress Report consultations included the following methods:

- Departmental reviews of accessibility goal progress throughout the year
- Direct outreach to NAC contacts with lived experience who provided previous feedback on the 2022-2025 Accessibility Action Plan
- Direct outreach to NAC contacts who provided previous accessibility feedback (through various means) in 2024
- Outreach to local and national community partners and employment service providers who support job seekers with disabilities in obtaining and retaining employment.
- Outreach to federal government departments and Crown corporations such as: Employment and Social Development Canada, The Canadian Museum of Nature, The Treasury Board of Canada and Accessibility Standards Canada.

(updates to final Progress Report content were made where possible, based on email comments, feedback, and phone discussions).

NOTE: Where specific accessibility feedback, requests, or suggested goals for future consideration were determined to require additional consultation or review, these items have been noted and will be reviewed further by the NAC prior to the next Progress Report update.

- Accessibility Advisory Committee review, with final draft Progress Report reviewed for AAC approval at the December 17, 2025, meeting
- Final review and approval of Progress Report by NAC Senior Management Committee (SMC)

Summary and Next Steps

New Accessibility Initiatives and Accomplishments in 2025

- In March 2025, the National Arts Centre hired their first Accessibility Coordinator to lead efforts in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility. The Accessibility Coordinator is also responsible for leading efforts to update the 2026-2029 National Arts Centre Accessibility Action Plan, which serves as a roadmap to achieving the goals set out by the Accessible Canada Act.
- In Spring 2025, the NAC resumed outreach activities as a member of the Employment Accessibility Resource Network's (EARN) Leadership Group to promote and learn important best practices in creating sustainable and supportive employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities and to create relationships with employers and service providers from this network.
- In November 2025, our Accessibility Coordinator attended the EARN 13th annual conference where the focus was on the use of adaptive technology and assistive devices in the workplace. Insight was gained on the use of artificial intelligence by people with disabilities in the workplace and the use of compatible technology for use by people with cochlear implants and who use hearing aids with pairing technology to participate in virtual and in-person meetings. Finally, members of this network have been consulted as we work towards rewriting our staffing policy with a lens centered on accessibility. We have consulted members of EARN regarding strategies for advancement and promotion as well as transition of people with disabilities in the workplace.
- In Fall 2025, the NAC completed a new build of accessible seating for the Babs Asper Theatre consisting of 10 wheelchair accessible and companion seats as well as 4 size-accessible seats which support weights up to 750 lbs. Visitors with lived disability experience were consulted throughout this process to identify potential barriers and to provide suggestions for removing them.
- In Fall 2025, the NAC received an offering of technology, training and technical support by B.C. non-for-profit WaveFront Centre to enhance our capacity to provide descriptive audio and enhanced listening to our visitors in our theatre spaces. This offering gives more choice and independence to people who want more control over their listening experience and who want to use their own smart devices to experience a performance. Our pilot trial with the Bluetooth and next generation systems Auracast along with the BettEar listening app will take place between March and September 2026.
- In May 2025, NAC French Theatre produced their first audio described performance, *Joséphine et les grandes personnes*, with a newly trained in-house audio describer.
- In 2025, NAC Dance produced a sensory friendly performance in an ice-skating arena Le Patin Libre's presentation of *Murmuration*. Preshow consultations were made with contacts at Autisme Québec and Propeller Dance to adapt

the show for a sensory friendly experience. Comprehensive information of what to expect and how to get there were sent in advance.

