



NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION
SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES

Accessibility Plan 2023-26

Annual progress report

JUNE 2025



Land acknowledgment

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization acknowledges that we have worked in many different Indigenous territories since the inception of the organization. We are grateful to the Indigenous and municipal communities that have worked with us for more than 20 years.

We also acknowledge that today we are working in northwestern Ontario with the communities of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace, as well as neighbouring communities.

We further acknowledge that we have the privilege of working with other First Nations and organizations, with Métis communities and the Métis Nation of Ontario, and many municipal communities that have all expressed an interest in learning about our work.

As part of our commitment to Reconciliation, we recognize both the historic and current injustices far too many Indigenous communities endure. We commit to doing our part to support well-being in the communities with which we work.

General

The Accessible Canada Regulations under the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) require that the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) establish, implement, maintain and document an accessibility plan. In compliance with this requirement, the NWMO developed our first accessibility plan, [Accessibility Plan 2023-26](#), which was submitted to the Accessibility Commissioner and made available to employees and the public on the NWMO's website on June 1, 2023.

The accessibility plan outlines the NWMO's strategy for preventing and removing barriers for persons with disabilities, and meets the organization's obligations under the Accessible Canada Regulations and the ACA.

The NWMO must also publish a progress report with respect to the implementation of our accessibility plan on a yearly basis. This progress report, dated June 1, 2025, will be publicly available, including in an accessible format upon request. This progress report is in compliance with the Accessible Canada Regulations: SOR/2021-241 under the ACA.

Application of the accessibility plan

The accessibility plan applies to all employees, as defined in the Accessible Canada Regulations, as well as the public with whom the NWMO interacts.

The NWMO'S head office is located in Toronto, Ont., at:

» **TORONTO OFFICE**

22 St. Clair Avenue East, Fourth Floor, Toronto, ON M4T 2S3

Email: contactus@nwmo.ca

Tel.: 416.934.9814

Toll free: 1.866.249.6966

Fax: 416.934.9526

The NWMO also currently has offices located in Dryden and Ignace, and a facility in Oakville. The contact information for each is listed below.

» **DRYDEN OFFICE**

33 King Street

Dryden, ON P8N 1B4

1.807.223.2023

» **DISCOVERY AND**

DEMONSTRATION CENTRE

2009 Wyecroft Road

Oakville, ON L6L 5V6

» **IGNACE OFFICE**

304 Main Street

Ignace, ON P0T 1T0

1.807.934.2472

Background: The *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA)

The ACA was given royal assent in June 2019, with the purpose of making Canada barrier-free for persons with disabilities by Jan. 1, 2040. A key requirement of the ACA is for organizations under federal responsibility to prepare accessibility plans that describe how they will identify, remove and prevent barriers in the priority areas identified below:

- » Employment;
- » The built environment (buildings and public spaces);
- » Information and communication technologies (ICT);
- » Communication (other than ICT);
- » The procurement of goods, services and facilities;
- » The design and delivery of programs and services; and
- » Transportation.

The ACA defines a *barrier* as the following:

“Anything — including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice — that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.”

The ACA defines a *disability* as the following:

“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.”

Designated accessibility representative

The NWMO has a designated accessibility representative to receive feedback relating to accessibility and accessibility barriers on behalf of the NWMO, requests for copies of this progress report in an accessible format, or requests for a description of the NWMO’s feedback process in print, large print, Braille, audio format or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology that assists persons with disabilities.

The NWMO’s designated accessibility representative is the Vice-President of Human Resources and Chief Ethics Officer (the “designated accessibility representative”). You can provide feedback and/or communicate with the NWMO and the designated accessibility representative using the contact information below:

Mail: 22 St. Clair Avenue East, Fourth Floor, Toronto, ON M4T 2S3

Email: accessible@nwmo.ca

Tel.: 416.934.9814

Toll free: 1.866.249.6966

The Vice-President of Human Resources and Chief Ethics Officer (or delegate) can answer any questions on how to receive the NWMO’s accessibility plan in an accessible format, as well as provide an accessible description of the NWMO’s feedback process for the accessibility plan. Responses to feedback will be returned in the format in which the feedback was received. The NWMO is unable to respond directly to anonymous feedback, but such feedback will still be considered in our efforts to improve accessibility.

Progress on the NWMO's accessibility plan

The NWMO continues to embrace the vision articulated in the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) and has made progress in our journey towards fostering accessibility within the organization.

The NWMO has undergone a number of large-scale initiatives in 2024, including our site selection milestone and an organization-wide restructure. While navigating these changes, the NWMO has continued to move forward in creating a culture that supports accessibility, inclusion and belonging.

