



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2024-2027



Peoples Group



## Peoples Group Accessibility Plan – 2024-2027

<b>Last Modified:</b> May 24, 2024	<b>Version No.:</b> 01	<b>Date:</b> 2024-2027  Name: Peoples Group Accessibility Plan
<b>Business Line(s) Affected:</b>	All business lines	
<b>Contact information &amp; Contributors</b>	Please note, this plan is available in alternative formats upon request. We welcome feedback on this plan and can be contacted by post, our website, email or by phone. Information has been provided below.  Peoples Group  888 Dunsmuir St, Suite 1400 - Vancouver, BC V6C3K4  Website - <a href="http://PeoplesTrust.com">PeoplesTrust.com</a>  Email address– <a href="mailto:Accessible@peoplesgroup.com">Accessible@peoplesgroup.com</a>  Telephone – 604-683-2881	
	<b>Subject Matter Expert:</b>  Tammy Downey  Senior Manager, Corporate Services	<b>Subject Matter Expert:</b>  Ashley White  Senior Manager, People & Culture

### Accessibility Statement

Peoples Group has been providing tailored financial services to the Canadian marketplace for more than 35 years. Since 1985, our focus has been on exceptional customer service, solidly rooted in extensive product knowledge and experience. Over the years, we’ve thoughtfully expanded our product and service offerings based on customer needs. We expect to continue this successful journey in the years to come. Peoples Group financial services are offered through a selection of partners and channels. Our diverse offerings include retail lending, deposit services, commercial mortgages, services and securitizations and payment solution and card services.

Peoples Group is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with limitations. We are committed to treating people with limitations in a way that allows them to maintain dignity and independence. We believe in integration and are committed to meeting peoples’ needs in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and in doing so, strive to meet requirements under accessibility laws.

### General

Peoples Group is committed to aligning with consulting organizations on the Accessibility Plan in 2024 to ensure fundamentals of the plan are covered and welcomes feedback on how we provide an accessible workplace. Employee and customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Feedback from current or active employees and stakeholders may be provided in the following ways:

1. For employees, speaking with your manager or team lead, or outside of Peoples Group.
2. Contact Peoples Group at 604-683-2881
3. Email us at [accessible@peoplesgroup.com](mailto:accessible@peoplesgroup.com)
4. You can also mail our head office at –  
888 Dunsmuir Street, Suite 1400 - Vancouver, British Columbia, V6C3K4

All feedback, including complaints, will be managed by members of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC). Respondents can expect to hear back in within 5-10 business days. Peoples Group ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

### Facilities

In reviewing the accessibility of our environment, we tried to look at our office through the view of a person with limitations. With this in mind, we have completed the following:

- An install of an automatic door opener in our reception area which opens with a wave.
- A regular review of elevator functionality.
- A regular review of desks, chairs and monitors so ensure their ergonomic suitability.
- Availability of accessible washrooms in our facilities.
- Availability of gender-neutral washrooms in our facilities.
- Availability of wheelchair accessible hallways and meeting rooms.

### Technology

In looking into the accessibility of our technology we looked at our business through the view of a person with accessibility challenges. With this in mind, we have completed the following:

- Availability of transcription on all Microsoft products
- Availability of ergonomically suited technology equipment, such as keyboards, mice, and headsets
- Availability of on-line meetings where in-person sessions are not possible due to limitations in access from a mental health and physical point of view.

## Processes

In looking into the accessibility of our processes we tried to look at our business through the view of a person with limitations. With this in mind, we have completed the following:

- Availability of accessibility inbox ([accessible@peoplesgroup.com](mailto:accessible@peoplesgroup.com))
- Availability of recruiting inbox for candidates who may not be able to process their application due to limitations. ([recruiting@peoplesgroup.com](mailto:recruiting@peoplesgroup.com))
- Availability of contact information for our various business lines by phone, email, or in-person in both French and English.
- Availability of translators, counsellors and support professionals through various intermediaries including Lifeworks by Telus Health.

The reference from below is taken from “Guidance on the Accessible Canada Regulations from the Government of Canada” website. Areas are described under Section 5 of the Accessibility Canada Act (ACA).

