

Ottawa International Airport Authority

Accessibility Plan and Feedback
Process

2026 to 2029

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General

Alternate Format(s)

Upon request, accessible alternate formats of the 2026 to 2029 Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process can be provided by contacting us at the mailing address, phone number, or email listed below, or through any other links provided in our Feedback Process.

We will ensure that requested accessible alternate formats are provided:

- No more than 15 days after the day the request is received for:
 - Print
 - Large print
 - Electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology intended to assist people with disabilities
- No more than 45 days after the day the request is received for:
 - Braille
 - Audio format

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Feedback Process

The Ottawa International Airport Authority (the Authority) welcomes feedback from passengers, employees, and campus partners about its 2026 to 2029 Accessibility Plan or other accessibility-related concerns. If you have experienced a barrier at the airport or have suggestions to help us improve, we encourage you to share your comments with us. You can share your comments personally or anonymously, at any time throughout the year.

This Accessibility Plan and more information about accessibility services at the airport are available at www.yow.ca/en/accessibility. You can submit feedback via our website form, email, phone, mail, or our social media channels, as detailed below.

We acknowledge all feedback upon receipt, except feedback submitted anonymously. The Director, Passenger Experience, is responsible for receiving, reviewing, and maintaining records of all feedback submitted to the Authority.

Feedback may be addressed during implementation of the current Accessibility Plan or considered for future plans and/or progress reports. Accessibility plans are reviewed, developed, and published by the Authority every three years. Progress reports are published intermittently in the years between accessibility plans.

Online and social media options

- Website feedback form: www.yow.ca/en/accessibility
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/FlyYOW
- X: www.x.com/flyyow
- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/yow-ottawa
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/flyyow

To learn more about accessibility at the Authority, visit www.yow.ca/accessibility.

All feedback and related communication records are kept for at least seven years, as required by applicable regulations.

Introduction

Welcome to the Ottawa International Airport Authority, Where Accessibility is Everyone's Business

I am pleased to share the Ottawa International Airport Authority's 2026 to 2029 Accessibility Plan. It reflects our commitment to providing a barrier-free environment where everyone can travel, work, and spend time at Ottawa International Airport (YOW) with ease, independence, and confidence.

Accessibility and inclusion are shared responsibilities that depend on strong collaboration across the airport campus. As a gateway to Canada's Capital Region serving nearly five million passengers each year, delivering an accessible travel experience requires coordinated effort. We work to improve how we design our spaces, deliver our services, and communicate by working closely with employees and campus partners, including airlines, contractors, and service providers.

Our 2023 to 2026 Accessibility Plan reinforced the importance of listening to those with lived experience and those who advocate for them. Their perspectives help us identify barriers and focus on practical, meaningful improvements.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this plan, especially those who shared their lived experience and expertise. We will report on our progress in 2027 and 2028 to ensure continued transparency and accountability.

Accessibility is embedded in how we operate and in the culture we are building. I am proud of the progress we have made and committed to the work ahead as we continue to identify, remove, and prevent barriers so that everyone can navigate Ottawa International Airport with confidence and ease.

Susan Margles
President and CEO
Ottawa International Airport Authority

About our Accessibility Plan

Our 2026 to 2029 Accessibility Plan represents the beginning of our next plan cycle to identify, remove and prevent barriers across our airport.

Building on the foundation established in our June 2025 Progress Report, this Accessibility Plan marks the next step in our commitment to creating a more accessible airport. It reflects a renewed set of priorities, with updated commitments, actions, and goals aimed at continuously improving the experience for all passengers, visitors, and employees.

As a terminal operator in Canada, this Accessibility Plan has been developed in accordance with the governing principles and regulations of the Canada Transportation Act and the Accessible Canada Act. We are publishing this Accessibility Plan and the description of our feedback process together. Progress Reports will be published in June 2027 and June 2028 to share updates.

Improving the accessibility journey at Ottawa International Airport is an ongoing effort. Input from our community plays a critical role in identifying barriers and strengthening accessibility initiatives. Continued feedback, participation in accessibility-related events, and sharing information about programs and services are encouraged to help advance this work and support meaningful, sustained improvement.

Key Learnings

Through the implementation of our previous Accessibility Plan, we have gained valuable insights into what it takes to advance accessibility. These learnings continue to guide how we plan, prioritize, and deliver on our commitments.

What we have learned:

- Posting the Plan online on its own does not generate much feedback, and many people prefer other, more direct ways to share their experiences.
- Accessibility is everyone's responsibility, and creating a more accessible airport requires a significant coordinated effort across employee teams and campus partners.
- The difference between services provided by the Authority and those provided by partners such as airlines can be unclear, which can lead to confusion for passengers.
- Additional ways of sharing information beyond the airport's website and social media channels are needed. This includes more targeted outreach and improved promotion of programs such as the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program and airport rehearsal tours.
- Opportunities to increase collaboration with airlines for information sharing and coordinated pre-travel messaging/notifications need to be explored.

