



BCFMA Accessibility Plan 2024 - 2027

BC Family Maintenance Agency

Helping families achieve their best outcomes and future for their children



BC Family
Maintenance
Agency

Contents

Message from the CEO	3
Message from the Employee Advisory Committee	4
Territorial Acknowledgement	4
Key Terms	5
Framework Guiding our Work	6
Supporting Legislation.....	7
Introduction	8
Our Approach	9
Our Employee Advisory Committee	10
Our Accessible Website and Feedback Mechanism	10
Our Three-Year Plan.....	11
Priority One: Ensure Accessibility Awareness and Understanding Throughout the Agency	12
Priority Two: Identify and Reduce Access Barriers to Service Delivery	13
Priority Three: Recruit a Diverse Workforce	14
Priority Four: Create Accessible Channels for Information and Communication	15
Monitoring and Evaluation.....	16
Conclusion.....	16
Provide Feedback to BCFMA	16

Message from the CEO

We are pleased to share BC Family Maintenance Agency's Accessibility Plan. British Columbia is home to many vibrant and diverse communities. This plan is the first step on our path towards building client services and workplaces that are accessible, inclusive and empowering for all citizens and employees. As we embark on this journey, we want to ensure that every individual, regardless of ability or circumstance, has a part in shaping our future.

As we launch this three-year plan, we invite each of you to be an ambassador for change.

Client feedback: We encourage our clients to share their experiences and suggestions through our website at www.bcfma.ca. Your insights will guide our continuous improvement.

Employee feedback: Our Employee Advisory Committee (EAC) plays a crucial role in shaping our workplace accessibility initiatives. We invite you to provide your feedback to a member of the EAC and encourage you to actively participate in EAC activities.

Let us champion accessibility, challenge assumptions, and celebrate progress. Our success will be measured not only by completing the priorities laid out in this plan but by the impact we create in people's lives.

Together, we will build a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive Agency—one where every door is open, every voice is heard, and every opportunity is within reach.

Joanne Hanson
Chief Executive Officer



Message from the Employee Advisory Committee

The members of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Employee Advisory Committee (EAC) are honoured to endorse the Agency's first Accessibility Plan. The EAC was formed to raise awareness and support inclusivity, diversity, equity and accessibility throughout the Agency. Our ongoing commitment is to identify, prevent and remove barriers for individuals working in or interacting with the Agency, with a lens on continuous improvement. We look forward to establishing standards, educating staff and implementing supports that will ensure a safe and healthy BCFMA workplace that honours inclusion, diversity, and accessibility.



Territorial Acknowledgement

BCFMA acknowledges the territories of First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands.

Key Terms

Accessibility: Accessibility means making sure everyone, including people with disabilities can use a service, participate in an activity, or access information.

Accommodate: To make changes or provide assistance so that people with disabilities can participate fully.

Barrier: A barrier is something that prevents a person from fully participating in all aspects of society.

Disability: A disability is an outcome of the interaction between an individual's impairment and the barriers they encounter, which can limit their ability to perform certain tasks or participate in various activities. This impairment can manifest in different forms, such as difficulties with moving, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, or understanding information.

Diversity: Legally protected differences such as race, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression. Diversity also includes such 'non-visible' qualities as diversity in thought, perspectives, education, socio-economic status and life experiences.

Equity: The quality of being fair and impartial, ensuring that processes and programs are accessible and provide equal opportunity for every individual.

Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+): An analytical tool used to assess how diverse groups of people may experience policies, programs and initiatives.

IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility

Inclusion: Creating services and work environments where clients and employees feel included respected and connected.



Framework Guiding our Work

BCFMA uses the six principles outlined in the [*Accessible British Columbia Act*](#) to form our framework for designing, implementing and updating this plan. These principles are:

Inclusion

All British Columbians, regardless of their background, abilities, or characteristics, are accepted, valued, respected, and provided with equal opportunity for employment and access to our services.

Adaptability

Our plan will reflect that as we acquire new knowledge or feedback we will adjust, modify or change our priorities and action items to better meet citizens' needs.

Diversity

BCFMA celebrates the diversity of people in B.C. This includes differences in ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and abilities.

Collaboration

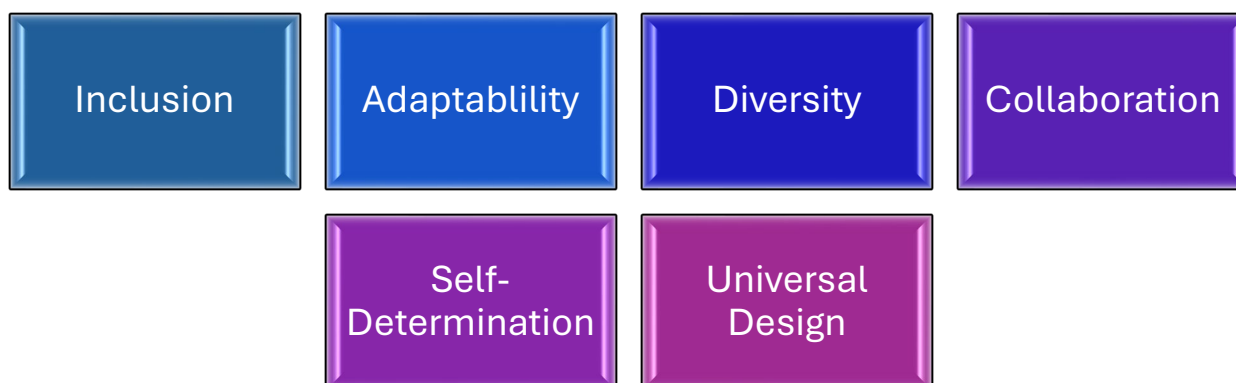
BCFMA fosters partnerships to promote positive change and encourages collaboration among individuals, organizations, and communities.

