

General Bank of Canada

Accessibility Plan 2024 - 2027

General

Executive Summary

General Bank of Canada (the “Bank”), headquartered in Edmonton, Alberta, is a Schedule 1 Chartered bank and part of the Wheaton Group. Our roots trace back to the entrepreneurial spirit of our founder in the mid-1950s, who began with a single auto dealership in Saskatchewan. Evolving into one of Canada's fastest-growing small banks, General Bank of Canada expanded into helping Canadians with their automotive, aviation, and commercial financing needs.

The Bank employs approximately 100 employees and serves close to 75,000 customers coast to coast. United by trust, at General Bank of Canada, we build relationships while pursuing excellence by focusing on what matters. We are driven by deep insights, innovation and coaching to unlock the potential of our people. After years of success, we aim to harness the advantages of our small, nimble structure and work to redefine banking in a digital era. As we strive to build a bank for the future, we are guided by our core values:

- Innovation: We spark innovation through intrapreneurship.
- Discipline: We focus on what matters.
- People-Centric: We are people who build experiences.
- Trust: We trust and are trusted.

General Bank of Canada is committed to providing a barrier-free environment and ensuring accessibility for all. The Bank recognizes accessibility as a continuous priority and has developed this Accessibility Statement to underscore our commitment to inclusivity.

While developing the Bank’s Accessibility Plan, the Bank collected feedback from employees, community partners, individuals with disabilities, as well as our customers and members of the public.

The Bank identified barriers in five of the seven areas identified in the Accessible Canada Act (the “Act”), including employment, built environment, information and communication technologies, communication (other than information and communication technologies), and design and delivery of programs and services. The barriers and action plans are outlined in this Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility Statement

Our Commitment: At General Bank of Canada, we understand the importance of accessibility for individuals of all abilities. We strive to ensure that our services, facilities, and digital platforms are accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. We are dedicated to removing barriers

and fostering an environment where everyone can fully participate in banking services and experiences.

Accessibility Plan: In accordance with the [Act](#), the Bank has developed an Accessibility Plan to identify, address, and prevent barriers to accessibility. This Accessibility Plan outlines the Bank's strategies for enhancing inclusivity across all aspects of the Bank's operations, including customer service, employment practices, and digital accessibility.

Available Formats

The Bank's Accessibility Plan is offered in any of the following formats upon request:

- Print.
- Large print (increased font size and clarity).
- Audio (a recording of someone reading the text out loud).
- Electronic (an electronic version of this Accessibility Plan that works with assistive technology is available on our public website at <https://www.generalbank.ca/accessibility-plan/>).
- Braille (a system of raised dots that people who are blind or have low vision can read with their fingers).

Feedback and Contact Information

As part of the Bank's ongoing commitment to a barrier-free environment and inclusive workplace, we welcome feedback and encourage individuals to share their accessibility concerns or suggestions for improvement. We strive to address feedback promptly and continuously improve our accessibility initiatives. Please direct any feedback or questions regarding this Accessibility Plan or requests for alternate formats to the following designated company representative. If you prefer to remain anonymous, please direct feedback to the mailing address.

Director, Human Resources
1-877-443-5620
HR@generalbank.ca
#100 – 11523 100 Avenue
Edmonton, AB, T5K 0J8

Definitions

Accessibility means the design of products, devices, services, environments, technologies, policies and rules for people who experience disabilities.

Barrier is defined by the Act as 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.

Disability is defined by the Act as 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.

Areas Identified in the Accessible Canada Act

The Bank identified barriers in five of the seven areas identified in the Act, as well as actions to address each barrier. The Bank will prioritize and focus on action items over the next three years to remove and prevent barriers.

Employment

The Bank is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. We promote a diverse and inclusive workplace where all employees are valued and supported. Our hiring processes, training programs, and workplace accommodations must be designed to ensure equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Barriers

- Online job postings are not compatible with assistive technology.
- The Bank does not ask employees if they require any accommodations upon commencement of employment which can leave employees feeling fearful to have to request one themselves.
- Job applicants and employees hired with disabilities are lower than the labour market availability.