Key Focus Areas of Accessibility

The Accessible Canada Act identifies seven key areas that the Authority must address to enhance accessibility:

1. Information and communication technologies (ICT)
2. Communication (other than ICT)
3. Procurement of goods, services, and facilities
4. Design and delivery of programs and services
5. Transportation
6. Built environment
7. Employment

The following sections outline recent accessibility-related accomplishments and detail our strategies for identifying, preventing and removing barriers at the Authority over the next three years.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Information and communication technologies are digital systems that people use to find, access, and use information and airport services. Tools include the airport's website, mobile apps, check-in kiosks, and flight information displays. As we introduce new technologies, accessibility remains a critical consideration to ensure inclusive and equitable experiences for all users.

Our Achievements

- Engaged ABE Factors Inc. to perform a third-party accessibility audit of the Authority's website to ensure it meets the current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) while going above and beyond to incorporate lived-experience testing and universal design feedback. The findings were provided to the web developer, and improvements are currently underway.
- Reviewed and improved how gate, boarding, and passenger announcements are communicated by expanding the use of accessible formats, such as sign language video messaging. Explored solutions, including a pilot program using the Spoke Flight Plus app to provide accessible real-time airport information for passengers who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing.
- Promoted a new interactive map on our mobile and desktop website to support accessible wayfinding throughout the airport and the surrounding area. It provides directions and information about concessions, services, and points of interest.

Barriers Identified

- Accessibility information and resources for employees are stored in several different online repositories, making it difficult or time-consuming to find needed resources.
- Passengers who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing may have difficulty with announcements made over the current public address system due to echo and volume changes.

Plans to Remove Barriers

In 2026, we plan to:

- Validate the completion of the Authority's website updates that addressed accessibility issues through a final third-party review by ABE Factors Inc.
- Establish and maintain a centralized, accessible online hub where employees can access clear guidance, tools, and standards for creating content in accessible formats.
- Conduct an independent accessibility audit of our public address and sound systems to ensure announcements and information are clearly audible.
- Research potential accessibility features, such as browser extensions, which could be added to the Authority website to help improve the online experience.

In 2027 and 2028, we plan to:

- Consider opportunities to enhance the public address system to introduce newer technology with more capabilities. The public address system announces important information for travellers, such as gate changes for a flight, or for paging travellers to a gate.
- Include technical accessibility requirements when sourcing new software (including subscription-based tools). We will also document how to request technology-related accommodations and establish a clear process for tracking accessibility needs, planning and budgeting for remediation, and reporting on progress.
- Ensure all public information videos (including third-party hosted) are published with accurate closed captioning in both English and French.
- Implement mitigation measures for barriers identified through the website audit and integrate required updates into ongoing site improvements.
- Review and update the accessibility page and assistance request form(s) to use consistent and plain language. Update the options to reflect a broader range of disabilities (beyond mobility-related), including multiple assistance types and/or an "Other (please describe)" field.

- Improve the online “how to request help” instructions (including curbside assistance) so passengers can quickly understand where to go, what to do, and who to contact.
- Simplify the online assistance request process using a clear, step-by-step question flow with logical pathways, while maintaining accessibility for screen readers and keyboard navigation.
- Differentiate alternate-format document requests from travel-day accessibility assistance requests, so users are guided to the right request type without confusion.

On an ongoing basis, we plan to:

- Continue to monitor and evaluate the pilot program using the Spoke Flight Plus app to assess its effectiveness and explore opportunities to expand the technology throughout the terminal.
- Explore potential applications of artificial intelligence at the airport to enhance accessibility for staff and passengers, such as wayfinding assistance, automated information support, or accessibility-focused chat support.

Communication, Other Than ICT

Communication at the Authority is about sharing information clearly, inclusively, and accessibly. Communicating with our staff and passengers is a key part of our daily work and includes public address announcements, signage, information on our website and social media, and our internal communication materials and channels.

Our Achievements

- Shared our Statement of Commitment to Accessibility across the organization, made it publicly available, and integrated it into employee onboarding.
- Published multiple social media posts to celebrate and raise awareness of accessibility initiatives, including Invisible Disabilities Week, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Canadian Airports Council accessibility training, 24/7 mobility assistance curb to terminal services, and the Spoke Flight Plus app pilot program.
- Deployed accessibility information on digital screens in employee lunchrooms to improve internal awareness and communication.

Barriers Identified

- Staff do not always know who to contact for accessibility-related services, which can contribute to delays in receiving required support.

- The current welcome kiosk is not accessible. It is difficult to use for people who use wheelchairs or other wheeled mobility devices, people who are hard of hearing or d/Deaf, and people who are shorter in stature.
- The existing events podium requires accessibility improvements. It creates barriers for people of shorter stature and those who use wheeled mobility devices.

Plans to Remove Barriers

In 2026, we plan to:

- Collaborate with the procurement team to develop a centralized list of qualified providers and vendors that offer accessible services (such as Braille signage, sign language interpretation). This will ensure staff have quick, reliable access to appropriate service options when needed.
- Explore ways to collaborate with the procurement team to create a list of clear, accessible language that staff can use in procurement and communications materials.

