



ACA, Progress Report, Golden West Broadcasting Ltd. (Golden West) 2024-06-01

2024 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

GENERAL

Executive Summary

Golden West Broadcasting Ltd. (Golden West) is a Canadian radio and digital media company with radio stations and online community portals in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Serving primarily small, rural markets, we operate 39 radio stations (12 AM and 27 FM) and 18 community portals in 22 communities. We also offer holistic marketing and organizational development consulting to local businesses.

We generously give back to our communities by supporting many local organizations, including those that support accessibility for persons with disabilities. By assisting in raising money and providing promotional radio/online support with our local radio stations and portals, we help promote fundraising campaigns for these organizations.

This Accessibility Progress Report describes the strides Golden West has made in the first year of implementing its Accessibility Plan. More specifically, in the following priority areas: organizational culture; employment; built environment; information and communication technologies (ICT); communication; procurement of goods, services and facilities; design and delivery of programs and services; and transportation. This report also highlights how persons with disabilities were consulted in preparing this progress report, and reviews the feedback received.

Intent

Golden West is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders, including clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who enter our premises, access information provided by the company, or use the company's goods and services.

Golden West will continue working to identify and remove barriers, and prevent any new barriers, for persons with disabilities as they relate to employment, communication, the built environment, goods and services, and transportation within our organization.

Definitions

Barrier: Anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications, or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment, or a functional limitation.

Disability: Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, and sensory impairment, or functional limitation that is either permanent,

temporary, or episodic in nature. It can be evident or not in interaction with a barrier to hinder a person's full and equal participation in society.

Contact Information

Contact to receive feedback for the Golden West Accessibility Plan:

Human Resources Manager
PO Box 950, Altona MB, R0G 0B0
204.324.2337
gwhr@goldenwest.ca

The accessibility plan is offered in any of the following formats upon request:

- Print;
- Large print;
- Audio; and
- Electronic.

Requests to receive an accessibly formatted version of the Golden West Accessibility Plan are available by phone, email or via the Accessibility Feedback sections on each of our community portal's home page. The Accessibility Plan will be provided within 45 days of receiving the request.

Feedback Collection Process

Golden West welcomes feedback from its employees, listeners, clients, and members of the community regarding the accessibility plan and any barriers encountered by persons with disabilities.

- Externally, individuals who provide formal feedback receive acknowledgement of their feedback along with any resulting actions. Individuals can submit feedback via the form available on our community portals, or by obtaining a physical copy of the feedback form from the front desk of any of our locations or with a mail-in request to:

Human Resources
Golden West
PO Box 950, Altona MB, R0G 0B0
gwhr@goldenwest.ca

- Internally, Golden West welcomes feedback from its employees regarding the accessibility plan and any barriers that may be encountered by persons with disabilities. The digital feedback form is accessible to all staff internally 24/7. Employees who provide formal feedback receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions and/or timelines based on the concerns or complaints they submit.
- Employees also have the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback if desired; all feedback remains confidential unless the person consents to the disclosure of their personal information.
- The manager at each Golden West location is required to detail any feedback received related to accessibility issues in their specific location as part of their weekly reports.

Individuals are free to provide feedback in the format most comfortable for them. The feedback process is published in accordance with the applicable legislation. Any changes to the Accessibility Plan or the feedback process are published as soon as possible, and notice of any changes are reported to the Accessibility Commissioner. The personal information of anyone who provides feedback remains confidential in accordance with all applicable privacy laws.

PROGRESS ON GOLDEN WEST'S ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Our Employment Practices

Our online job postings state that, *"Golden West is committed to providing a fair and equitable work environment and encourages applications from qualified women, men, visible minorities, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities.* We provide training on fair interview and selection practices to our hiring managers.

An Accommodation Plan was developed to ensure employees with disabilities – permanent or temporary – have access to a fair and consistent avenue of support and assessment, should they encounter any barriers to effective achievement in their role.

Our Built Environment

We understand the importance of providing safe, comfortable and inclusive spaces. As our locations span 22 communities in 3 provinces, we have implemented reporting requirements at the local level. This ensures that any reported barriers are made known, and acknowledged in a timely manner.

Through this reporting process, it was noted there was a lack of general parking at one of our locations that contributed to the misuse of accessible parking. This was addressed by clarification with the building owner and using clearer signage.

Our Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

In our commitment to serving our communities, we continue our efforts toward the removal of barriers in our technologies, to better serve individuals in accessing information about their local communities.

