

Westman Communications Group

Accessibility Plan:

2024 Progress Report



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General Overview:

Westman Media Cooperative Ltd., operating as Westman Communications Group (WCG) was formed in 1977 as a cooperative cable television distributor. The company has grown significantly over the years and now serves over 80 communities in southwestern Manitoba. As a leader in communication and information technology, we offer a variety of products and services including cable TV, Internet, and Voice in both residential and commercial markets. Additionally, Westman WCG TV provides local community programming in 18 communities.

Executive Summary

Westman Communications Group (WCG) strives to be a diverse and inclusive organization focused on providing an exceptional customer experience while treating all individuals in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. WCG's dedication to service excellence includes our commitment to the *Accessible Canada Act* (the Act)¹ and identifying and removing accessibility barriers.

WCG supports and fosters a culture of diversity and inclusivity, which is embedded in our core values of providing equal opportunities and enabling the full participation of our team members, customers, and stakeholders in delivering our services. This helps us provide the highest quality customer and team member experience.

We acknowledge that accessibility is a continuing and vital aspect of being an inclusive organization, and we are committed to continual enhancements in all operations. To achieve this, identifying and removing barriers that persons with disabilities may meet is a vital aspect of our plan. This requires a continued commitment to open and candid discussions with stakeholders and the development of clear and concrete commitments to eliminating barriers.

Accessibility Statement

Westman Communications Group recognizes our responsibility to build and foster a diverse, inclusive, accessible culture and environment. We are committed to supporting and encouraging team members' full and equitable participation in our workforce. To achieve this, we recognize that identifying, preventing, and removing barriers experienced by persons with disabilities is vital.

¹ The Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c. 10) and its regulations are referred to as the "Act"



Alternate Formats Available

WCG will provide any information relating to our Accessibility Plan, feedback process, or progress report in alternative formats upon request by the abovementioned process.

If you have any questions or require this information in an alternative format, please contact: Senior Director, Human Resources (Accessibility and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer)

Phone 204 717 2030

TTY (Message Relay Service): Call 7-1-1 and ask the TTY Operator to connect you to 204 717 2030.

Email: accessibility-feedback@westmancom.com

In-person or via mail:

1906 Park Ave.

Brandon, MB

R7B 0R9

<https://westmancom.com/wcg-accessibility>

Definitions

Accessibility: As defined by the *Ontario Human Rights Commission*, accessibility is a general term for the degree of ease with which something (e.g., device, service, physical environment, and information) can be accessed, used, and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, designing, and effort to ensure that something is barrier-free for persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population by making things more usable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.²

Barrier: As defined by the *Accessible Canada Act*: “Anything – including physical, architectural, technological, attitudinal, anything that based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or practice – that hinders the full and equal participation of society of persons with impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or functional limitation”³.

Disability: As defined by the *Accessible Canada Act*: “Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment – or functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary

² <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/teaching-human-rights-ontario-guide-ontario-schools/appendix-1-glossary-human-rights-terms>

³ The Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c. 10) and its regulations are referred to as the “Act”

or episodic in nature or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.”⁴

Status Report: 3-Year WCG Accessibility Plan:

This progress report is based on our 3-year Accessibility Plan, segmented into seven key areas defined by the Accessible Canada Act. It highlights the immediate, medium—or long-term progress made within each segment on our path to achieving our 3-year goals over this past reporting cycle. Our goals are monitored and reported internally throughout the reporting cycle, as various operational teams are responsible for implementing items within the plan.

Employment

Accessibility will be embedded in our practices throughout a team member's journey on the WCG team. Accommodations will be made available to candidates and team members upon request, and accessibility should be embedded into our policies, processes, and practices, such as recruitment, onboarding, learning and development, short- and long-term disability leaves, return to work processes, and redeployment.

Our immediate and medium-term goal progress includes the following:

- We continue communicating our philosophy of inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility, and belongingness within our work environment and ensuring that practices and policies align with these values.
- As part of our talent sourcing strategy, we continue exploring and cultivating recruitment and placement partnerships with employment agencies specializing in securing employment for persons living with disabilities.
- Expanded network and partnerships with agencies that provide accessibility services to support identifying barriers, removing barriers, and identifying process best practices.
- Invested in learning and development initiatives, explicitly focusing on inclusivity, diversity, equity, accessibility, and belongingness to promote inclusive behaviors and raise awareness within the team.
- Enhanced our recruitment accommodation practices to provide enhanced visibility on our website.
- Enhanced our collection of internal feedback via the development and implementation of three employee experience surveys delivered at various points within the employee life cycle to capture insights on any challenges, barriers, and opportunities for enhancements.

⁴ The Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c. 10) and its regulations are referred to as the “Act”

To achieve our long-term goals, we have also started on the following:

- Enhancing our website, including the careers page, to be WCAG 2.1 Level AA protocol compliant.
- Enhancing our accommodation process and return to work protocols for team members returning to work following an absence.

The Built Environment

Creating a workspace free from physical barriers is pivotal to fostering a culture of inclusivity.

Our immediate and medium-term goal progress includes the following:

- Engaging with accessibility experts to conduct an as-built environment audit within our physical spaces to identify and address barriers and enhance wayfinding features.
- Continuing to improve accessibility when conducting space renovations.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

We aim to achieve a high standard for digital accessibility within our operations by addressing information and communication technology-related barriers.

Our immediate and medium-term goal progress includes the following:

- Enhancing our website to be WCAG 2.1 Level AA protocol compliant.
- Invested in learning and development initiatives, explicitly focusing on inclusivity, diversity, equity, accessibility, and belongingness to promote inclusive and accessible practices in digital marketing collateral and external communications methods.