Actions

- Conduct an accessibility audit of the Bank’s website, including the Careers page and online job advertisements, to identify specific areas where accessibility features are lacking or incompatible with assistive technology.
- Develop a step in the onboarding process for employees to identify required accommodations for disabilities.
- Enhance the Careers page on the Bank’s website to demonstrate our commitment to inclusion and ability to accommodate individual disabilities.
- Create hiring program partnerships with community partners to increase representation of persons with disabilities and provide meaningful employment opportunities.

The Built Environment

The Bank is dedicated to maintaining physical spaces that are accessible to individuals with mobility challenges or other disabilities. The Bank’s headquarters are in Edmonton, Alberta where customers and members of the public rarely visit. The Bank is a tenant in a historical building resulting in known built environment restrictions. The Bank will continue to collect feedback

regarding built environment barriers and implement changes as required in alignment with the historical building code requirements.

Barriers

- The current emergency response plan was not created with accessibility in mind.
- There is no ramp or elevator from the Bank's main reception to access the first or second floor.

Actions

- Review and update the emergency response plan to incorporate accessibility considerations.
- Meet with the property manager of the building to understand what options have been considered for improving the built environment.
- Contract for a built environment accessibility audit to identify areas for improvement and determine what modifications can be made to enhance accessibility.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Recognizing the importance of digital accessibility, we strive to ensure that our online platforms, mobile applications, and digital content are accessible to users of all abilities. This includes adherence to web accessibility standards and ongoing monitoring and improvements to enhance usability.

Barriers

- The Bank's website is not fully accessible and is not compatible with assistive technology.

Actions

- Conduct an accessibility audit of the website to identify specific areas where accessibility features are lacking or compatible with assistive technology.
- Develop and share resources internally for employees to make documents and communications accessible.
- Enhance the website, applications, and digital documents to ensure accessibility for persons with various disabilities (e.g., low vision, screen reader compatibility).
- Expand existing digital accessibility testing tools and processes.
- Create training and learning materials for employees to increase accessibility of employee and customer materials (print and digital).
- Establish a governance model for websites and web content on public sites.

Communication (other than information and communication technologies)

The Bank is committed to providing accessible communication methods to ensure that information is available to all individuals. Employees, customers, and stakeholders provide and receive information in various ways. The Bank must consider these differences and provide its communications in various accessible formats for people who require them. This may include documents or invoices that are not technology-based.

Barriers

- The Bank's documents are not fully compatible with assistive technology.

Actions

- Identify service providers to create alternative formats to provide information and communications as needed for employees, customers, and other stakeholders.

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Barriers

No barriers related to the procurement of goods, services, and facilities were identified through the feedback collection process.

Actions

No action is currently required regarding the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The Bank is committed to reviewing, updating and enhancing current policies, processes and policies to ensure the Bank provides accessible programming and services.

Barriers

- Employees are not provided training to increase awareness or sensitivity when interacting with a colleague or customer where a disability or barrier may be present, or accessibility is limited.

Actions

- Explore sensitivity and awareness programs or training to educate employees about disabilities.

Transportation

Barriers

No barriers related to transportation were identified through the feedback collection process.

Actions

No action is currently required regarding transportation.

Consultations

The Bank collected feedback through surveys, virtual consultations, and one-on-one meetings with employees, customers, community partners, accessibility experts and individuals with disabilities. Feedback was solicited on the following areas of focus.

- Employment.
- The built environment.
- Information and communication technologies.
- Communication, other than information and communication technologies.
- The procurement of goods, services, and facilities.
- The design and delivery of programs and services.
- Transportation.

Feedback Summary

- The Bank anonymously surveyed employees, customers, and community members via an electronic survey.
- The Bank conducted virtual feedback consultation sessions with the following organizations:
 - Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (Edmonton Branch).
 - Canadian National Institute for the Blind.
 - Alberta Society for the Visually Impaired.
- The Bank met one-on-one for further feedback and information collection with the following organizations:
 - Inclusion Alberta.
 - Voice of Albertans with Disabilities.
 - disAbility – Accessibility by Design.
 - Gateway Association.

Review Process

The Bank will continue to meet its legislative and regulatory requirements. This includes updating this Accessibility Plan and other accessibility-related initiatives as necessary and publishing progress reports.