

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Accessibility Plan

2025 to 2028

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Introduction

The *Accessible Saskatchewan Act* came into effect on December 3, 2023, to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers in Saskatchewan. Under the *Act*, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) is required to develop an Accessibility Plan and update it at least once every three years.

As a Treasury Board Crown Corporation, SHC provides housing programs and services to people who could not otherwise afford or access adequate, safe, and secure shelter. SHC provides a range of housing programs and services, including social and affordable rental housing, development of new housing, home repair and adaptation programs, and the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit. SHC recognizes the importance of accessibility and is committed to identifying and removing barriers for the people we serve.

In alignment with the Government of Saskatchewan Accessibility Plan, the SHC Accessibility Plan outlines actions taken to remove existing barriers, and future actions to improve the accessibility of SHC's programs and services over the next three years from December 2025 to December 2028.

Engagement

SHC regularly seeks tenant and client feedback into housing programs and services through surveys and interviews. The feedback received on accessibility barriers through surveys of 1 120 households informed the goals and actions outlined in this plan.

Following our engagement actions to date, we have considered how physical accessibility, technological, information, and communication barriers sometimes make housing programs and services harder to access. For example, information on housing programs may be difficult to access online. Additionally, SHC gathered information about how accessibility is being improved for existing housing programs and services across Canada to help inform this plan.

Accessibility Goals and Actions

Improving accessibility is an ongoing journey. SHC has continuously taken action to make housing programs and services more accessible, and this work continues to evolve. This plan outlines the actions that SHC will prioritize over the next three years to keep identifying and removing barriers that persons with disabilities experience.

Goal 1: Continue to engage with clients and other stakeholders with disabilities

To continue identifying and removing accessibility barriers, SHC will regularly engage with clients, including persons with disabilities.

Achievements to date:

- SHC has updated tenant and client surveys to gather feedback on technological, communication, information, and physical barriers for existing programs and services. These include surveys for the:
 - Social Housing Program;
 - Saskatchewan Housing Benefit; and
 - Adaptations for Independence programs.

Actions for 2025-2028:

- SHC will continue to seek feedback on accessibility barriers through its current and future surveys and interviews.
- SHC will conduct additional engagements aimed at further identifying accessibility barriers, including:
 - identifying relevant stakeholders connected to or impacted by SHC programs and services; and

- engaging in open conversation about accessibility barriers for SHC's programs and services, and how to remove them.

Goal 2: Decrease technological, communication, and information barriers in SHC's programs and services

SHC recognizes that technological, communication, and information barriers impact how individuals learn about our programs and how to access them. Removing these barriers is an important part of improving the accessibility of SHC's services and programs.

Achievements to date:

- Following feedback received in the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit client survey, SHC has worked on removing barriers for the program by:
 - launching an online application form in January 2024;
 - increasing awareness of the program on social media; and
 - assisting applicants fill out their applications by meeting with them in person at various outreach events.
- SHC offers additional ways to provide application information over the phone or in-person.
- SHC has worked on changing the font type and size of the application forms to meet the new, more accessible Government of Saskatchewan Visual Identity Guidelines.
- SHC surveys are available online and in paper format allowing greater opportunity for tenants and clients to provide feedback. Upon request, surveys may be completed over the phone, including for people with visual impairments.

Actions for 2025-2028:

- In alignment with the Government of Saskatchewan Accessibility Plan, SHC will review and update its applications, public documents, and website to ensure that information about housing programs and services is accessible, easy to find, and in plain language.
- SHC will work with housing authorities to improve the availability of information on accessible SHC units and buildings.
- SHC will continue to work on improvements to the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit application process by exploring options to:
 - allow applicants to digitally sign application forms online;
 - streamline processes for applicants to submit required income documentation; and
 - increase awareness of the program through workshops and other community engagement events.
- When possible, SHC will coordinate with housing authorities to improve the accessibility of information in public reception areas.

Goal 3: Address physical barriers where possible

As an organization focused on providing housing services and programs, we recognize the importance of addressing physical barriers. SHC will explore opportunities to improve the accessibility of existing SHC housing across the province.

Achievements to date:

- SHC provides approximately 8,600 accessible units across the province that allow people who use walkers or wheelchairs to enter their buildings or units with ease. SHC's portfolio also includes more than 700 fully accessible units that allow individuals who use wheelchairs to live comfortably and easily access all features within their unit.
- In the Social Housing Program, income and asset limits are waived for persons with disabilities who need fully accessible housing units.
- SHC's Adaptations for Independence repair program offers financial assistance to homeowners and rental property owners to make homes more accessible, enabling individuals with a disability to live more independently in their primary residence.
- SHC collaborates with the Disability Programs Division of the Ministry of Social Services to design and develop purpose-built group homes for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities in need of housing.
- The Saskatchewan Housing Benefit is a monthly benefit that helps eligible Saskatchewan renters with their shelter costs (rent and utilities). Feedback received through engagement indicated that the benefit helps make it possible for persons with disabilities to remain in accessible homes in the private market.
- The Rental Development Program provides one-time capital funding to help housing organizations develop affordable rental housing units for households with low incomes. The inclusion of accessible units is one of the evaluation criteria for the selection of proposals to the program.

Actions for 2025-2028:

- SHC will continue offering the Adaptations for Independence repair program so eligible households can make repairs to live independently in their own homes.
- SHC will consider accessibility improvements within major repair and renovation projects for existing and new buildings.
- SHC will continue to work with housing authorities across the province to accommodate tenants based on their individual needs, whether that be hearing, mobility, visual, or other health related needs, where possible.
- SHC will review accessibility of public reception areas in housing authority offices, to identify and address physical barriers to accessing SHC programs and services in person.

Conclusion

SHC is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers for individuals accessing housing programs and services. We are further committed to improving accessibility and promoting the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities. This plan will guide SHC over the next three years as we engage further and work to decrease technological, communication, information, and physical accessibility barriers.

Provide feedback

SHC will review and update this plan every three years. We value your feedback and welcome comments or questions about the SHC Accessibility Plan using the contact information below:

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