Communication (Other than ICT)

We aim to achieve a high accessibility standard within the delivery of our internal and external communication services.

Our immediate and medium-term goal progress includes the following:

- Invested in learning and development initiatives, explicitly focusing on inclusivity, diversity, equity, accessibility, and belongingness to promote inclusive and accessible practices in marketing collateral, social media, and other external communications methods.
- Accessibility requirements are evaluated when selecting venues and delivering member and community engagement initiatives.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

The *Accessible Canada Act* requires we consider accessibility requirements when procuring and providing services and facilities, where appropriate (for example, accessible technology, materials, and amenities).

Our immediate and medium-term goal progress includes the following:

- Accessibility requirements are evaluated when selecting venues and delivering member and community engagement initiatives.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The inclusion of accessible methods and protocols within the design and delivery of our internal and external programs and services is vital to cultivating a culture of accessibility. As such, we aim to incorporate accessibility considerations in our key activities.

Our immediate and medium-term goal progress includes the following:

- Enhanced our collection of internal feedback via the development and implementation of three employee experience surveys delivered at various points within the employee life cycle to capture insights on any challenges, barriers, and opportunities for enhancements.

To achieve our long-term goals, we have also started on the following:

- Investing in learning and development initiatives, explicitly focusing on inclusivity, diversity, equity, accessibility, and belongingness to promote inclusive behaviors and raise awareness.

Transportation

Transportation does not apply to WCG's operations.

Our Consultation Process

WCG is committed to fostering an accessible culture and environment where team members and stakeholders can fully and equally participate while growing professionally within our organization. To this end, we will continue to consult and engage with persons with disabilities, capture insights and data from various surveys, and leverage external expert resources within this field to achieve our accessibility goals.

To achieve our long-term goals, we commissioned an accessibility consultant to audit our as-built environment. Consultation and participation with persons with lived experience and accessibility expertise are critical to this engagement.

Stakeholder feedback is incorporated into our action plans and informs future planning phases and implementation.

Our Feedback Process

Our commitment to inclusion and accessibility encompasses communication, collaboration, and continual improvement. To achieve this, a feedback process was established. This process is published on our website, and upon request, it is available in alternative formats, such as print, large print, braille, audio format, electronic format, or any other agreed-upon formats. Requests for braille or audio format documentation will be fulfilled within 45 business days of the request. All other requests will be fulfilled within 15 business days.

Feedback may consist of a suggestion, compliment, or complaint about the accessibility of WCG's goods, services, or facilities or about a specific member's experience being accommodated with accessible formats or communication supports, which may be requested when providing feedback.

Feedback is valued and welcomed to enable us to continually improve to meet our customers' expectations and enhance their experience with our team.

Feedback can be collected via various channels, such as telephone, TTY (Message Relay Service), email, in person, or via mail. Additionally, we capture feedback internally from employee surveys, emails, comments, suggestions, lived experiences, and consultation engagements.

Feedback will be acknowledged (other than anonymous feedback) as soon as feasible but, at the latest, within 15 days of receiving the feedback.

Accessibility feedback is received by Senior Director, Human Resources, our designated person responsible for receiving and responding to accessibility feedback.

WCG supports and fosters a culture of diversity and inclusivity, which is embedded in our core values of providing equal opportunities and enabling the full participation of our team members, customers, and stakeholders in delivering our services. This helps us provide the highest quality customer and team member experience. To achieve this, identifying and removing barriers that persons with disabilities may meet is a vital aspect of our plan. This requires a continued commitment to open and candid discussions with stakeholders and the development of clear and concrete commitments to eliminating barriers.

Feedback has been received from consultation engagements with accessibility subject matter experts and team members regarding employment and the built environment. The input is catalogued and reviewed to inform future action planning and assigned to the appropriate area to address and implement. We

actively review and monitor our progress throughout the year to ensure that we are progressing to meet our goals and addressing any emerging items if they arise. We acknowledge that accessibility is a continuing and vital aspect of being an inclusive organization, and we are committed to continual enhancements in all operations.

Regulatory Conditions

The WCG Accessibility Plan has been created within the following regulatory frameworks.

1. Accessible Canada Act, S.C 2019 c.10⁵
2. Telecommunications Act S.C 1993, c.38⁶
3. Broadcasting Act S.C 1991, c.11⁷

The Accessible Canada Act identifies seven fundamental principles.⁸:

1. Everyone must be treated with dignity
2. Everyone must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the life they are able and wish to have
3. Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in society
4. Everyone must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire
5. Laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the ways that different kinds of barriers and discrimination intersect
6. Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development of the design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures, and
7. Accessibility standards and regulations must be made to achieve the highest level of accessibility.

Reporting On Our Accessibility Plan

In accordance with the requirements stipulated in the *Accessible Canada Act*, we are publishing a 2024 status report. We will continue to review and update our accessibility plan every three years while maintaining an annual externally published reporting cycle.

Conclusion

The WCG Accessibility Plan incorporates the seven key evaluation areas identified by the Accessible Canada Act, which provide the framework for our

⁵ The Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c. 10)

⁶ <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/T-3.4/page-1.html>

⁷ <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/>

⁸ <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html>

environmental scan, enabling the identification of barriers to accessibility. We are committed to the continued implementation of our 3-year action plan and ongoing consultation efforts with stakeholders to identify and rectify any other unidentified barriers as of the time of submitting this progress report.