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Canada

# Towards an Inclusive and Accessible Government of Canada

Presentation to the Public Service Management Advisory  
Committee

*Office of Public Service Accessibility*  
*March 8, 2019*

## Purpose

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- ✓ Provide an update on the development of the Public Service Accessibility Strategy
- ✓ Highlight current initiatives and next steps

## The Current Situation



- ✓ Departures of PWDs outpace recruitment
  - ✓ 5.5% of employees self-identify as persons with disabilities (PWDs)
  - ✓ Low representation of PWDs in the PS under the age of 35
  - ✓ ½ of PWDs occupy administrative or clerical positions
- ✓ Broad range of enabling infrastructure perpetuating barriers
  - ✓ Procurement
  - ✓ ICT systems and tools
  - ✓ Built environment and work places
  - ✓ Development and training
- ✓ Evidence of problem areas confirmed by PSES results
  - ✓ PWDs face greater challenges in the workplace
  - ✓ Stress, harassment, discrimination, lack of tools and career opportunities

## The Office of Public Service Accessibility

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Established in August 2018 to prepare the Government of Canada to meet or exceed the requirements of Bill C-81 – The Accessible Canada Act

Two-year mandate (until March 2021) to:

- ✓ Develop and launch a Public Service Accessibility Strategy and implementation plan
- ✓ Provide expert advice, leadership and coordination to departments and agencies to implement the requirements of the proposed Act
- ✓ Manage the Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund

## OPSA will support departments, enabling discovery & collaboration



An Accessibility Hub for all public servants that ...



### PLATFORM

Provides a **centralized** Government platform for communications, outreach and engagement for issues of accessibility



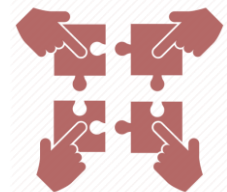
### COMMUNITY

Brings together experts from the public service and the disability community to help address specific accessibility issues



### DISCOVERY

Supports **identification** and sharing of knowledge, best practices, and tools on accessibility



### COLLABORATION

Leverages **collaboration** by linking people, communities and networks with industry, academia, and other government organizations

## Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund – critical building block

Created within OPSA with Funding Over 5 Years

### Research

Assessment of current workplace adjustment practices in federal departments to establish baselines  
Research and assessment of best practices from public and private sector jurisdictions

### Create

Experiment with innovative approaches to workplace adjustment such as the creation of an Employee Workplace Adjustment Passport and a centralized library of assistive devices

### Recommend

Make recommendations for a longer-term approach to workplace adjustments for new and existing employees of the public service

## Engagement to date

Across the public service...

- ✓ 2,300 public servants responded to a survey on a draft model strategy
- ✓ Regional town halls with public service employees
- ✓ Workshops with the Persons with Disabilities Chairs and Champions Committee

Face to face with leadership cadre...

Deputy Ministers across the federal portfolio

- ✓ Senior management committees
- ✓ Heads of functional communities

Across a range of external groups...

- ✓ Domestic and international disability and accessibility experts and stakeholders

Aided by multi-level governance...

- ✓ DM advisory group, ADM steering committee and technical working groups

## Confirming key insights for setting the path forward....

### Need for a major culture shift

- Culture change will take time and persistence, but quick wins are needed to demonstrate real progress

### Awareness

- Building and maintaining broad awareness critical, to eliminate stigma and change attitudes

### True Change When all Employees Feel they Belong

- Senior leaders set the tone, while ownership by managers makes change happen on the ground

### Workplace Adjustment is Lengthy and Cumbersome

- Centralizing expertise, funding, and procurement of workplace adjustments produce best results for managers, employees and the organization

### Make it Practical

- Provide tools and guidance to support progress and achieving change



# A Strategy is taking shape

## VISION

**To be the most accessible and inclusive public service in the world**

*Harnessing the power of our diversity and abilities by creating an inclusive and accessible federal public service truly representative of the people of Canada*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Nothing Without Us

Ongoing engagement of persons with disabilities throughout the development and implementation of the Strategy

### Transparency

Strategy is developed and implemented in a transparent manner and departments to report openly and fully on efforts and results on removing barriers

### Collaboration

Coordinated collaborative work by federal departments together with public and private sectors, bargaining agents and NGOs

### Sustainability

Entrench accessibility and inclusion in policies and practices, remove systemic barriers, and gain long-term commitment throughout the public service

## GOALS

- Equip public servants to design and deliver accessible programs and services
- Build an “accessibility confident” culture within the public service
- Improve recruitment, retention, and promotion of PWDs
- Make information and communications technology usable by all
- Enhance accessibility of the built environment

## Much work ahead, but many current initiatives providing momentum

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- 1 Accessibility embedded in current and proposed TB policies and standards
- 2 SSC's Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program
- 3 Health Canada's Workplace Wellness Service Centre
- 4 Public Health Agency of Canada's Accessible Meeting Rooms initiative
- 5 PSPC's pilot projects on accessibility to the built environment
- 6 ESDC's Accessible IT Strategy
- 7 PSC's national Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities
- 8 Service Canada's Flagship Service Canada Centre in North York, Ontario

## Expected outcomes

### SHORT-TERM

- ✓ A roadmap for the public service to meet or exceed the requirements of the Accessible Canada Act
- ✓ Built through user engagement and shared knowledge of best practices

### MEDIUM TERM

- ✓ Barriers to full inclusion and participation of Employees with disabilities are reduced
- ✓ Departments and agencies have access to advice and expertise to prevent and address barriers to accessibility

### LONG TERM

- ✓ A barrier-free public service
- ✓ All employees with disabilities have equal opportunities and can contribute to their fullest potential

## Next Steps

### Consultation on Draft Strategy - March

- ✓ With federal departments and agencies
- ✓ With public servants with disabilities
- ✓ With bargaining agents
- ✓ With external disability community organizations

### TB Submission - March 21

- ✓ Joint submission with OCHRO's Diversity and Inclusion Agenda
- ✓ Funding for the Strategy and Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund (TBS)
- ✓ Accessibility assessment of federal buildings (PSPC)
- ✓ Internship Program for Persons with Disabilities (PSC)

### Launch of the Strategy – by June 2019

## Discussion Questions

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- ✓ What opportunities and challenges do you see for your organization in implementing the accessibility strategy?
- ✓ How can we prepare the public service for this culture change?

