



CIRC Radio Inc.

88.9 RED FM CIRV FM

Initial Accessibility Plan 2024-2026

Version 1 June 2024

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## General

The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) and Accessible Canada Regulations (regulations) require that federally regulated entities prepare and publish accessibility plans, progress reports on the implementation of their plans, and descriptions of their feedback processes.

Our Accessibility Plan is developed in consultation with our staff, and people with disabilities. It aims to be in conformance with the Accessible Canada Act(ACA) and level AA of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines(WCAG). This plan echoes our beliefs and mandates that people are treated with dignity, and same opportunities. This plan is posted on our website and can also be made available in alternate formats. Please feel free to contact us with your valuable feedback. Our Vice President, Bijoy Samuel, is responsible to receive and address your accessibility feedback. You can reach him at [Bijoy@redfm.ca](mailto:Bijoy@redfm.ca) or call 604-598-9311.

**Alternate Formats:** The Feedback Process Description and our Accessibility Plan can also be made available to you in print, or larger font size print within 15 days, and in braille, or audio format, or an electronic format compatible with adaptive technology that assists persons with disabilities within 45 days of making such requests. Please contact [Bijoy@redfm.ca](mailto:Bijoy@redfm.ca) or call 604-598-9311.

**Accessibility Statement:** CIRC Radio Inc. (88.9 RED FM) believes in providing our listeners with inclusive experiences without barriers to accessibility while engaging with us. We are committed to identify & remove barriers, and also prevent new barriers as we develop and continuously improve our Accessibility Plan to achieve the highest levels of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

## About us

88.9 RED FM Toronto (CIRV FM) is a multicultural radio station serving greater Toronto's ethnic population in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu and many other ethnic languages. CIRC Radio Inc. operates this radio station with strong emphasis on community initiatives and providing engaging and compelling talk, news, and musical content.

Related companies also operate ethnic radio stations in Calgary and Vancouver.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Consultations:**

We conducted joint consultations on behalf of the three radio stations. These consultations include a joint meeting with staff from across the three radio stations and external consultations with a blind but extremely talented person. They helped us identify existing and future barriers and also gave us potential solutions.

### Goals:

- Conduct a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of comprehensive consultation with people of disabilities and staff before December 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.
- Incorporate feasible changes before June 2025.

### **Areas described under Section 5 of the ACA: Major Barriers identified, steps taken, and goals.**

### **Employment:**

88.9 RED FM is an equal opportunity employer.

- *Barrier:* people with disabilities may not easily have access to our job openings.

Goal: our goal is to improve the manner in which we communicate our job opportunities, by:

- posting all hiring ads on our website in text format and where possible in video format.
- posting all hiring ads on our LinkedIn page.

We will implement these solutions within the next one month.

- *Barrier:* some people have a negative bias that people with disabilities cannot be very productive in their work.

Goal: designing and airing a special on-air Public Service Announcement campaign to tackle this negative bias and encourage businesses to hire and support differently able people so that they can work, earn and make meaningful contributions to their workplace. Our goal is to implement this campaign before August 2024.

#### *Training Goals:*

We have already provided sensitivity training to our staff. Our goal is to provide accessibility related training to staff in all departments before December 2024. By December 2025, we will evaluate and ascertain additional accessibility training needs.

*For Staff with Disabilities:* we will consult them and facilitate a personalized workplace accommodation plan.

#### **The Built Environment:**

We believe in providing an easily accessible built environment.

- *Barrier-* Difficulty for blind people to locate our front door signage as it is not in Braille.

Goal: By December 2024, we will explore the feasibility and implement this suggestion.

- *Barrier-* new people don't know how to open the front door.

Goal: We are immediately removing this barrier by instructing our reception to verbally announce over the speaker- as they remotely unlock the door- that the door is now open and that they have to pull it.

*Accessibility accommodations for staff with disabilities:* As needed, for each differently able person, we will conduct an assessment and feasibility study to remove any physical barriers as per their personalized workplace accommodation plan.

By December 2025, we will conduct a review to identify and remove any new barriers in our built environment.

### **Information and Communication Technologies:**

- *Barrier- RED FM website did not have accessibility features.* We have been making changes to follow level AA of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines(WCAG).

*Goal:* We will complete these requirements before December 2024. Further, by May 2025, our goal is to conduct an audit of our website to ensure it is compliant with level AA of WCAG.

- *For any members of our staff with disabilities:* we will provide assistive technologies to remove any information and communication technologies barriers.