The purpose of the ACA is to benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities, through the realization, within the purview of matters coming within the legislative authority of Parliament, of a Canada without barriers, on or before the ACA target of January 1, 2040, particularly by the identification and removal of barriers, and the prevention of new barriers within 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
7. Transportation

### **1. Employment**

We are committed to a workplace that improves the representation of those with limitations. An internal review of our workplace took place to identify barriers that may exist and find solutions. As an example, an automatic door that opens with the wave of hand has been installed to ensure accessibility into our office space. Consultations with an external firm also took to ensure compliance and accommodation standards are met with our accessibility plan (see appendix 2). Additionally, we asked our employees to have thoughtful consideration in a survey about the accessibility of our workplace environment. More information about our survey and results are found in this plan (see appendix 1).

Peoples Group is committed to making accommodations to candidates and employees with limitations now and in the future. As an example, we plan to review our recruitment policy by the end of 2024 to ensure accessibility. As another example, in 2024 we launched our first employee survey to discover from our employees how we are doing with respect to accessibility and how we can make improvements. The results from our inaugural questionnaire are posted in this plan.

As our employee population changes and grows we plan to resend an updated survey annually to seek new opinions, viewpoints, and improvements. We will continue to consult with our employees to ask how Peoples Group is performing when it comes to accessibility. Peoples Group is committed to additional periodic reviews, and consultancy, to embed ideas into policies, processes, and practices, including within the below list.

1. Recruitment
2. Onboarding
3. Training
4. Redeployments

Peoples Group will continue to gather information through internal and external consultation as well as our website, post, telephone, and email to stay current on barriers that may present themselves. All information will be reviewed with our Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC) to agree on appropriate accommodations (see appendix 3 for our workflow).

Additionally, our employees have been provided access to work from home or from the office with our hybrid model since 2020; this choice helps to contribute to the accessible nature of our work. Going forward, we will continue to question the accessibility of our processes, facilities, technologies, and services with people with disabilities at front of mind to ensure a commitment for ongoing accessibility. Through information gathered from inquires, suggestion and consultations, Peoples Group will strive to continually to address limitations and barriers in all areas.

## **2. The Built Environment**

Our offices are maintained in modern buildings with accessibility in mind when designed. The use of ramps is integrated for access to our buildings, elevators and escalators are part of our environment, automated entries are used throughout our facilities, as well as the use of braille on signage for washrooms.

Desk chairs have been chosen for their ergonomic design, and adjustable desks installed throughout of offices to accommodate sitting, standing or any level in between. Through questions, comments, requests, and consultations from and with people with limitations, we will look to further improve our surroundings where it is seen as falling short. Peoples Group is also committed to barrier-free installations in the construction of new facilities or renovations.

### **3. Information and communication technologies**

Peoples Group has enabled all employees with the ability to work remotely and access the tools they need to do their jobs with greater flexibility.

We will continue to consult with people about accessibility to see where/ if further improvements can be made.

### **4. Communication**

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability specifically. We will work with people with disabilities to determine what method of communication works best for them. This may include the following:

1. Consulting with persons with disabilities to agree on the best communication options.
2. Reviewing font and color of our communications to ensure readability.
3. Using webpage content, press releases, social media, photos, videos, brochures, and posters – making sure not to limit our communication to digital forms.
4. Promoting the use of plain language in communications.

### **5. Buying of goods and services**

A look around our office shows Peoples Group commitment to goods and services that address limitations. Our office was designed with wide aisles, adjustable desks and ergonomic chairs. We will continue to consider accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities.

### **6. Design of programs and services**

Although in-office meetings had been the traditional way to get employees together, the introduction of our hybrid work environment has provided Peoples Group employees and partners the opportunity to meeting virtually to connect and share ideas. The technical advances afforded through Microsoft Teams enabled sessions allows participants to record meetings as well as add transcription as an added benefit. Peoples Group remains open to suggestions to further improve the design of our training programs and services with accessibility in mind.

### **7. Transportation**

When Peoples Group is arranging transportation for employees for work related purposes, accessible transportation will also be arranged upon request. Otherwise, this section is not applicable.

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## Consultations

To help build our accessibility plan, Peoples Group consulted similar accessibility needs at other organizations including facilities with banking operations, educational operations, and retail operations. During that process, Peoples Group also aligned with Human Resources professionals and understood that disabilities can present in physical and non-physical formats, and it is important to open lines of communication for new needs as disabilities arise in stakeholders.

It should be noted that Peoples Group does not collect data on employees with limitations – this created a challenge for us in terms of asking those with disability for their opinions. As an alternative, an online accessibility consultation survey was sent to a 15% sample our employee population to find views from customer-facing departments on the accessibility of Peoples Group. Recipients were given 5 days to provide their responses, garnering an 86% participation rate among those surveyed. Responses allowed for feedback to be shared anonymously.