Self-determination

Our plan will seek to empower people with disabilities to provide feedback and seek support for their individual needs and preferences.

Universal design

BCFMA strives to build accessible spaces and services that are easy to understand and supports all people regardless of their ability or disability.



Supporting Legislation

- [*Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*](#)
- [The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- [*Accessible Canada Act*](#)
- [*Accessible British Columbia Act*](#)
- [BC Human Rights Code](#)

Calls to Action

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action](#)



Supporting Internal Policies and Plans

- Code of Conduct
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- [*Public Interest Disclosure Act Policy*](#)
- [BCFMA Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Plan 2023-2026](#)
- Human Resource Divisional Plan 2023-2026
- [Mandate Letter – June 2023](#)
- [Service Plan- 2024/25 – 2026/27](#)

Introduction

Accessibility is part of BCFMA's larger equity and inclusion plan. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal benefits and outcomes. BCFMA's Accessibility Plan was created to support the *Accessible British Columbia Act* which provides a framework to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. In building this plan, we explored six themes where barriers may exist in our organization:

PHYSICAL

Obstacles that currently exist that may make access difficult for staff and clients.

ATTITUDINAL

Stereotypes, assumptions or lack of awareness about disability related issues.

TECHNICAL

Software, website and digital tools that are not designed with accessibility in mind.

COMMUNICATION

Inaccessible communication channels and content including online meetings, website content and complex and technical language.

SYSTEMIC

Policy and procedures that may not accommodate an individual's unique needs.

SENSORY

Work environment obstacles including lighting, sounds and smells.

Our findings have formed the priorities laid out in this plan and include the action items we will take to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers.



Our Approach

BCFMA will take a phased three-year approach to enhancing the Agency's inclusivity and accessibility.

Phase One: Identifying barriers and existing priorities - 2024/25

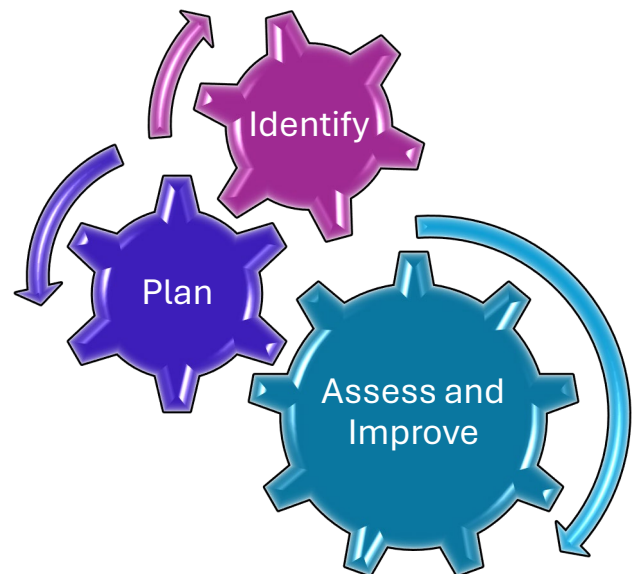
Our first step to ensuring we have an accessible Agency was to establish an EAC. The EAC will begin an analysis of our workplace and client services to identify any barriers that may exist. By September 1, 2024, we will implement an accessibility feedback tool on our website for the public to provide feedback on accessibility concerns. At the end of the 2024/25 fiscal year, the EAC will put forward a report to executive of the barriers that were identified by the committee and citizens. While our EAC is working on identifying barriers, the Agency will action the accessibility and inclusion items identified in our 2023-2026 corporate reports and plans.

Phase Two: Exploring and planning new priorities - 2025/26

The executive team will review the EAC report and will explore ways to accommodate and/or make modifications to improve the accessibility barriers identified. Solutions will then be prioritized and added to this plan for action.

Phase Three: Assessment and continuous improvement - 2026/27

As action items are completed, they will be evaluated, and adjustments may be made to further improve the tool or process. As new priorities arise, they will be evaluated and placed into a future iteration of this Accessibility Plan for action.





Our Employee Advisory Committee

The purpose of the EAC is to raise awareness about accessibility and inclusion and help identify internal and external accessibility barriers throughout BCFMA. Once identified, the committee will make recommendations and drive changes to remove/mitigate those barriers. The EAC will also collaborate with action item leaders to provide feedback on, and in some instances lead, certain action items in support of BCFMA's Accessibility Plan.