In 2027 and 2028, we plan to:

- Investigate options to replace the current welcome kiosk and events podium with more accessible alternatives.

On an ongoing basis, we plan to:

- Integrate accessibility into the planning and production of all public-facing documents to ensure that accessible versions are a standard part of project delivery.

Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

At the Authority, our procurement processes help us purchase the goods, services, and facilities that support airport operations. We consider accessibility in our purchasing decisions, where appropriate, to ensure the products, services, and infrastructure we buy or develop can be used and enjoyed by as many people as possible.

Our Achievements

- Started to modernize and standardize internal procurement solicitation templates by converting them into different formats (accessible Word documents and accessible PDFs) and updating them for consistent use across the organization.
- Began drafting an update to our Procurement and Contracting Policy, incorporating clearer, more accessible language and stronger considerations for accessibility throughout the procurement process.

Barriers Identified

- Staff members do not always have the knowledge or tools needed to incorporate accessibility considerations into procurement and contracting decisions, which can lead to missed opportunities to further integrate accessibility into these processes.

Plans to Remove Barriers

In 2026, we plan to:

- Implement an updated Procurement and Contracting Policy that incorporates accessible language and embeds accessibility considerations into procurement and contracting activities.
- Finalize the standardization and update of internal solicitation document templates to ensure they are accessible, easy to use, and support consistent, inclusive procurement practices across the organization.

In 2027 and 2028, we plan to:

- Build a library of clear, accessible language that staff can use across different types of contracts, including examples for accessible procurement.
- Integrate accessibility requirements into third-party vendor agreements, where appropriate, to establish expectations for accessible service delivery and to support compliance monitoring through contract management activities.
- Identify and pursue procurement-focused accessibility training for the procurement team. Training could include general accessibility awareness, accessible procurement standards and best practices to build internal knowledge.
- Investigate ways to implement a contract management tool in existing systems to support business units in tracking accessibility-related vendor performance, monitoring contract progress, and capturing lessons learned.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The design and delivery of our programs and services are grounded in a commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Through initiatives such as the Aira accessibility app, support for neurodivergent passengers, membership in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program, and airport familiarization tours, we are dedicated to creating a welcoming and seamless experience for all. We work hard to make sure that current programs and new offerings continually evolve to meet the needs of our passengers with disabilities.

Our Achievements

- Conducted a full-scale emergency exercise that included passengers who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted, who use mobility devices, and who speak different languages, to test and strengthen the accessibility of our emergency response capacity.
- Hosted a site visit with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to highlight recent accessibility updates. The tour included walk-throughs of renovated washrooms and key areas such as the departures area and light rail train station.
- Hosted a full-day site visit with the Canadian Transportation Agency to support their understanding of an accessible passenger journey and behind-the-scenes processes. This included walk-throughs of key areas and presentations by airport security screening and customs partners.

Barriers Identified

- During peak periods, passengers using mobility devices may experience longer wait times, affecting their overall ease of movement and access through the terminal.
- Passengers requiring mobility assistance do not currently have an independent way of travelling through the terminal because the Authority does not have a fleet of wheelchairs for independent public use.

Plans to Remove Barriers

In 2026, we plan to:

- Provide content creators with clear resources, guidance, and accessible templates to help them create accessible information and communications.
- Update the Passenger Care Plan to reflect lessons learned from the full-scale emergency exercise, including ongoing participation by people with diverse disabilities and accessibility needs and corresponding updates to procedures and staff guidance.
- Support the World Wheelchair Basketball Championships in September 2026 by welcoming more than 300 athletes and promoting event awareness to improve airport wait times and overall passenger experience.
- Collaborate with Air Canada to support the planning and delivery of Autism Aviators Day in September 2026, including measures that enhance accessibility, improve the travel experience for neurodiverse participants, and promote awareness of inclusive travel practices across the airport community.

In 2027 and 2028, we plan to:

- Source and identify agencies that provide sign language interpretation and on-call services to support passengers with disabilities, in addition to crisis counselling, spiritual and cultural support, and resiliency services.
- Develop a best-practices guidebook for emergency exercise design, which identifies the need to implement accessibility and inclusive factors into exercises wherever possible.
- Following the success of our collaboration with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) to develop a video which showcases the airport experience from the perspective of a young person with Autism, we aim to create a video that highlights key steps in the passenger journey for neurodivergent adult passengers.

On an ongoing basis, we plan to:

- Embed accessibility feedback and progress on Accessibility Plan commitments into ongoing departmental and management discussions.
- Maintain the accessibility page on the Authority's website and related online content by ensuring Communications is supported with current, accurate, and timely updates from relevant departments as changes occur and new content is developed.