- In December 2025, NAC French Theatre presented the play for children *Baobab* and included a performance adapted for youth enrolled in schools who belong to the community of children living with autism. In addition to providing access for people living with diverse needs, this production will help the NAC better understand the needs of children who live with autism and the degree to which they are impacted by sensory stimuli or other sudden changes in the performance environment. This activity will help the NAC to create productions that address the participation needs of a wider group of people living with autism so that more people can enjoy our shows with comfort.
- In May and June 2025, members of our People & Culture team participated in “Disability Awareness and Etiquette” training to deepen their understanding of disability, barriers encountered by this population and best practices for inclusive interactions. The training also included best practices for barrier-free participation at meetings and events. A modified version of this training took place afterwards for our Visitor Experience team in early June.
- The first audio described performance by NAC Indigenous Theatre took place in mid-September 2025. It was a successful performance that was experienced by a group of six people living with blindness or partial sight and which was supported by the wonderful consulting team of audio describer Drea (formerly with Great Canadian Theatre Company) as well as Victoria de la Ronde (who identifies as an Indigenous community member) and audio describer Janis Mayers, who is also Indigenous.
 - For NAC Indigenous Theatre’s audio described interpreted performances, the department has followed up specifically with invited visitors who have then provided feedback via email afterwards. As well, a process for obtaining accessibility feedback before an accessible performance has been established by NAC Indigenous Theatre to take place before each show; consultation with populations of people living with hearing loss or other disabilities occurs regularly to better inform these types of performances. This process will be maintained for future performances and will be adapted as emerging accessibility needs become known.
- For NAC Indigenous Theatre’s ASL interpreted performances, last year, the department worked with NAC English Theatre and Great Canadian Theatre Company to create and distribute a survey to members of the community in terms of what they would like to experience with regards to ASL interpreted performances, timing, pricing, etc.
- In 2025, NAC English Theatre produced audio-described performances of *Mahabharata* parts 1 and 2. These productions took place in the Babs Asper Theatre in May 2025. NAC English Theatre offered their third year of training opportunities for three local audio describers in collaboration with Rebecca Singh of Superior Description Services. ASL interpreted performances of *The First Metis Man of Odessa* and *Controlled Damage* took place in September 2024 and February 2025.

- A key focus of the NAC Orchestra's tour to Korea and Japan (May 25–June 8, 2025) was the celebration of Disability Arts, reflecting the growing emphasis on this field by both the Japanese and Korean governments. In Seoul, the Orchestra collaborated with Heart to Heart Orchestra, Korea's first orchestra for musicians with developmental disabilities, and with ArtWeCan, another prominent orchestral program for artists with disabilities. Heart to Heart has performed in renowned venues worldwide, including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and most recently at the Paris Paralympic Games. In Osaka, a relaxed, sensory-friendly chamber ensemble performance was presented at the BiG-I International Communications Center for Persons with Disabilities. This exceptional facility promotes international exchange and cultural activities for both disabled and non-disabled community members and serves as the inspiration for the National Access Arts Centre's new facility currently under development in Calgary.
- The NAC Orchestra's *Music Circle* series concluded its 2024–2025 season in June with significant growth and impact. The program more than doubled in scale year over year, expanding from 26 to 55 workshops (a 112% increase), reflecting rising demand, strengthened community partnerships, and its establishment as a trusted model for accessible arts engagement. Co-presented with the Lotus Centre for Special Music Education, the *Music Circle* delivers inclusive, sensory-friendly musical experiences for neurodiverse participants and individuals with sensory sensitivities across the National Capital Region. Led by NAC Orchestra musicians and local professional artists, the series supports holistic developmental outcomes through adaptive, hands-on musical engagement tailored to participant needs.
- On December 2, 2025, the NAC launched a new two-year partnership with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), led by Audience Engagement with support from the NAC Orchestra, to deliver high-quality performing arts experiences for patients, families, and staff. The collaboration includes up to four activations per year, coordinated with CHEO's Child Life Services. During the 2025–2026 period, the NAC Orchestra will present three chamber music performances, beginning with a French horn quartet, alongside a fourth activation led by another NAC artistic discipline. This initiative builds upon the NAC's accessible community engagement ecosystem, complementing established programs including relaxed performances, the NAC Orchestra's *Music Circle* series, and Arts Alive's research partnership with CHEO.
- The NAC Orchestra, in partnership with the Lotus Centre for Special Music Education, offered free sensory-friendly programming in the NAC's Atelier Shenkman Smith as part of the pre-concert activities for all three NACO Family Adventures performances this season. In addition, families of the Lotus Centre - including those with children who are autistic, neurodiverse, or have other disabilities - were invited to attend all NACO Family Adventures performances in the Southam Hall Balcony, ensuring inclusive access and meaningful engagement with live orchestral music throughout the season.