Internal Consultation survey questions -

1. Have you encountered or witnessed a barrier to accessibility at Peoples Group in any of the following areas?
  - Employment
  - Built environment (e.g., chairs, desks, doors, ramps)
  - Information and communication technologies (ICT)
  - Communication, other than ICT
  - Procurement of goods, services, and facilities
  - Culture
  - Design and delivery of programs and services
  - Transportation
2. For any barriers identified or witnessed, please give a short description of how it impacted you or someone else.
3. For any barriers identified, how do you think they should be removed, addressed or prevented?
4. Do you think Peoples Group is doing well in terms of accessibility and disability inclusion? (yes or no)
5. In terms of accessibility and inclusion, provide a short description of what you think Peoples Group is doing well or not doing well.
6. Is there anything else you would like to share to help us identify areas that need to be addressed in support of accessibility?

The results of our survey were compiled and added as an appendix to this plan. Recommendations collected from our surveys will be presented to the OHSC for consideration.

For governance purposes, Peoples Group partnered with an external accessibility consultancy firm to ensure optimal coverage of accessibility needs were covered in a wide range of consideration. Through consultations with Excellence Canada's People Access Division, ([www.excellence.ca](http://www.excellence.ca)) our plan was discussed and reviewed to update our plan with the recommendations put forward from trained professionals. In this way, Excellence Canada will help us better form a multi-year accessibility plan.

Furthermore, through Excellence Canada, Peoples Group were provided with consultations from people with disabilities. Those who were consulted had disabilities ranging from mobility disability, vision loss and learning disability. They reviewed our accessibility plan, providing us with ways to improve our document and their suggestions were applied. Updates were made to the language used, expected timelines to respond to inquiries, as well as improvements to for future iterations of our employee survey sample size. Excellence Canada also suggested that the scope of our plan could be further improved to consider those with disabilities that are invisible. Peoples Group will continue to research how to make our plan more inclusive versions going forward. As a direct result of Excellence Canada suggestions, an audio transcription of our plan will be uploaded to the website to assist those with vision loss.

### **Budget and resources**

Peoples Group is committed to ensuring our workplace is accessible and to enable that various committees, including the Occupational Health and Safety team have dedicated time and budget associated with creating and facilitating an accessible workplace.

There is a specific budget set aside in each department for process improvement to ensure that key activities, such as technology, facilities and processes are accessible under the growing need of individuals with limitations.

In addition, the People and Culture team, the Corporate Services team and all teams that interact with internal and external stakeholders are committed to freeing barriers in all elements of our work. We strive to create and foster an environment that is respectful, discrimination-free and well-being focused. Where we cannot see challenges that may arise, we partner with the expertise of consultants.

### **Training**

Ongoing training for Peoples Group employees will include 'Accessibility Awareness' provided through Excellence Canada as we update and improve our accessibility plan.

### **Recordkeeping**

Recordkeeping for the Accessibility Plan will be kept on the Peoples Group portal under OHSC. Information about consultations, how the information was collected, as well as copies of comments and questions will be noted and saved here for discussion and review by the committee. As well, any actions that were taken to accommodate requests and questions will be noted for lessons learned about barriers to eliminate and steps needed to avoid barriers in the future. The OHSC will be the primary group responsible for collecting information about barriers, removing identified barriers, and preventing them. If employees encounter a barrier to accessibility, they are encouraged to reach out via email at [accessible@peoplesgroup.com](mailto:accessible@peoplesgroup.com) where communications are checked regularly. Alternatively, respondents can use email, our website, the post or by telephone. Details are provided at the top of this [accessibility plan](#).

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**Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Peoples Group Internal Survey Questions and results.**

**PEOPLES GROUP INTERNAL ACCESSIBILITY CONSULTATION SURVEY**

**1. Have you encountered or witnessed a barrier to accessibility at Peoples Group in any of the following areas?**

Areas	Response
Employment	0
Built environment (e.g., chairs, desks, doors, ramps)	1
Information and communication technologies (ICT)	0
Communication, other than ICT	0
Procurement of goods, services, and facilities	0
Culture	0
Design and delivery of programs and services	1
Transportation	0
Total Responses	2

**2. For any of the barriers that you have encountered/ witnessed, please give a short description of the barrier and how it impacted you or someone else.**

