

Accessibility Progress Report – 2024

General.

At Laurentian Bank, we believe that better begins when everyone feels like they belong and has the chance to thrive. We're committed to providing equal access, participation and inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Accessibility is an integral part of inclusion and equity at Laurentian Bank. Our approach is based on embedding inclusion, equity, diversity and accessibility into everything that we do. By empowering each of our team members to apply accessibility considerations to their work, we'll be able to drive meaningful and sustainable action to improve inclusion for persons with disabilities.

We have developed a comprehensive multi-year plan to break down barriers for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Over this past year, we have made important progress toward our plan. Much of this progress has involved foundational work in building our governance and increasing awareness across the organization. The work we have done this year positions us well to continue to deliver on our multi-year accessibility plan.

We have established a network of Accessibility Champions composed of about 20 team members from across the organization whose mandate is to:

- Promote a culture where accessibility is embedded in everything that we do;
- Develop Bank-wide awareness on accessibility;
- Enable the development of Bank-wide capabilities in accessibility by identifying best practices and developing and sharing tools, resources and learning material; and,
- Deliver on Laurentian Bank's Accessibility requirements, including our multi-year accessibility plan.

We also delivered foundational accessibility training across the organization to increase team members' awareness of accessibility. Another key deliverable this year has been the introduction a comprehensive and centralized accessibility resource center including many resources for team members.

Feedback.

The Accessibility Champions Network is engaged in ongoing discussions around our accessibility plan. Based on this feedback, our plan is in constant evolution to best ensure that we are continuously identifying, removing and preventing new barriers to accessibility.



We have a process in place to receive feedback on how we can continue to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities. Feedback can be provided in-person, by telephone, mail, email or through social media and can be provided anonymously. During the past year, we did not receive any feedback on accessibility at Laurentian Bank.

Contact:

Chief Legal Officer, Chief Inclusion and Equity Officer and Corporate Secretary

By email:

accessibility@laurentianbank.ca

By mail:

Chief Legal Officer, Chief Inclusion and Equity Officer and Corporate Secretary
Laurentian Bank of Canada
1360 René-Lévesque Blvd W. Suite 630
Montreal QC H3G 0E5

In person:

At any one of our [branch locations](#)

By telephone:

1-800-522-1846 TTY 1-866-262-2231

You can also share your feedback on accessibility with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Accessible formats.

To receive an accessible format of our Accessibility Plan and/or Progress Report, contact us using the contact information we've provided.

Employment.

Laurentian Bank has roughly 2,800 team members in Canada. We have a hybrid and flexible work model where working from home is the first approach for all tasks that can be performed remotely.

Our commitment to an inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities means that accessibility must be considered throughout the employee experience.

Some of the practices in place that support accessibility include:

- Our flexible work model plays a role in removing barriers in employment by offering flexibility as the norm for all, rather than as an accommodation for some.

- We provide support to team members for mental health through our benefits, and by offering a supportive work culture that destigmatizes mental health.
- We have a workplace accommodations policy that outlines our accommodations process, which applies to candidates and employees. Information on the availability of workplace accommodations is included in our job postings, offer letters, new hire orientation and performance management documents.

We're aware of ongoing barriers, some of which include:

- Persons with disabilities are underrepresented in employment at Laurentian Bank.
- Persons with disabilities may choose not to self-identify for various reasons.
- We've identified some gaps in the format of our online training material that aren't accessible.

Progress.

- Developed resources to support employees on how to talk about their disability in the workplace and for managers on supporting employees with disabilities.
- Delivered training to our learning and development professionals on developing accessible training materials.

The Built Environment.

Laurentian Bank has 9 corporate and commercial offices across Canada, and 57 branches and 130 Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) in the province of Quebec. We also offer ATM services to our customers through THE EXCHANGE® Network, which consists of 3,000 ATMs from other financial institutions.

Our ATMs meet accessibility standards for self-service interactive devices. Some of the accessibility features include:

- Screen orientation and PIN pad height are designed for individuals using wheelchairs
- Font size follows accessibility standards
- The centre key of PIN pads is identified with a raised button to make it clearly identifiable for individuals with visual impairments

All our properties are leased and we work closely with property owners and managers to remove barriers to accessibility. When renovating existing locations or searching for new locations, accessibility is an important requirement of our plans.

Some of the accessibility features of our locations include:

- Designated parking for persons with disabilities
- Level or ramped entrances

- Automated/accessible doors
- Customer service areas with lower countertops providing access for wheelchairs
- Accessible washrooms

In the case of an emergency, we've established a process for developing Individualized Emergency Response Plans for the safety of team members with disabilities.

While our aim is to be accessible from the start, when barriers to accessibility are identified within our premises, we review each situation as we become aware of it and assess how we can remove the barrier. Some of the existing barriers we're aware of include some locations not having an automatic door opener for the washroom.

Progress

- Over this past year, we installed 14 new ATMs. All of these new ATMs have additional accessibility features. They are equipped with headphone jacks with text to speech functionality for individuals with visual impairments.

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities.

Laurentian Bank procures goods and services for our operations. We have a centralized corporate team supporting the procurement process.