- In 2025, our Digital Experience and Design team introduced significant enhancements to the NAC's digital programming and overall website accessibility. The team focused on improving design and creative elements to ensure clarity, readability, and compliance with accessibility standards. They reviewed visuals across the organization to maintain strong color contrast and collaborated on seasonal campaigns—such as Dance and Zones Théâtrales—to uphold accessible design principles. Guidance was provided on applying accessibility tags in MS Word for French Theatre guides, and subtitles were added to all videos featuring spoken content.
- Building on recommendations from an external Accessibility Audit for the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards (GGPAA), Digital Experience and Design implemented font improvements and regularly monitored color choices and layouts to support individuals with colour vision differences, including during the Big Bang collaboration with Zonzo. Web accessibility was further strengthened through features designed for screen readers and improved navigation. Carousels were updated with ARIA labels, heading hierarchies were refined, and ARIA labels were added to events and modals. New color palettes were applied in accordance with WCAG 2 standards.
- To support these efforts, the team completed web accessibility training and will be scheduling additional sessions for the coming year.

New Barriers Identified in 2025

- Event or program cost may still be a barrier to some visitors. The NAC participates in the Access 2 Entertainment program (where registered cardholders can purchase a companion ticket at a reduced cost), participants must be identified and verified by a registered healthcare professional or service provider as requiring a support person. The NAC will be conducting discussions in 2026 to determine accessible ticket prices to enable low-income earners to attend shows that would otherwise, be unaffordable.
- Improved communication and information sharing of accessibility research and resources across NAC departments is needed.
- Better web site accessibility has been requested by visitors living with partial sight or blindness. They suggest embedding an “Accessibility” button which allows access to various accessibility tools such as screen magnification, speech-to-text, High Contrast mode or Focus mode.
- People who work as LSQ interpreters to the community of persons living with hearing loss or who are deaf have commented that targeted marketing campaigns which involve ASL/LSQ interpreted videos are a sure means of attracting attention from this population. It was also noted that among the population of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, some individuals do not attribute French or English as being their first language. For some, ASL/LSQ is their primary language of communication.

- Some people believe that accessible seating in designated zones segregates people who are mobility devices users and their companion from others as there are no other comparable seating arrangements.
- All individuals who consulted with us and who live with vision loss indicated that wayfinding within our spaces is problematic; whether because of inaccessible signage or because of the architectural structure of the built environment at the NAC.
- The NAC staffing policy is in need of review and updating to reflect up-to-date legislation and to help to provide a foundation for a safe, inclusive and accessible experience regardless of where the individual is along their employment journey.
- A clearer understanding of the impact of accessibility barriers and the impact of addressing and removing barriers is needed. More input from accessibility professionals, community partners, employment service providers, and those with lived experience in disability is needed to help prioritize ongoing accessibility plans and improvements to NAC accessibility services, features, and facilities. More NAC awareness of and engagement with broader disability communities is needed, including input from persons with invisible, temporary, and episodic disabilities and conditions.
- Many NAC visitors who attend performances and who self-identify as living with a disability have complained that performance and planning information is not available in advance. This creates barriers for people living with hidden mobility and episodic disabilities, who sometimes need showtime information in advance so they can plan their route of travel. People who have been negatively impacted by the last-minute posting of performance and planning information report that they often need to travel longer distances on-foot. This overextension often results in the person being impacted long after having overextended themselves. For others, not having the confirmation on show duration and ideal paths of travel from parking to performance space creates undue stress and uncertainty.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps in 2026

- **Organize the 2022 simplified audit to better prioritize NAC areas needing action**
- Apply accessibility enhancements to the Southam Hall path of travel to P1 Parking from the Southam Vestibule to remove physical barriers for people living with sensory, mobility and hidden mobility barriers.
- Design, construct and install a new desk for the Welcome Centre. Prioritize accessibility elements to create a more welcoming and inclusive experience for NAC visitors. Considerations for illumination, paths of approach will also be prioritised.
- Design and install accessible elements to signage in the Canal Lobby. This includes large and raised print, braille characters and reverse contrast (white text on black background). Identify and choose suitable locations for the placement of accessible signage in the Canal Lobby space where it will be visible, readable and will not create

accessibility barriers. Illumination will also be considered when determining appropriate locations for accessible signage.

