



ACA, Progress Report, Golden West Broadcasting Ltd. (Golden West) 2025-06-01

2025 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 most recent 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.

Leadership training was provided to all Leaders in the areas of mental health and accommodation. Emphasis was placed on building awareness, communication, and building on language sensitivity, teaching around privacy rights. Leaders were versed in procedures as well as resources offered through company benefits.

Improvements to our Employee Assistance Program have been made. It now provides a self-directed Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) service. Employees can access this immediately, and online.

As we strive for inclusivity and work at removing barriers, we continue to partner with a provincial agency to work to provide meaningful work opportunities for individuals living with a disability.

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.

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

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.

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

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

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.

In response to the need for clarity, a centralized “Wellness Hub” was created on our company intranet. The purpose of this hub is to provide easier access to the company’s wellness resources. Resources include company benefits, mental health resources as well as Accessibility feedback.

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

CNIB Panel Discussion

As part of our commitment to advancing accessibility, Golden West attended an engagement session/consultation with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) organized by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) in the spring of 2025. The discussion focused on a wide range of accessibility issues, from improved approaches for closed captioning and described video, to best practices in the workplace on how to create a more inclusive and accessible environment and culture.

The CNIB is a non-profit organization that delivers innovative programs and powerful advocacy that empowers people impacted by blindness. Through their Access Labs program, the CNIB offers resources to help individuals with vision loss and other disabilities to better navigate and engage with the digital and media landscape. They also engage with organizations seeking input from experts and individuals living with disabilities to create a barrier-free environment. The CNIB’s engagement session/consultation was led by an expert on accessibility and inclusion. It also included a panel of three individuals living with a disability.

The CNIB outlined principles that CAB members can adopt to ensure their environments are accessible, emphasizing that workplace accommodation should be individualized, proactive and respectful, as well as begin with an inclusive design.

The CNIB also led a discussion on appropriate language and the stigmas surrounding disability, emphasizing that language is personal and evolving. The CNIB explained that using people-first language and avoiding stigmatizing terms helps normalize conversations about disability and fosters inclusion. The session emphasized the importance of normalizing conversations about disability and accommodation, using respectful and up-to-date language, and asking for clarification when unsure.

Through a range of discussions and videos, the CNIB highlighted that blindness exists on a spectrum, that many blind individuals are highly skilled in using technology, and that with the right support and inclusive environments, people with disabilities can fully participate in work, community, and daily life.

The CNIB provided feedback to CAB members on key practices to create accessible workplaces. The session explained how accommodation is not about fixing problems after they arise, but about proactively designing inclusive, barrier-free environments that respect the dignity and individuality of all employees. Effective accommodation requires engaging directly with individuals to understand their specific needs, while also making simple, organization-wide changes.

Discussions also highlighted how technologies like screen readers, magnifiers, and talkback features are essential tools that help individuals living with disabilities participate more fully in both the workplace and media spaces. The session highlighted how assistive technologies have become powerful tools for independence, enabling blind and partially sighted individuals to access information, navigate digital spaces, and fully participate in work and media environments.

This consultation also included direct conversations with individuals living with disabilities, who provided valuable feedback to CAB members, offering practical insights into how accessibility initiatives could be implemented and strengthened to meet community needs. These individuals living with disabilities explained that small, everyday actions, like keeping pathways clear, sharing information in multiple formats, and modelling inclusive language, can significantly improve accessibility across any organization. They also recommended proactively inviting feedback and designating a go-to person for accessibility to foster a more inclusive and responsive workplace culture.

The session with the CNIB also included a discussion with a panel of individuals living with disabilities, who shared their personal experiences and provided valuable feedback to broadcasters on how they can improve accessibility for both radio and television programming. They emphasized the need for high-quality audio descriptions in media. They also discussed the importance of customizable accessibility features like font size and contrast settings (14 point is effective; ariel font is preferred). The panel explained how using clear and inclusive language should be prioritized, especially for audiences with cognitive barriers. They also focused on the role of high-contrast visuals and clear, accurate captions in improving accessibility. The session concluded with a Q&A, where participants engaged with the presenters on strategies for improving accessibility and explored how the CNIB's resources and feedback could help broadcasters enhance their accessibility practices.

Overall, this session reinforced the importance of accessibility for our respective organizations. These sessions are part of our ongoing commitment to learning from and collaborating with persons with disabilities, experts in the area, and stakeholders. These takeaways and key learnings were very helpful and used to implement accessibility goals in our Accessibility Plan and inform the development of this year's Accessibility Progress Report.

Internal Consultation

Based on responses in our 2024 Consultation process and concerns around "invisible disabilities" Golden West has done work in the following areas:

- Developed Leader Training in Mental Health Awareness. This training is designed to equip our Leaders with awareness, information and processes that will bolster their leadership capabilities to the support of teammates who may be struggling with mental health issues. Leaders were trained in areas of communication, sensitivity and accommodation.
- Based on feedback received, Golden West assessed communication practices that had potential impacts on individuals living with an “invisible” disability. As a result, it was recognized that clearer communication was required insofar as expectations and methodology were concerned.

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.

Conclusion

Over the past year Golden West has made progress in the areas of accessibility that are most applicable to our business. We continue to monitor feedback and comments from individuals with disabilities as an important part of making our workplaces and communities better.

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