Internally, for all new training content, we provide a pdf of each script in an alternative format for different accessibility needs.

Our Accessibility Plan and complaint form are posted internally on the Golden West Teams channel and available 24/7.

Communication other than ICT

Our Employment Equity and Accessibility Committee continues to seek input on our other types of communications, including verbal and signage. In the absence of any feedback, either formal or informal, no barriers were identified.

Our Processes to Procure Goods, Services and Facilities

Our Employment Equity and Accessibility Committee continues to seek input on our processes to procure goods, services and facilities. In the absence of any feedback, either formal or informal, no barriers were identified.

Our Design and Delivery of our Programs and Advertising Services

Our Employment Equity and Accessibility Committee continues to seek input on the design and delivery of our programs and advertising services. In the absence of any feedback, either formal or informal, no barriers were identified.

Our Transportation Considerations

Our Employment Equity and Accessibility Committee continues to seek input on our transportation considerations. In the absence of any feedback, either formal or informal, no barriers were identified.

CONSULTATIONS

Internal

Golden West invited all staff to participate in a consultation process wherein employees who identified as individuals with disabilities could voluntarily and confidentially share their experience with accessibility within our organization.

Participants were invited to provide their experience in the following areas: attitudinal, architectural/physical, information and communication (ICT), technology, systemic, employment, attainment of goods and services, design and delivery of programs and transportation. Participants could also share general comments on the importance that Golden West's culture places on accessibility and inclusivity.

The consultation was in the form of an online questionnaire, sent to all staff.

External

Golden West reached out to local organizations in several of the communities where we operate. Specifically, these are organizations who support individuals with disabilities. Participants were invited to provide details of how they experience Golden West in the following areas: attitudinal, architectural/physical, information and communication (ICT), technology, systemic, employment, attainment of goods and services, design and delivery of programs and transportation. Participants could also share general comments on the importance that Golden West's culture places on accessibility and inclusivity.

The consultation was in the form of an online questionnaire; two organizations responded.

Feedback from Questionnaire

The questionnaire asked for input regarding barriers, known or experienced, in the nine areas of accessibility. Space for comments was also provided.

Golden West received feedback from 10 staff members (7 of whom identified as individuals with disabilities), as well as two responses from external organizations.

The consultation process provided valuable feedback from firsthand knowledge and experience of the respondents. Any feedback received is assessed and reviewed by the Accessibility Committee and Senior Management, with appropriate accommodation made where applicable.

Internal Feedback

It was noted that employees with “invisible” disabilities may experience barriers related to attitudes or established processes surrounding productivity and as a result, may impact those employees whose disability may require some flexibility. These concerns are being reviewed with the Committee and Senior Management.

Positive feedback was provided regarding communication with management; overall, those experiences were seen to be understanding and accommodating. The internal communication process with senior management continues to be a priority in helping to guide supervisors through the various individual accommodation requests.

Regarding physical barriers, Golden West operates radio stations in 22 communities across three provinces, some of which are located in much older buildings. In these older buildings, accessibility needs are considered wherever possible; any new builds are designed taking accessibility into account.

In addition to our own internal processes, it is also necessary to be aware of any potential accessibility barriers that may exist within those organizations that provide Golden West and its employees with products and services (ie the various benefits providers). In the rare event barriers are identified, Golden West would notify the applicable provider to ensure they are aware of any challenges being experienced in accessing their services.

External Feedback

Outside organizations found Golden West to be “warm and welcoming”. It was also noted that, while attitudinal barriers can be a very common happening, Golden West makes the effort to address the challenges brought to their attention.

Consideration

Golden West’s Employment Equity and Accessibility Committee and Executive reviews feedback, when received. Identified processes are reviewed, and solutions are considered based on individual experience, as well as cultural and business practices. Additional education and training practices may also be considered.

As Golden West has recently augmented training materials to include multiple formats, the company will continue to assess other areas where multiple formats may be used to increase the accessibility of our products and services.

Conclusion

Over the past year Golden West has made progress in the most applicable areas of accessibility and continues to work toward the removal of barriers in all areas. Feedback and comments from individuals with disabilities as well as local organizations is an important part of making our workplaces and communities better; the importance of committee review as well as representation through consultation – internally and externally – is clear.

As Golden West moves into the second year of implementing its Accessibility Plan, we look to continued opportunity to receive feedback whether through formal consultation, or general feedback.