Transportation

As Canada's Capital airport, the Authority plays a special role in welcoming people to our country and our capital and sending them off warmly. Transportation considerations include accessible parking infrastructure, drop-off zones, public transit stations, and mobility in the terminal. Ensuring transportation options to, from, and within the airport are accessible means facilitating relationships between the various airport partners and considering accessibility in the different ways people travel within our terminal.

Our Achievements

- Installed additional electric vehicle (EV) fast charging stations near the Cell Phone Lot that can be used by the public and commercial vehicles.
- Ensured that the new Alt Hotel has clearly marked accessible parking spaces, with proper signage, and a clear step-free path to the main entrance.

Barriers Identified

- Third-party taxis offer accessible transportation to and from the airport and supplement ParaTranspo's specialized transit within the city's network. However, there are not enough accessible vehicles to meet demand across airport and city networks.

- People who require accessible transportation may face longer waiting times, which may cause unnecessary delays.
- While parking can be reserved ahead of time, passengers cannot specifically reserve an accessible parking space.
- Most wheelchairs used in the terminal are owned by airlines. The Authority owns a few older-model wheelchairs to assist with travelling from the curb to the check-in and baggage area, and back to the curb. These wheelchairs are not self-propelling and do not have baggage storage or automation features.

Plans to Remove Barriers

In 2026, we plan to:

- Review the accessibility of EV charging stalls in the Parkade, to identify whether any electrical or access updates are needed.
- Explore options for the Authority to procure additional wheelchairs for passengers to use independently. This will include exploring other equipment for moving baggage, as well as autonomous and self-propelled wheelchairs.

In 2027 and 2028, we plan to:

- Develop a plan to integrate EV charging in employee and long-term parking areas, ensuring accessible options.
- Install EV charging stations after power upgrades occur in 2026. Installation will ensure that at least one accessible parking space on each Parkade level includes an EV charger.
- Consider opportunities to provide expanded accessibility training for transportation companies operating on airport grounds.
- Explore the feasibility of advanced reservations for accessible parking.

On an ongoing basis, we plan to:

- Explore opportunities to work with nearby municipalities to improve the availability and reliability of accessible transportation options to and from the airport.

Built Environment

As a terminal operator, we champion accessible airport infrastructure. We recognize that the design, maintenance, and continuous improvement of our facilities are critical to providing an inclusive and accessible travel experience. The terminal is designed to support intuitive passenger movement, with integrated amenities and services that respond to the diverse needs of passengers and employees throughout their journey.

Building on our first Accessibility Plan (2023 to 2026), the Authority's accessibility audits, stakeholder feedback, and lived-experience consultations, accessibility considerations will remain embedded in planning, design, and redevelopment processes. This ensures that everyone who passes through the airport can experience a welcoming barrier-free environment.

Exciting and New

We are excited to announce the new on-site Alt Hotel. It is conveniently connected to the terminal by an accessible pedestrian link, with heating and air conditioning with direct transit connections via OC Transpo bus service and the O-Train if you are travelling to or from the airport.

Our Achievements

- Initiated the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) renewal process. A third-party organization (ABE Factors Inc.) will assist us with the next steps in the recertification process.
- Renovated the south-end Parkade washrooms as part of the end-of-life replacement projects. This incorporated doorless entries, accessible stalls, and inclusive design features.
- Built a kids play zone in the Canada/International gate area. It includes traditional and accessible hopscotch (accessible for someone who uses a mobility device), with a variety of seating and charging options.
- Outfitted parenting rooms (nursing rooms) with lounge or rocking-style chairs, accessible sinks and baby-change tables.
- Added six additional accessible self-service bag drops at transborder and Canada/International bag drop areas.
- Replaced all check-in kiosks with accessible, modern versions.
- Began to update and implement additional assistive listening systems at information desks using modern Auracast (Bluetooth technology).
- Updated a variety of universal washrooms, incorporating adult-change table facilities at specific locations.
- Provided gender-neutral accessible individual washroom enclosures pre-security near our departures retail and food vendors.
- Identified all service animal relief areas, both inside and outside the terminal, with new tactile signage.

Barriers Identified

- Families travelling with young children may encounter limited or inconsistent access to interactive or kid-friendly features throughout the airport environment.
- Doors in employee workspaces could benefit from the installation of additional power door operators. Certain spaces in the administrative area are older with accessibility limitations (such as the Pass Control Office service counter and Suite 2500 lunchroom).
- The Customs hall has limited space and can be congested at peak arrival times. This can create a barrier for people approaching the baggage carousel and collecting checked baggage.

Plans to Remove Barriers

In 2026, we plan to:

- Open the new accessible internal link between the Alt Hotel and the departures level of the terminal for passengers and employees.
- As part of the new Connections Centre project, a feasibility study will be completed to determine requirements for accessible amenities to guide infrastructure decisions.
- Assess and ensure the working order of all emergency call systems installed within washrooms.