Our committee is made up internal staff members, each with differing experiences and varying degrees of knowledge in the fields of accessibility and inclusion. Many of our committee members live with a disability or have lived experience supporting people with accessibility issues. The committee strives for diversity by including members with a range of backgrounds and experiences, including gender, sexual orientation, disability, race and ethnicity, age, and geographical location. Committee meetings and activities are facilitated by two co-chairs. Other leadership representatives may also attend meetings from time to time.



Our Accessible Website and Feedback Mechanism

BCFMA commits to providing accessible services and communications to citizens in British Columbia. Before September 1, 2024, we will launch a new website design that is accessible to all users. The new design is created in alignment with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA 2.2 standards.

A new client feedback form will be included in the website accessibility launch. The contact form provides clients and citizens a secure way to provide feedback on accessibility to the Agency.



Our Three-Year Plan

BCFMA's Accessibility Plan will focus on the following priorities:

PRIORITY ONE

Ensure inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility throughout the Agency.

PRIORITY TWO

Identify and reduce access barriers to service delivery.

PRIORITY THREE

Recruit a diverse workforce.

PRIORITY FOUR

Create accessible channels for information and communication.



Priority One: Ensure Accessibility Awareness and Understanding Throughout the Agency

Create an increased sense of understanding and belonging for all staff and equip them with the skills and tools to respond to a variety of needs.

Action Item	Timeline
Identify and implement supplemental training and development opportunities on ableism, unconscious bias, enhanced communication, plain language, and relationship-building.	2024/25
Embed inclusivity, diversity, equity and accessibility within all the Agency's policies and procedures.	2024/25
Incorporate diversity and inclusion learning goals in annual performance assessments.	2024/25
Identify and collect workforce diversity data to create benchmarks for future inclusivity planning, reporting and evaluation.	2024/25
Create opportunities to raise accessibility awareness through IDEA events.	2024-2027
Update emergency response plans for persons with disabilities.	2025/26
Finalize enhancements to our internal accommodation process to ensure staff who require an accommodation have a clear process to follow.	2024/25

Priority Two: Identify and Reduce Access Barriers to Service Delivery

We recognize that one in five British Columbians has a disability and we commit to make our services barrier-free for all citizens.

Action Item	Timeline
Review inclusivity, diversity, equity and accessibility throughout the Agency's services and supports to identify and address existing barriers.	2025/26
Modify our services and supports to improve access to justice for British Columbians.	2024-2026
Identify and establish supports for Client Services Representatives to access if customers have language, speech or hearing impairments to better serve all clients.	2025/26
Build relationships with under-served communities and social services agencies to socialize the Agency and support clients.	2024-2026
Internally and publicly communicate BCFMA's commitment to diversity and inclusion.	2024/25

Priority Three: Recruit a Diverse Workforce

Enhance recruitment practices that are inclusive and improve accessibility in the areas of recruitment, onboarding, training, and retention.

Action Item	Timeline
Target recruitment activities to attract a diverse pool of candidates from varied and often underrepresented groups.	2024/25
Increase awareness among hiring managers of the capabilities of candidates with disabilities.	2025/26
Promote full-time, part-time or temporary roles for persons with disabilities through internships, co-op, casual, or customized positions.	2024/25
Apply GBA+ aspects to recruitment, employee life cycle stages and activities.	2025/26
Review and modify policies and procedures to ensure accessible onboarding, training, and retention practices.	2025/26



Priority Four: Create Accessible Channels for Information and Communication

Ensure that all information and communication content that we produce across the Agency is accessible to everyone.

Action Item	Timeline
Ensure website meets WCAG 2.2 recommendations to support accessibility compliance.	2024
Improve internal access to digital documents and training by building an intranet site.	2024-2026
Explore opportunities to discover the specific needs of our customers when interacting with us digitally.	2025/26
Ensure our digital communications options work effectively with screen reading and other assistive technology.	2024/25
Promote PowerPoint presentation options to ensure accessibility features are available to all attendees.	2024/25

Monitoring and Evaluation

BCFMA will conduct an annual review and evaluation of this Accessibility Plan. A report will be created and shared with the executive team and Board of Directors. As we continue to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our province, we will measure our success by comparing the representation of designated groups against the available workforce in B.C. Our Accessibility Plan is, by its nature, a living document that will grow and evolve over the years. It is a roadmap rather than an endpoint.

Conclusion

BCFMA's Accessibility Plan 2024-2027 sets us off in the right direction to build a path that identifies, supports and removes barriers for both our employees and our clients with disabilities. The action items identified within this plan will be reviewed and enhanced as we learn more about the needs of our clients and staff.

Provide Feedback to BCFMA

To provide us feedback on accessibility please do one of the following:



ONLINE: Go to www.bcfma.ca and complete our online "Provide feedback on accessibility" contact form.



TELEPHONE: Call us at 1-866-557-2427



MAIL: Write us at:
BCFMA - Accessibility Feedback
Box 9216, Victoria B.C. V8W 9J1



**BC Family
Maintenance
Agency**