In the last year, our primary focus revolved around the following key initiatives:

- » **Integration of accessibility in policies and processes:** A comprehensive review and revision of existing and new policies to ensure alignment with the latest accessibility standards and best practices. By embedding accessibility into foundational documents, the NWMO aims to prioritize inclusivity.
- » **Advancement in the employment of people with disabilities:** The hiring, promotion and retention of people with disabilities at the NWMO was and will continue to be a talent management focus. Building on the progress already made, the NWMO committed to expanding our efforts to create a workforce that is representative of the diverse talents and capabilities of individuals with disabilities. This included initiatives to promote career development opportunities, support promotion pathways through succession planning, and foster an inclusive workplace culture that encourages the long-term retention of employees with disabilities. This is evident in the employment equity data from 2024, which saw an increase in representation of persons with disabilities by 1.4 per cent and no departures of persons with disabilities.

This second progress report provides an overview of the steps taken over the last year, building on foundations and planning future endeavours while acknowledging that there is still substantial work to be done to attain our goals. In some priority areas progress may have been slower, but as an organization we are moving in the right direction to build an inclusive and barrier-free workplace.

Consultations

The NWMO values input from internal and external individuals, particularly individuals with disabilities, in shaping our accessibility initiatives. Over the last year, the NWMO engaged in consultations with diverse individuals, including employees and subject matter experts. Consultation with all employees occurs on an ongoing basis through various methods, including formal and informal conversations, exit interviews, committees, meetings and townhalls.

In May 2025, the NWMO partnered with Diversio (a Canadian HR advisory company that specializes in supporting organizations with their diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives) to conduct a diversity and inclusion survey. The goal of the survey was to better understand the perspectives of employees living with disabilities and to measure perceptions of progress in accessibility and overall inclusion at the NWMO, while informing ongoing work associated with the accessibility plan. Employees were asked to share positive accessibility and inclusion experiences at the NWMO and identify barriers and areas for improvement. The survey also allowed employees to confidentially disclose demographic information as it relates to their identity.

The results of the survey are being compiled and will be shared as part of our commitment to accessibility and inclusion. The feedback received will help inform the goals of the overall accessibility plan and the *Employment Equity Plan*, as well as the work of Human Resources and the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility committee.

Feedback

In our accessibility plan, the NWMO identified accessibility goals in the following areas:

1. Employment;
2. The built environment;
3. Information and communication technologies (ICT);
4. Communication, other than ICT;
5. The procurement of goods, services and facilities;
6. The design and delivery of programs and services; and
7. Transportation.

The NWMO has not received any direct feedback externally on the accessibility plan or the first progress report since their respective publications in 2023 and 2024.

The following outlines the feedback the NWMO has received internally with respect to each of the areas noted above, and how that feedback has been taken into consideration by the NWMO in the implementation of our accessibility plan.

Progress in priority area 1: Employment

The NWMO continues to make advancements in the area of employment for people with disabilities, aligning our efforts with the goals in our *Employment Equity Plan* and with our *Recruitment Procedure*. This section provides an account of the progress made in employment over the last year.

Progress in hiring processes

The NWMO continues to measure progress against our short-term hiring and promotion goals to eliminate under-representation, while aiming to achieve our long-term goal of full representation. In 2024, the proportion of the NWMO workforce identifying as persons with disabilities stood at 3.6 per cent compared to the labour market availability of 10.8 per cent. This is an increase of representation from 2.2 per cent in 2023. Employment equity data indicates of our new full-time hires in 2024, 3.6 per cent identified as persons with disabilities, and of our six new temporary and fixed-term hires, two identified as persons with disabilities.

In response to internal feedback received, we added an open text box as part of the pre-screening for applicants in our Applicant Tracking System. This step eliminates the need for applicants to leave the application process and contact us directly to make a request for an accommodation. Continued evaluation of recruitment metrics, along with consultation with persons with disabilities, will help determine if applicants feel comfortable disclosing their identification at any stage of the recruitment process and if current measures are effective.

Organization-wide restructuring has resulted in some employees receiving promotions or taking on new roles, as well as the creation of many new roles. As a result, a number of roles will be posted externally over the course of 2025. The NWMO has committed to expanding our network and partnering with organizations, job boards and agencies that support people with disabilities in recruitment to fill these new positions.

In March 2025, a second Talent Acquisition Manager was hired to support recruitment efforts locally in Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace, while also advancing our employment equity and accessibility goals in the priority area of employment.

Continued accessibility training and development

Training on accessibility remains a diversity priority. The NWMO recognizes the importance of ensuring all employees, from leadership to individual contributors, are well-versed in accessibility principles. Our Human Resources Managers, who promote accessible hiring practices for people with disabilities, participated in numerous training sessions, webinars and conferences over the last year to increase their knowledge on accessibility and implementing inclusive practices.

Training and development activities included:

- » “Creating a Culture of Inclusion: A Fireside Chat on Removing Barriers to Disability Inclusion” (hosted by Holland Bloorview);
- » 5th National Summit on Episodic Disabilities and Employment by Realize; and
- » 2025 UnConference by CCDI.