In 2027 and 2028, we plan to:

- Provide a clearly marked, accessible space at each baggage carousel to ensure passengers with disabilities have safe, unobstructed, and priority access to retrieve their baggage.
- Update office number signage to include Braille and explore opportunities to add other accessible features such as improved colour contrast and accessible font styles and sizes, to support clear and inclusive wayfinding.
- Explore the integration of sensory and rest areas throughout the terminal post-security for the enjoyment of all passengers, particularly those who are neurodivergent.

On an ongoing basis, we plan to:

- Explore existing terminal spaces that could benefit from or are required to be equipped with tactile walking surface indicators.

- Conduct an audit of all washroom stall doors and identify those lacking occupancy indicators (hardware that indicates “in use” or “not in use”) to improve accessibility and privacy.
- Assess all public and back-of-house doors used by passengers and employees to determine where and how many power door operators may need to be installed to improve the navigation of the terminal for everyone. The installation of power door operators would be completed in phases based on available funding.

Employment

Airports are often seen as passenger-facing places, but an accessible travel experience depends largely on the people who work there every day. At the Authority, we recognize that accessibility must be built into our employment practices. Accessible employment means making sure accessibility is considered at every stage of the employment cycle (from hiring to onboarding, career development, and beyond). This includes accessible recruitment and workplace practices, inclusive opportunities for learning and growth, clear and timely support for accommodations, and ongoing efforts to remove barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

Our Achievements

- Initiated an accessibility update of our job offer letters, agreements, onboarding materials, and self-identification processes.
- Provided customer service training from the Canadian Airports Council on accessibility, accommodations, and assistive devices for all Authority staff.
- Completed an accessibility-focused renovation of the Airport Operations Control Centre, designed to support employees who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.
- Revamped the Standard Operating Procedures used by our seasonal workers, transforming what was once a lengthy, text-heavy document into an engaging learning module that considers a diverse audience and varying learning requirements. These procedures have also been printed and organized into binders for easy on-site reference.
- Embarked on a culture shift project in 2026 to ensure alignment between our strategic plan, corporate values, and employee programs. The data gathering for this project involved interviews, focus groups, and a culture survey. This data is being used to prepare a 3-year plan to prioritize programs that will move the organization in the right direction towards its objectives and improve the employee experience.

Barriers Identified

- While the Authority values inclusion, some employees and applicants with disabilities may not feel comfortable self-identifying or requesting accommodations during recruitment or employment. This can make it harder to access the support they need.
- The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program is not widely recognized by employees. They would benefit from expanded training and increased awareness.
- There is an opportunity to further embed accessibility into the recruitment process by consistently offering accommodations during interviews and clearly communicating how applicants can request support. The current Human Resources (HR) system does not allow flexibility in how employees provide information (such as written responses versus multiple-choice options). This can create barriers for some users.

Plans to Remove Barriers

In 2026, we plan to:

- Share the Canadian Airports Council Accessibility Training with campus partners to support consistent training across the airport. We have followed suit by providing this training, along with several other Canadian airports, to collaborate on training and provide consistent customer service.
- Begin expanding outreach and collaboration with disability organizations, recruitment agencies, and disability-focused job boards to promote employment opportunities and explore partnerships with third-party services representing job seekers with disabilities.
- Improve accessible recruitment by clearly communicating options for accommodations and how to request them at each stage of the hiring process, while having HR engage external expertise to ensure recruitment practices align with recognized accessibility standards and best practices.
- Offer aids like mobile Aura loop devices for interviews and other interactions to improve communication access for people who are hard of hearing.
- Develop a plan to deliver accessibility training to leadership teams with the goal of educating the teams and building buy-in to support consistent adoption across teams.
- Review current job posting templates and recruitment policies to determine whether they clearly describe accessibility accommodations available to applicants. If needed, they will be updated to ensure this information is easy to find and understand.

In 2027 and 2028, we plan to:

- Ensure new technology, software, and processes used by employees meet applicable accessibility guidelines or are available in accessible alternate formats.
- Address and review employee accessibility and accommodation requests on an ongoing basis through a structured, HR-led accommodation process, developed in collaboration with employees and, where appropriate, informed by input from a medical professional.
- Explore ways to allow employees to enter their own written responses in the self-identification questionnaire within the HR system so they can describe their identity or requirements in a way that best suits them.
- Research opportunities to store all internal policies in the Human Resources Information System. This centralization will help staff find policies more easily and access them in accessible formats.
- Update staff workstations with ergonomically adjustable features such as adjustable desks, chairs, and screen settings, to ensure employees can customize their workspace for comfort, safety, and accessibility.

On an ongoing basis, we plan to:

- Ensure emergency floor wardens and response teams are aware of and review individual accommodation plans for employees requesting support during emergencies or evacuations. Plans will be reviewed annually to remain current.
- Offer “lunch and learn” sessions on accessibility and inclusion topics such as accessible practices and tools, and perspectives from people with lived experience to foster a culture of accessibility and inclusion.
- Share products and information about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program with our staff to help build staff use of the program and products. Our aim is to continue developing a culture of accessibility and inclusion and help staff feel supported in sharing their lived experience.