Response 1	Glass Doors to enter general office space limits anyone with a wheelchair or crutches to enter before door closes. Access to the bathrooms is not possible given the doors have to be manually opened both from the outside and inside. Access to meeting rooms also means manually opening doors both inside and outside.
Response 2	Hard to be updated for new product (channel or partner) launching.
Response 3	I haven't personally encountered any barrier or seen it impact anyone else

**3. For any barriers identified, how do you think they should be removed, addressed, or prevented?**

Response 1	Wheelchair push buttons should be on both sides of the doors. Even if a person breaks their arm or leg, they will find opening doors very challenging leaving their colleagues to always help. People are not always around to help.
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Response 2	Simple introduction for new product (from when, how we make profit, the contact point of PG etc.) in portal would be great. If it conflicts confidentiality, detailed information about our products in terms of subsidiary would be great. It seems that we don't know our products or services (PCS/PPS included).
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**4. Do you think Peoples Group is doing well in terms of accessibility and disability inclusion?**

Yes - 6 No - 0
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**5. In terms of accessibility and disability inclusion, provide a short description of what you think Peoples Group is doing well, or not well**

Response 1	People self-declaring disabilities is responded to with respect and a sense to help. People and Culture admit when they do not know something and willing to obtain outside consultation to find a solution
Response 2	I do not see any issues with accessibility at Peoples Group.
Response 3	Thank you for having this survey to check if PG continues creating accessible workplaces for all employees.
Response 4	The office is located in a building that is accessibility friendly. There are two doors that have automatic openers, although one is never really closed. With the desk spaces the actual desks allow for almost any type of accessibility.
Response 5	The office is very wheel-chair accessible and I like that it offers an ergonomic setup. I also appreciate the flexibility of working from home
Response 6	Office area is easily accessible, entry ways are wide enough, table tops are easy to raise or lower, and there is sufficient space in the aisles between desks.

**6. Is there anything else you'd like to share to help identify areas that need to be addressed in support of accessibility?**

Response 1	Mental health (ADHD, dyslexia) and physical disabilities in the inclusion training videos to demonstrate how as colleagues we can be more understanding toward our coworkers.
Response 2	None at this time, I feel Peoples Group is doing a good job.
Response 3	Would there be a plan to have one of the doors that lead into the office space/reception area have an automatic opener? This is the only area that could be of concern.
Response 4	I'm fairly able-bodied so I might not provide the best perspective regarding accessibility.

**Appendix 2 – Excellence Canada Consultation**

**ACA Committee Review Summary**

People’s Trust

**Prepared by:**

Sarah White & Stephanie

Quick

With Acede Consulting Group Inc.

**Consultation Group Information:**

<b>Individual:</b>	<b>Disability/Lived Experience:</b>
Rob	Mobility Disability
Stephanie	Mental Health Professional, Vision Challenges
Heather	Learning Disability, Vision Loss
Kaylee	Mobility Disability

Consultation was conducted May 14, 2024 – May 20, 2024.

The participants were asked to provide feedback on the formatting and readability of the document, as well as how that could be improved. We asked participants if the goals of the plan were specific and timely. We were interested to know whether a sufficient range of disabilities were considered and if this was representative of their customer base. Participants were also invited to offer any general recommendations or feedback