- Design, construct and install additional accessibility enhancements to the built environment to facilitate the removal of barriers for people living with disabilities. Enhancements to the built environment include modifications to signage, entrances, doors, elevators, stairs, ramps/handrails, paths of travel, seating, parking, etc. Prioritize features of the built environment that pose safety risks to NAC visitors.
- Reimagine and implement a new design for the CD-318 Glenn Gould art installation and prioritize an “accessibility first” mindset in its creation. Provide audio, large print/braille and touch elements to enhance accessibility and to promote more interaction by people living with sensory barriers, invisible disabilities or who are neurodiverse.
- Provide refresher training on the creation of accessible digital documents, communications and presentations through lunch & learn sessions.
- Raise awareness among NAC content creators about the accessibility resources and training available to support creation of accessible MS Word and PowerPoint documents (Digital Accessibility Toolkit).
- Design, create and launch the NAC Accessible Programming web page. This will be the hub where information on all our accessible programming events for the season will live. Searchable accessible shows will be filterable (i.e. by accessibility feature). Links to other important pages like the Accessibility page will also live on this page.
- National accessibility standards on the delivery of digital services and goods were released in 2024. The NAC will work to integrate these standards into the delivery of digital products and services to visitors and employees.
- The NAC web site is in need of auditing. We have consulted with “Open Cognitive Accessibility” working with people living with cognitive disabilities and they have offered to have a user audit conducted by consultants working for the agency.
- Currently, a review of our acquired digital platforms and applications is under way to help identify accessibility areas of concern so they can be addressed.
- The usage of the Ruddy Lounge as a stimulation and retreat space for people who need a space to go to when they become overloaded, need stimulation activities in a dedicated space or simply need a space to refresh during performances has been attributed for all NAC visitors.
- Purchase three new wheelchairs to increase capacity to lend mobility devices to visitors with mobility and hidden mobility disabilities.
- Develop a scenario-based guide (The Visitor Experience Accessibility Playbook) which provides avenues of solutions to assist people with disabilities who encounter accessibility barriers during their visit at the NAC or when interacting with our services. Provide foundational resources for Visitor Experience staff to better understand topics like: “The Good Samaritan Act (2001)”, “The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act (2017)” and the “Accessible Canada Act (2019)”,

- Develop/outsource ASL/LSQ Finger Spelling and basic sign language education training to build capacity for the Visitor Experience team to interact with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Design and deploy tactile emergency evacuation maps to provide NAC visitors, living with sight-barriers, with supports to navigate the built environment in the event that they are required to evacuate the building.
- Centralize all accessible communication services under one department to facilitate faster responses to accessible communication requests and more efficient management/tracking of resources and services.
- Provide additional FOH training on supporting persons with disabilities in an emergency or evacuation.
- Continue to reach out to NAC contacts with lived experience when developing updated NAC accessibility programs and services (including Accessibility website content). Track and address feedback as needed.
- Ensure that Accessibility Plan goals are a regular agenda item at AAC meetings, reviewing progress and identifying and addressing roadblocks throughout the year, as needed.
- Ensure that additional time is scheduled for more organized planning and coordination of certain ACA and accessibility activities, including:
 - Event planning, coordination, promotion, and delivery of National Accessibility Week (to begin earlier in 2026, with actions assigned, and support and review provided by AAC members);
 - Broader community consultation with persons who identify as Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent, as well as broader outreach and collaboration with disability organizations, with additional time provided for review of future accessibility progress reports and plans; and
 - Increased and earlier marketing and promotion of NAC performances, events, and activities with accessible features and supports for persons who are Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent.
- Source, procure, deploy and support digital wayfinding technologies that would meet the accessibility requirements of people seeking digital solutions to navigate the NAC built environment independently and with ease with their personal smart phones.
- Ensure that NAC team members involved in software procurement are aware of how to apply updated procurement directives with new mandatory elements for all new software to include both accessibility and Official Language requirements. Staff will integrate National standards of accessibility in the procurement of goods, services and facilities (CAN-ASC-4.1 – Accessible Procurement) and the delivery of digital services (CAN/ASC – EN 301 549:2024 – Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services).
- The NAC seeks to identify potential barriers in the delivery of its transportation services when it comes to having NAC employees travel away from Ottawa for work. We intend on creating a survey that would be circulated to NAC employees who have traveled outside the city in the past year. The survey aims to collect information on individual experiences with respect to physical accommodations, IT & Communications, Transportation, Customer Service,

etc. Once barriers have been identified, action steps will be taken to mitigate them or work to minimize the impact of barriers.