Consultations

How we Consulted People With Disabilities

During the development of the 2026 to 2029 Accessibility Plan, we held three virtual focus group sessions facilitated by our accessibility partners, O'Hara Aging + Accessibility and Left Turn Right Turn Ltd. These sessions ensured meaningful and accessible consultation with people with lived experience, including passengers, employees/campus partners, disability organizations, advocacy partners, and the public.

Prior to the focus group sessions, participants were invited to request any required accessibility supports or alternate formats to ensure full and equal participation. Accommodations were provided, including materials shared in advance, closed captioning, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation.

Focus group sessions were held using Microsoft Teams in March 2026:

- Session 1 – Public Consultation (General Public, Disability Organizations, Government Agencies and Community Partners)
- Session 2 – Employees and Campus Partners
- Session 3 – Accessibility Advisory Group of Canadians with Disabilities

Each focus group session included a presentation followed by facilitated feedback. The agenda included the following:

- Welcome Message
- The Airport and Our Partners
- What is the Accessibility Plan 2026 to 2029?
- Seven Key Focus Areas
- Accessibility Achievements to Date
- Feedback

During the sessions, we asked a variety of questions to guide our discussion, including:

- Tell us your thoughts on the progress we have made so far.
- What strengths has YOW demonstrated in advancing accessibility and reducing barriers for people with disabilities?
- Tell us your thoughts on the kids zone.
- What initiatives do you think should be prioritized in the 2026 to 2029 Accessibility Plan?
- Using our passenger journey map, help us identify barriers for passengers with disabilities. Where do you think the most improvements could be made?

Employees and campus partners were also asked the following:

- In what ways do you think the airport could better support employees with disabilities or accessibility needs?
- What can we do to make sure colleagues with hidden disabilities feel included and supported at the airport?
- How can communication regarding accessibility initiatives be improved within the airport?

To support these discussions, we shared a Passenger Journey Map with external participants and an Employee Journey Map with internal participants. These visuals, shown in the figures below, helped guide the conversation about barriers and opportunities for improvement.