*Goal:* By May 2025, we will conduct an audit to ascertain that we are compliant with this goal.

### **Communication ( other than ICT):**

- *Barrier-communication within departments needs to improve.* It is decided that, effective immediately, each department will send emails to the entire team to communicate the latest developments happening in their departments.

### **Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities:**

88.9 RED FM believes in removing barriers and preventing new barriers in our procurement of goods, services and facilities. We will continue to provide equal opportunities to all vendors including people with disabilities.

### **The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services:**

We are paving the way for better design and delivery of our programs by removing accessibility barriers from our website as mentioned above.

- *Barrier:* our listeners with disabilities may not be aware of the newly introduced accessibility features.

*Goal:* to broadcast a public service announcement campaign, at the earliest, or any time before December 2024. This campaign will inform the public about the new accessibility features on our website.

*Goal:* By December 2025, we will evaluate if there are any new assistive technologies that we can adopt to make the delivery of our content more accessible.

### **Transportation:**

We have designated handicap parking near our studio.

*Goal:* By December 2025, we will review to identify any new barriers relating to transportation and explore solutions to remove them.

## PRINCIPLES (SECTION 6 AND SUBSECTION 42(9) OF THE ACA):

Our Initial Accessibility Plan is built in accordance with the following principles of the Accessible Canada Act:

- A) All persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities.
- B) All persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities.
- C) All persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities.
- D) All persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities.
- E) Laws, policies, programs, services and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons.
- F) Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures, and
- G) The development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The above principles are the foundation of our Accessibility Plan. The Management and staff of 88.9 RED FM acknowledge and are willing to encourage a welcoming environment that adheres to the above principles and removes any signs of ableism-discrimination and social prejudice against people with physical or mental disabilities.

This Accessibility Plan enables policies and services that support barrier free access for equal participation and promotes the understanding that people with disabilities are differently able to do certain things very well and must be treated with dignity and provided special accommodation as possible.

## CONSULTATIONS ( SUBSECTION 42(5) OF THE ACA):

We conducted joint consultations on behalf of the three radio stations. These consultations include a joint meeting with staff from across the three radio stations to discuss the accessibility barriers that they have either experienced personally or they perceive that people with disabilities will experience while interacting with our built environment, employment, information and communication technologies, communications, and the design and deliver of our programs and services and transportation.

Staff gave their suggestions regarding some of the existing barriers and potential solutions.

We also conducted external consultations with a member of the public. He is a blind person but extremely talented and able. He accessed the webpages of the three radio stations and provided valuable feedback. We also discussed about the areas mentioned in section 5.

It was a very good learning experience for us to see how he engages with our content through our website.

Goals:

- Conduct a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of comprehensive consultation with people of disabilities and staff before December 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.
- Incorporate feasible changes before June 2025.

## AREAS DESCRIBED UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE ACA

### Employment:

88.9 RED FM is an equal opportunity employer. We believe in eradicating any visible or invisible barriers and biases relating to employment of people with disabilities. We appreciate that differently able people can excel in their own special way and 88.9 RED FM strives to maintain a welcoming work culture and support a diverse workforce.

We provide special accommodations for people with disabilities during the job interview and hiring phases.

*Barrier:*

- During our consultations, an important barrier was identified- people with disabilities may not easily have access to our job openings.
- Goal: our goal is to improve the manner in which we communicate such opportunities. Our solution is to start posting all hiring ads on our website in text format and where possible in video format. Additionally, we will also post all hiring ads on our LinkedIn page. We will implement these solutions within the next one month.

*Barrier:*

- Additionally, our external consultation with a blind person, identified a bigger barrier. He believes that a bigger barrier is the mindset of people who have a negative bias that people with disabilities cannot be very productive in their work. He emphasised the need to remove this barrier.

- Goal: 88.9 RED FM believes that, as a radio station, we are in a unique position to enable the removal of this barrier by designing and airing a special on-air Public Service Announcement campaign to tackle this negative bias and encourage businesses to hire and support differently able people so that they can work, earn and make meaningful contributions to their workplace. Our goal is to implement this campaign before August 2024.

### *Training Goals:*

We have already provided sensitivity training to our staff. Our goal is to provide accessibility related training to staff in all departments.

- For example: We will provide training to people responsible for hiring on their duty to accommodate and conduct bias free hiring process.
- Another example: We will provide training to our web content designers to address the best practices for designing in an abstract format, while at the same time creating linear accessible content, and how to design with accessibility in mind. Our goal is to implement these training programs before December 2024. By December 2025, we will evaluate and ascertain additional accessibility training needs.