Accessibility considerations are considered case-by-case. We don't yet have a consistent approach to ensure that the goods and services we procure systematically take accessibility into consideration.

Progress.

We have embedded accessibility into our procurement processes by taking the following actions:

- Updated our Supplier Code of Conduct to outline our commitment to accessibility and the expectations we have of our vendors.
- Updated our master contract agreement to outline the requirements we have of our vendors with regard to accessibility.
- Conducted training with our Procurement team so that they're equipped to address accessibility considerations throughout the vendor engagement and management processes.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

ICT is central to how our team members complete their work and how we communicate with our customers.



- We have made significant investments to make our customer-facing websites and digital platforms accessible and conform with the most up-to-date web accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1 Level AA).
- Web pages that are migrated to our new platform and new web pages that are developed meet this standard.
- When working with new vendors for our public digital platforms, we define accessibility requirements, include them in vendor agreements and have processes for auditing accessibility.
- Some of our commonly used technological tools have accessibility features built in, such as Microsoft Office.
- We're aware that there continue to be barriers with internal IT systems that were not designed with accessibility in mind.

Progress.

- Engaged in ongoing discussions with our IT teams to increase awareness around the accessibility requirements of our IT systems and websites.
- Working on a plan for migrating the remainder of our public web pages to be accessible.

Communication, other than ICT.

The way we share information has an important impact on whether our work environment is inclusive for persons with disabilities. This includes whether the format of our communications is accessible and the visibility of persons with disabilities within our communications.

- When possible and upon request, we provide documents to team members and customers in accessible formats.
- We don't have a consistent approach to make communications accessible by default.
- Consultations have identified that there's limited knowledge throughout the organization on how to draft in plain language and create accessible documents.

Progress.

- Developed resources for inclusive writing, including support for plain language practices.
- Developed resources for how to create accessible documents.
- Provided resources to increase team members' awareness on how to use the Accessibility features of Microsoft Office.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services.

We want our products and services to be accessible to everyone and strive to include accessibility from the start of the design process.

- The expansion of our digital offering, including the introduction of our mobile app and online bank account opening, provides more channels for customers to bank with us. This can serve to decrease barriers.
- We offer telephone services via TTY for customers with hearing or speech disabilities.
- All team members receive training to provide accessible customer service. This includes letting persons with disabilities be helped by a support person or be accompanied by a service animal.
- In the event of a disruption to the accessibility of our services, we provide notification. The notification includes information about the reason for the disruption, its expected length and alternative services, if available.
- To capture accessibility requirements from the start of the design process, we have introduced an accessibility section in our Business Requirements document that's completed for all major projects at Laurentian Bank.

Progress.

- We have started to provide training for team members specific to their role so they can apply accessibility requirements to their work.

Transportation.

While we don't supply transportation services, team members and customers rely on transportation to travel to our locations. Transportation can present a barrier to persons with disabilities.

At our office and branch locations, we provide designated parking for persons with disabilities where possible. While the availability of accessible public transit is outside of our control, our shift to a work model that prioritizes working from home has decreased or removed the need to commute for some of our team members.

Also, our expanded digital offering for customers has reduced the need for customers to get services in person. This provides more options for how customers can receive services, which may lessen the need for transportation to one of our branches. For example, we now offer digital account opening on our website, eliminating the need for eligible customers to visit a branch location to open a bank account.

Progress.

- On an ongoing basis, we consider the barrier that transportation can pose to persons with disabilities within our Accessibility Plan. For example, when leasing new premises or when developing services for customers.

Training.

Our approach to embedding accessibility in everything that we do requires that all team members have the essential knowledge and skills available to them in a format that they can access. This will be made possible through ongoing training and awareness.

- All team members complete annual unconscious bias training to help team members understand how unconscious bias can impact behaviour and decision-making, recognize their own biases and how to interrupt bias.
- All team members complete annual accessibility training to build awareness on disability and accessibility. The training includes information on how to interact with persons with disabilities and on the accommodation process.
- We have an inclusion and equity program that provides ongoing awareness and training for team members.
- More advanced knowledge of accessibility was identified as a barrier throughout our consultations.

Progress.

- Created an Accessibility Champions Network working group to share knowledge and best practices on accessibility, and collaborate on identifying, removing and preventing barriers.
- Created an accessibility knowledge centre with centralized resources.
- Provided opportunities for our team members for ongoing learning on disability and accessibility.

Consultations.

Laurentian Bank has different means for receiving feedback from team members, customers and the public. In developing our multi-year accessibility plan, we analyzed the feedback received as a starting point for understanding the current state of accessibility and to inform our consultations.

As part of consultations with persons with disabilities, we completed the following:

- We invited all team members, including persons with disabilities, to complete a survey on accessibility. The survey was available online and we gave the option to receive the survey in accessible formats. We asked team members to share their experiences and observations on barriers to accessibility at Laurentian Bank.



- We held two virtual focus group sessions to discuss accessibility barriers for team members and customers. We invited all team members, including persons with disabilities, to participate in these sessions.

We are currently working on a partnership that will facilitate our ability to consult with persons with disabilities to better understand, prevent and remove barriers to inclusion.