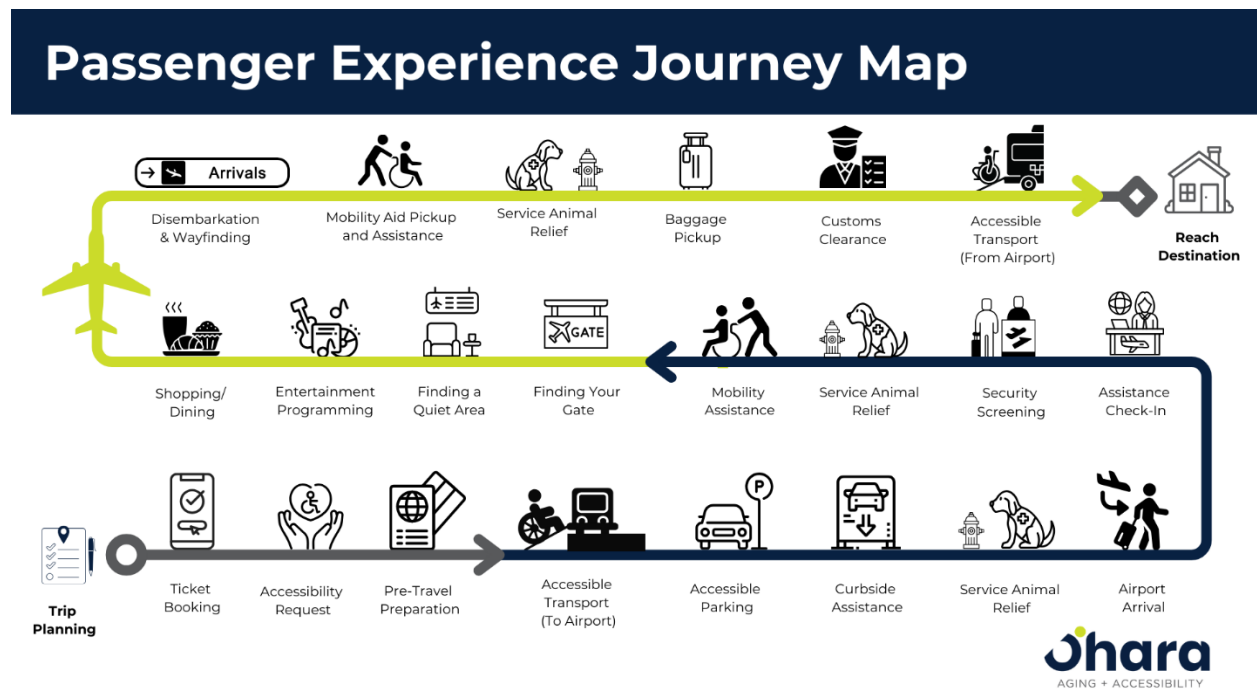


Figure 1. Passenger Experience Journey Map

Employee Experience Journey Map

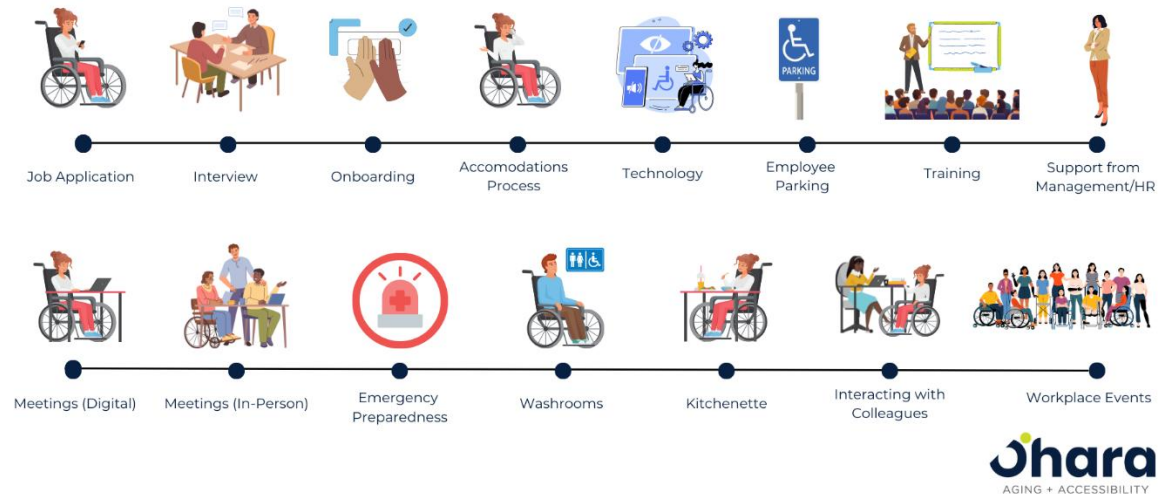


Figure 2. Employee Experience Journey Map

Feedback

Our accessibility partners prepared a consultation summary that captures detailed feedback on how the Authority can better prevent, identify, and remove barriers for passengers and employees with disabilities. The consultation summary was shared with internal teams and the authors of this Accessibility Plan to ensure lived experience guides our commitments and our ongoing work.

In the sections that follow, we summarize key perspectives from the consultations on ways to improve accessibility for passengers with disabilities and the people who support them. These insights helped us recognize new commitments throughout this Accessibility Plan that will be proactively addressed over the next three years.

Session 1 – Public Consultation

Over 30 individuals with lived experience of disability, organizations representing people with disabilities, government agencies, and community partners joined this session. Many people were eager to share their positive experiences and offer helpful feedback to support our goal for a more accessible and inclusive airport experience.

In the words of one participant: “More often than not, these types of initiatives are completed in isolation. THANK YOU for engaging with the community!”

Organization attendees included:

- Ottawa Disability Coalition
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides
- Canadian Air Transport Security Authority
- Deafblind Ontario
- Parents Lifeline (PLEO)
- Canadian Hearing Services
- City of Ottawa
- Service Canada
- Catholic Centre for Immigrants
- Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO)
- Canadian Foundation for Animal-assisted Support Services
- MS Canada

People with disabilities included:

- People with cognitive disabilities
- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- People with invisible disabilities
- People who use service dogs
- People who have brain injuries
- People who are neurodiverse or have autism or ADHD
- People who use wheelchairs or mobility assistance devices
- People who are blind or partially sighted
- People who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing
- People who use medical devices
- Care partners and family members of people with disabilities

Key Highlights of Feedback Received:

- Single-use accessible washrooms could be enhanced through clearer signage and more consistent placement of grab bars. Increasing the number of accessible washrooms will help ensure more passengers can comfortably access facilities prior to boarding.
- Security screening can feel rushed. A dedicated non-express lane, maybe identified with the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower, was suggested to better support neurodivergent passengers, passengers with mobility needs who require more time, older adults, and people with PTSD.
- Information about support services (such as curbside assistance and the airport concierge) is not always easy to find on the Authority website.
- Passengers are not always aware of concierge services; by increasing public awareness, more passengers can benefit.

- Wheelchair assistance improvements are desired, particularly when coordinating transitions between one provider and another.
- Wheelchairs are often older models and require a person to push the wheelchair instead of being self-propelled.

Session 2 – Authority Employees and Campus Partners

During this session, we spoke with nearly 70 airport staff and campus partners. Attendees included representatives from a wide range of departments, as well as from airlines such as Air Canada and Air France. SSP Canada (food and beverage service provider) staff and representatives from the Canada Border Services Agency were also in attendance. Attendees included airport staff and campus partners with lived experience.