*For Staff with Disabilities:* we will consult them and facilitate a personalized workplace accommodation plan. This plan will include providing them with the required workplace furniture, special accessibility software, and other accommodations as feasible.

### *The Built Environment:*

We believe in providing an easily accessible built environment. We have identified certain barriers as detailed below and are working on removing these barriers.

- *Barrier-* Front door signage in Braille: our consultation identified that barriers to locate our studio can be reduced by installing a front door signage in Braille.

Goal: By December 2024, we will explore the feasibility and implement this suggestion.

- *Barrier-* new people don't know how to open the front door: access to our studio is monitored. For entry, visitors have to press a buzzer button. Thereafter, our reception will remotely open the front door. During our staff consultation, it was suggested that new people visiting our studio may face an accessibility barrier because they might not hear the door clicking open and be aware that they have to pull the door immediately.

Goal: We are immediately removing this barrier by instructing our reception to verbally announce over the speaker- as they remotely unlock the door- that the door is now open and that they have to pull it.



*Accessibility accommodations for staff with disabilities:* As needed, for each differently able person, we will conduct an assessment and feasibility study to remove any physical barriers as per their personalized workplace accommodation plan.

By December 2025, we will conduct a review to identify and remove any new barriers in our built environment.

### Information and Communication Technologies(ICT):

- *Barrier-The RED FM website did not have accessibility features:* We have identified a major barrier for people with disabilities to access our content. Previously, our website was not accessible to people with disabilities. We have taken steps by conducting tests to check for compliance with level AA of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines(WCAG). Thereafter, we have been making changes to our website to achieve compliance with level AA of WCAG. We are making good progress and aim to be compliant before December 2024. We consulted with a blind person and asked him to interact with our website and app. We identified certain barriers with regards to ease of usage of our website.

*Goal:* We are incorporating these suggestions and will complete them before December 2024.

- Before May 2025, our goal is to conduct an audit of our website to ensure it is compliant with level AA of WCAG.
- *For any members of our staff with disabilities:* we will provide assistive technologies to remove any information and communication technologies barriers.

*Goal:* By May 2025, we will conduct an audit to ascertain that we are compliant with this goal.

### Communication ( other than ICT):

*Barrier-communication within departments:* One of the barriers identified during staff consultations relates to better communication within the departments relating to any new contests, programming initiatives, community events or any other developments.

*Goal:* It is decided that, effective immediately, each department will send emails to the entire team to communicate the latest developments. All corporate communication can be made available in alternate formats upon request.

### Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities:

88.9 RED FM believes in removing barriers and preventing new barriers in our procurement of goods, services and facilities.

- While procuring goods and services for our operations, we will continue to provide equal opportunities to all vendors including people with disabilities.
- While procuring new facilities, we would be accessible to people with disabilities. We will ensure that they don't have any physical accessibility barriers.

## The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services:

Previously, our programs available on our website had barriers to accessibility, but with the introduction of the new accessibility features on our website, we are happy to state that we have removed many accessibility barriers and have paved the way for better design and delivery of our programs.

- *Barrier- awareness about our new accessibility features:* Further, we have identified an additional barrier, wherein, our listeners with disabilities may not be aware of the newly introduced accessibility features.

*Goal:* To remove the above barrier, our goal is to broadcast a public service announcement campaign, at the earliest, or any time before December 2024. This campaign will inform the public about the new accessibility features on our website.

*Goal:* By December 2025, we will evaluate if there are any new assistive technologies that we can adopt to make the delivery of our content more accessible.

## Transportation:

We have designated handicap parking near our studio.

*Goal:* By December 2025, we will review to identify any new barriers relating to transportation and how we can remove them.

## Glossary:

ACA: the Accessible Canada Act is a federal law that aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers facing people with disabilities. The federal government adopted the Act in 2019. The goal of this Act is to create a Canada without barriers by 2040.

Accessible Canada Regulations (regulations): regulations made under the Accessible Canada Act provide details on how to follow that law.

Barrier: means anything-including 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 persons with an impairment including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment of a functional limitation. (obstacle)

Braille: Braille uses six raised dots in different patterns to represent letters and numbers. People who are blind use their fingertips to read.

Disability: means any impairment, including a physical, mental intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment- or a functional limitation- whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. ( handicap)

Level AA of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines(WCAG): these guidelines explain how to make web content accessible to people with disabilities. The primary goal of these guidelines is to promote accessibility.

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