**Consolidated Consultation Responses:**

Overall Review Notes	<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Throughout the plan there is language that is dated and needs to be removed. Specifically, the use of the word “handicapped” and “person with limitations”. Person-centered and strength-based language is highly recommended, for example, people with disabilities versus people with limitations.</li> </ul> <p>Scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The committee agrees that there could be more inclusivity when referring to individuals <u>with disabilities</u>. There is a specific focus on</li> </ul>
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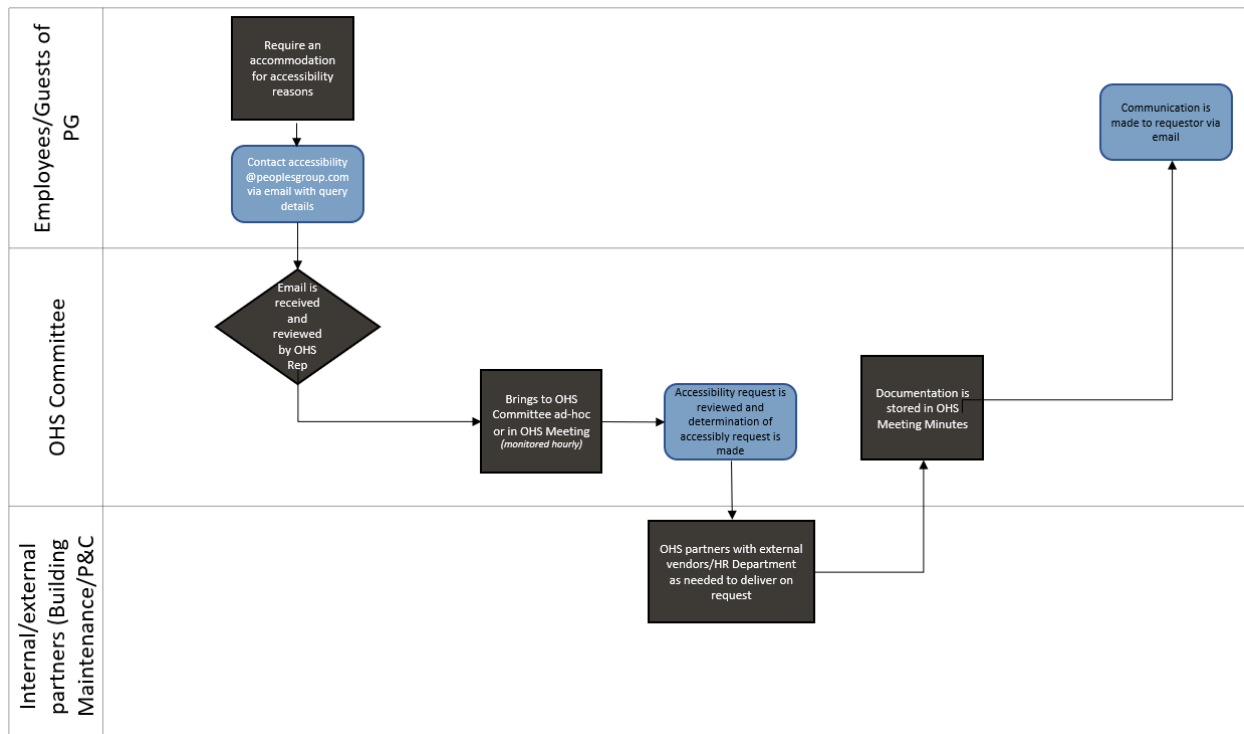
	<p>“physical disabilities” but does not consider disabilities that are invisible. These could include, vision impairments, hearing loss, mental health challenges or learning/processing disabilities, for example. Accessibility goes beyond ergonomic options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Although we appreciate the options offered from a “hybrid work environment”, the built environment of the office must be accessible to all who choose to utilize it. A hybrid workplace does not mean the office space is only available to those who are able to access it – it must be accessible to all employees and service users.</li> <li>- We believe that training could go above and beyond the AODA standards to create a more inclusive culture within the organization.</li> </ul> <p>Timeliness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A response of 10-15 business days seems inadequate. There should be more urgency to respond and act on any recommendations for inclusivity or accommodations.</li> <li>- Having a general goal of 2040 does not necessarily show that inclusivity is a priority. When able, it would be beneficial to use dates and deliverables to show an urgency and effort to reach a more inclusive environment for all.</li> </ul> <p>Feedback/Surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The committee appreciates the commitment to improving. Incorporating feedback from surveys is a great way to learn of barriers to access and make the necessary adjustments.</li> <li>- Expanding the sample size and ensuring employees and service users can submit feedback anonymously will allow more participation and more inclusivity.</li> </ul>
<p>Specific Formatting Suggestions/Comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The formatting and readability of the plan was sufficient, making it easy to follow and navigate through the document.</li> </ul>

<p>Questions/Comments</p>	<p>The committee was curious about the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the organization have an in-house accessibility committee/individual or is this contracted out externally?</li> <li>- We are wondering who is responsible for ensuring the organization is meeting regulation standards.</li> <li>- It was mentioned that changes to the built environment are currently underway. Are these changes based on the National code?</li> <li>- Are the surveys being offered to service <u>users, as well as employees?</u></li> </ul>
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**Conclusion:**

In gathering the data from members of the committee, the accessibility plan shows a step in the right direction with good intentions for a more inclusive environment. The plan could be taken one step further by having a more inclusive scope of disabilities and increasing the sample size to gather more inclusive data results. Exhibiting a dedication and priority to inclusivity shows employees and service users that it is important to the organization to achieve barrier-free access to services and facilities.

**Appendix 3 – Accessibility Workflow**



**Appendix 4 - Sources:**

<https://www.canada.ca>

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-train-your-staff-accessibility>

<https://excellence.ca/>