Key Highlights of Feedback Received:

- Coordination of passengers using assistance services is not always seamless. While processes are generally well established within airside operations, the most common gaps were related to the arriving passenger's journey from the arrivals area to the curb. The arrivals area or hall are places where passengers arrive when they get off the airplane.
- Built environment improvements are needed in employee spaces to improve accessibility, including installing power door operators, improving the administrative area lunchroom and Pass Control Office access, as well as exploring the option for a sensory space or quiet room for staff.
- The Airport Operations Control Centre was recently renovated using universal design to support employees with disabilities (such as accessible work surfaces and amenities); photographs are available.
- Additional passenger-facing improvements discussed included purchasing wheelchairs, marking a dedicated floor area for people with disabilities to access baggage carousels, adding seating/rest points along longer corridors, and improving consistency of tactile wayfinding.

Session 3 - Accessibility Advisory Group of Canadians with Disabilities

This group included five passengers from across Canada with lived experience of disability, representing a range of backgrounds and lived experience, including:

- People who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids
- People who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing
- People with speech-related disabilities
- People with invisible, chronic, and episodic disabilities

Key Highlights of Feedback Received:

- Information on the website's accessibility page should be arranged with accessibility in mind. Participants noted that call-out boxes related to Accessibility Plans, Progress Reports, or regulatory bodies or compliance-related links can draw attention away from the most time-sensitive travel information. Consider moving these callouts lower on the page so that practical accessibility services (parking, mobility support, curbside help, etc.) remain the first items visible.
- Passengers with disabilities often encounter barriers to accessing mobility assistance services. A coordinated and holistic review of the mobility assistance available at the Authority could help fill gaps and create a quicker, more streamlined, passenger-oriented approach.
- Wayfinding in the airport can be challenging for people with disabilities. The Authority could consider a colour-coded, stylized approach in which a line of one colour or style will lead passengers to a specific destination, such as the baggage carousel or the transit station connected to the terminal.
- Passengers do not always know about, or clearly distinguish between, the roles and responsibilities of different airport partners, such as airline responsibility versus security versus airport staff, which can create uncertainty throughout the journey. Continued partnerships among airport and campus partners are essential to help provide a more seamless and accessible experience.
- It would be helpful for some staff to have basic knowledge of langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) and ASL so that d/Deaf passengers who use sign language feel included in communication.

Things passengers with disabilities appreciate at the airport:

- Airport familiarization tours have been useful for passengers with disabilities and their travel companions to become familiar with the airport and help them prepare for the day-of-travel experience.
- The CHEO video is highlighted as a great virtual resource. Being able to see from the airplane and from the narrator's perspective is greatly enjoyed.
- A digital map available on the Authority's website identifies accessible features and services.
- The new kids zone is great for engaging children in sensory-friendly play. It would also be helpful to have a sensory-reduced room or space for anyone who may need a quiet space with reduced stimuli, including a dedicated adult sensory area.
- Highlighting the advance booking option for mobility assistance was well received.

Provisions of CTA Accessibility-Related Regulations

From its roles as a Terminal Operator, Transportation Service Provider (TSP), and employer, the Authority's Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process aligns with, and supports compliance with, the Accessible Canada Act (ACA) and the Canada Transportation Act (CTA), which consider the following accessibility-related principles, provisions and regulations:

ACA

- Section 6, Principles
- Part 4, Duties of Regulated Entities – Regulated Entities in the Transportation Network, Accessibility Plans – Regulations Under the CTA, and Accessibility Plan – Regulations Under This Act
- Accessible Canada Regulations (ACR)
- ACR - Part 1, Planning, Feedback and Reporting - Accessibility Plans, Feedback Process, Document Retention
- Annexed Section 63 - Canadian Transportation Agency, Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations (ATPRR)
- ATPRR - Accessibility Plans, Feedback

CTA

- PART V Transportation of Persons with Disabilities

Additional Guides and Regulations:

- CTA Information Bulletin, Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations (ATPRR) [Permits TSPs to publish one Accessibility Plan meeting both ATPRR and ACR]
- Canadian Transportation Agency - Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPDR), Part 1 and Part 4 Divisions 1 and 2

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2019-244/index.html>

- Government of Canada, Guidance on the Accessible Canada Regulations: Guidance on Accessibility Plans, 11 July 2022

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada-regulations-guidance/accessibility-plans.html>

- Government of Canada, Guidance on the Accessible Canada Regulations: Summary of Guidance on Accessibility Plans, 11 July 2022
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada-regulations-guidance/accessibility-plans/summary-plans.html>
- The Accessible Canada Act and the Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations: A Guide on Accessibility Plans, 22 December 2021
<https://otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/publication/accessible-transportation-planning-and-reporting-regulations-accessibility-plans>
- Canadian Transportation Agency, ACA and ATPRR: A Guide on Feedback Processes, 22 December 2021
<https://otc-cta.gc.ca/eng/publication/accessible-transportation-planning-and-reporting-regulations-feedback-processes>

Agency notifications:

Within 48 hours of publishing this Accessibility Plan and its Feedback Process to our website, the following agencies were notified and provided with a hyperlink:

- The Accessibility Commissioner
- The Canadian Transportation Agency

Should any edits or changes be made to this Accessibility Plan and its Feedback Process, the Agencies listed above will be notified upon re-publication.