



Accessibility Program Checklist for Franchise Systems

This checklist is designed to help members in the franchise system, whether in start-up or mature stages, implement accessibility measures that are impactful, scalable, and aligned with regulatory requirements. By using this checklist as a guide, businesses can take meaningful steps toward creating environments that are more inclusive and welcoming for employees, customers, and stakeholders. The aim is to provide practical strategies that support accessibility, enhance customer experiences, and contribute to long-term business success.

Understand Accessibility Requirements

- ❑ Familiarize yourself with provincial legislation.
Leverage free provincial government resources for guidance.
- ❑ Identify minimum requirements that apply to your specific business structure, such as accessible customer service and hiring practices.

Engage Stakeholders

- ❑ Collaborate with stakeholders (employees, customers, business partners, etc.) to understand accessibility barriers in your business.
- ❑ Establish regular touchpoints, such as virtual feedback sessions or short surveys, to maintain engagement.

Conduct a Preliminary Accessibility Review

- ❑ Use straightforward tools, like government-provided checklists, to assess your facilities, communications, and processes.
- ❑ Prioritize high-visibility, high-impact areas for improvement, such as entrances, signage, and service counters.

Define Your Accessibility Commitment

- ❑ Develop a clear accessibility statement that reflects your business' commitment to inclusivity.
- ❑ Incorporate this statement into onboarding materials, training programs, and customer communications.

Create a Scalable Plan

- ❑ Identify a manageable starting point with clear, low-cost actions, such as revising training materials for readability or adjusting physical layouts.
- ❑ Outline a phased approach for more significant investments as your franchise grows.

Establish Accountability

- ❑ Assign an accessibility lead for your business, whether at the corporate level or within individual locations.

- ❑ Create a small working group to track and support accessibility efforts across locations.

Set Measurable Goals

- ❑ Define specific objectives that align with your business' capacity, such as "improve accessible seating space by Q2" or "ensure all employee training modules meet accessibility standards by year-end."
- ❑ Regularly evaluate progress and adapt goals as needed.

Educate and Empower Your Team

- ❑ Provide training on accessibility best practices and legal compliance.
- ❑ Use practical, relevant examples to ensure the training resonates with stakeholders at all levels.

Communicate Your Efforts

- ❑ Share updates about your accessibility initiatives with internal and external stakeholders.

Implement Practical Changes

- ❑ Focus on cost-effective, impactful changes that can be implemented at scale, such as installing grab bars in washrooms, improving website navigation to support screen readers, or providing printed materials in larger fonts.
- ❑ Leverage available grants or tax credits to offset costs for larger initiatives.

Collect and Respond to Feedback

- ❑ Actively seek input from employees, customers and business partners on the effectiveness of your accessibility measures.
- ❑ Use their insights to refine your programs and demonstrate responsiveness.

Maintain and Document Progress

- ❑ Keep detailed records of actions taken, challenges encountered, and outcomes achieved.
- ❑ Use this documentation to ensure compliance, build trust, and guide future accessibility efforts.