Progress in workplace accommodations

While progress has been made in workplace accommodations, the NWMO acknowledges the continuous nature of the journey towards full accessibility and inclusivity. In response to internal feedback from NWMO employees, which indicated that enhanced communication on accommodation processes would be beneficial for all employees, improvements were made in a few areas.

Recognizing the importance of transparent communication, the NWMO is committed to providing information about the accommodation process and publishing it on our employee intranet. With the support and guidance of the NWMO's occupational health nurse, we have continued our work to revise forms, improve governance and outline a formal procedure that sets clear guidelines with responsibilities and expectations for all parties involved. A communications strategy to support understanding of the governance and revised forms will be established by the end of 2025.

Through these efforts, the NWMO continues to remove barriers to employment, foster inclusive opportunities and build a workplace culture that values and supports employees of all abilities.

Progress in priority area 2: The built environment

The NWMO is dedicated to creating an inclusive and accessible built environment, prioritizing both our office spaces and future public spaces. The NWMO plans to continue to review our facilities and office equipment to identify possible improvements with respect to accessibility.

Progress in priority area 3: Information and communication technologies (ICT)

The NWMO continues to ensure that ICT initiatives are aligned with national standards. A comprehensive assessment of our current digital platforms is well underway. Some of the progress made over the year includes:

Continuing to advance ICT accessibility using government standards

A goal under the NWMO's accessibility plan is to ensure our website complies with the standards of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. As part of our commitment to consultation, first-time visitors to the NWMO website receive a pop-up message outlining our website upgrade and asking for feedback on ways to improve. We continue to track the volume and progress of software and web issues related to accessibility.

Leveraging Microsoft Office accessibility for enhanced inclusivity

Recognizing the underutilization of existing accessibility features within the Microsoft Office Suite, efforts are in the planning phases to bridge this knowledge gap and ensure all employees can benefit from these tools.

Progress in priority area 4: Communication (other than ICT)

The NWMO is committed to enhancing communication accessibility. As outlined in our accessibility plan, the NWMO will incorporate any new accessibility requirements to ensure our information, communications systems and platforms are accessible. Additionally, upon request, we will ensure communications are available in accessible formats to meet the needs of D/deaf persons in Canada as well as those who are visually impaired or with neurological or cognitive disabilities. The NWMO will continue to monitor products and services that will enhance communication accessibility.

Progress in priority area 5: The procurement of goods, services and facilities

The NWMO continues to increase opportunities for diverse suppliers and seek inclusive business opportunities where possible.

The NWMO is undertaking a major transformation to modernize our processes and systems to position us to optimally support our operations over the coming decade as the organization's focus changes. The cornerstone of this transformation will be fully implementing an enterprise resource planning-based solution to meet the organization's process and system needs in the areas of finance, business planning, human resources, procurement and project operations and control. Ensuring it is accessible and adaptable is part of the planning and understanding of the platform.

A known gap relates to the identification of approved disability-owned suppliers and the expansion of our network to create more inclusive business opportunities. This is an area we intend to explore as part of a long-term strategy.

Progress in priority area 6: The design and delivery of programs and services

The NWMO is committed to ensuring future programs and services are designed with accessibility as a foundational principle. Efforts are underway to integrate accessibility considerations into every stage of program development, guided by insights from the diversity and inclusion survey, Human Resources policy reviews and feedback from persons with disabilities. This approach allows the NWMO to identify and address accessibility challenges early, ensuring programs and services are inclusive, responsive and aligned with the needs of all individuals.

Progress in priority area 7: Transportation

The NWMO is committed to regularly reviewing our travel policies and processes to ensure any barriers to accessibility are identified and solutions are put in place where possible.

Summary

This progress report aims to identify necessary steps towards achieving a barrier-free workplace. This is a long-term organizational effort, and meaningful change can only come from continuous individual and systemic improvement, both of which take time, resources and a willingness to engage.

Our primary objectives for the upcoming year include:

- » **Incorporating data and feedback received from the diversity and inclusion survey:** The NWMO plans to identify and address accessibility challenges using data from employees. This will ensure programs and services are inclusive, responsive and aligned with the needs of employees. By leveraging improved datasets and fostering transparency, the NWMO hopes to create a more accessible and welcoming environment.
- » **Integrating accessibility into policies and processes:** The NWMO will continue to embed accessibility into core policies, processes and program development.
- » **Promoting disability inclusion in the workforce:** The NWMO is committed to prioritizing the hiring, retention and advancement of employees with disabilities. Efforts will focus on identifying and actively removing systemic barriers in the external recruitment process and internal promotion to build a more inclusive, diverse and representative workforce.

The NWMO will monitor the progress of the goals outlined in our accessibility plan and this progress report. The NWMO also welcomes feedback on our accessibility plan, which will contribute to the development of future progress reports and ultimately help guide us on the path towards a barrier-free NWMO, and Canada, by 2040.

**For more information,
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