

2024-2026 Accessibility Plan

April 30, 2024

for

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited



Table of Contents

1. General 3
 Statement of Commitment..... 3
 Contact Information and Feedback Process..... 3
 Alternative Formats 3
 Executive Summary of this Plan..... 4
 Definitions 4
 Budget and Resources..... 4

2. Areas Described under Section 5 of the ACA..... 5
 The Built Environment..... 5
 Employment 5
 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)..... 6
 Communication, other than ICT..... 7
 The Procurement of Goods 8
 The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services..... 8
 Transportation..... 9
 Organization Wide Initiatives 9

3. Consultations 11

4. Conclusions 12

1. **General**

1.1 Statement of Commitment:

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders, including clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who enter the premises, access information provided by the Company, or use the Company's goods and services.

This Accessibility Plan contains details of the companies' policies, practices, and services in relation to the identification and removal of barriers. This plan is also used to establish prevention measures against new barriers emerging to ensure a barrier-free environment at the Company.

1.2 Contact Information and Feedback Process

The Company welcomes any feedback from the general public. Any feedback or questions regarding this plan or requests for copies of the Accessibility Plan in an alternative format can be addressed to the following designated Company representative:

Brian DePaepe, Billing Supervisor
519-236-7300
72863 Blind Line, Zurich, ON N0M 2T0
brian@haymail.ca

Feedback can be provided anonymously if desired. Feedback can be received in the following formats:

- Telephone: 519-236-7300
- E-mail: accessible@hay.net
- Mail: 72863 Blind Line, Zurich ON N0M 2t0
- <https://hay.net/terms-conditions/accessibility/>

1.3 Alternative Formats

This Accessibility Plan is offered in any of the following formats upon request:

- Regular Print: We can provide this within 15 days of when we receive your request.
- Large print: We can provide a large font printed copy of this plan. We can provide this within 15 days of when we receive your request.
- Braille: We can provide a braille copy of the plan within 45 days of when we receive your request
- Audio: We can provide an audio copy (an audio file with a person's voice reading the text) of this plan within 45 days of when we receive your request.

1.4 Executive Summary of this Plan

Hay Communications wants to engage with our employees, customers and business partners in a way that makes everyone feel inclusive when it comes to accessibility. Our Joint Health and Safety Committee will continue to monitor and update our Accessibility Plan as issues arise.

1.5 Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this plan:

Disability: An impairment or difference in physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning or communication ability. Disabilities can be permanent, temporary or can change over time

Barrier: A barrier is anything that might prevent people with disabilities from full and equal participation. Barriers can be based on attitudes, built environment, communication of information and procedures and policies

Accessibility: The design of products, devices, services, environments, technologies, policies and rules in a way that allows all people, including people with a variety of disabilities, to access them.

1.6 Budget and Resources

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited will continue to work to identify and remove barriers, and prevent new barriers, for persons with disabilities as they relate to employment, communication, the built environment, and transportation at the Company. To achieve this purpose, the Company has allocated resources to ensure that ongoing feedback, consultations, improvements, and implementation of short- and long-term goals occur to eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities.

In addition, the Company has allocated the following resources to ensure accessibility improvements:

- The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) will continue to monitor accessibility issues indefinitely
- The board of directors has committed to ensure that accessibility issues are resolved in a timely manner wherever possible

2. Areas Described under Section 5 of the ACA

2.1 The Built Environment

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited will work to ensure that elements of the built environment, including building interiors and exteriors, are designed to facilitate barrier-free access to goods or services. The Company has implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to the built environment:

- Entrance ramp located at the front of the two office buildings that are not at ground level.
- Automatic door openers at two of the three general business office buildings.
- Customers are aware and will continually be advised that they can call prior to arrival and an employee would be available to assist them from their vehicle.

The Company remains committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in the built environment. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practices, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in the built environment at the Company:

- Some barriers do exist within our buildings for access to the washrooms.
- We have three versatile offices within 24 kilometres of each other. Not all offices have the same barriers.
- We are currently renovating a building. There will be little or no barriers at this new facility. Projected move in date is August 2024.
- Many buildings (Central Offices) are not at all wheelchair accessible. However, these buildings are not open to the public and therefore, do not present an immediate issue.

2.2 Employment

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited understands that improving workplace accessibility and ensuring an accessible recruitment and selection process for applicants with disabilities can contribute to a more diverse and welcoming workplace culture.

The Company has implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to employment:

- Where necessary, accommodations are being made during the recruitment and selection stages, and throughout the employment lifecycle.
- All training and development programs provided will consider an employee's barriers and abilities, and are provided in alternative formats, such as in person with a tutor, paper or electronic versions.

The Company remains committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in employment. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practices, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in employment at the Company:

- Not all fire alarms are audio and visual – There are no existing fire panels in any of our buildings.
- Employee entrances are not wheelchair accessible.
- We will require signage at doors that are not wheelchair accessible to direct people to doors that are wheelchair accessible.

The Company will take steps to address the above three issues in the short term.

2.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited understands that communication to and with the Company is vital to an individual's access to the Company's goods or services. The Company has implemented the following information and communication technologies to allow individuals to communicate with the Company:

- Accessible formats including: print, large print, Braille, audio, and electronic upon request
- In person communication via telephone or Webex

To help ensure compliance with these services, the Company has implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to information and communication technology:

- Upon request, the Company provides or arranges for accessible formats and communication supports for employees, applicants, or persons accessing the Company's goods or services. Such accessible formats and communication supports are conversion-ready and are provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost.
- The Company consults with the individual to determine the specific barrier and the best way to provide support.

The Company remains committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in relation to information and communication technologies. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practices, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in relation to information and communication technologies at the Company:

- Difficulty using some equipment provided by Hay Communications for services such as remotes for TV service
- Issues with the display and font of the "guide" accompanying our TV service
- Cell phone users with disabilities also have some difficulties with services

The Company will take the following actions in the short term to address these identified barriers, to be achieved in 12 months after this plan is published:

- Continue to research available technical equipment and services available to enhance the service provided
- Encourage providers and suppliers to comply with requests for improvements
- We are currently in the process of re-developing our website to make it more user-friendly

The Company will take the following actions in the long term to address these identified barriers, that will take three years or more to achieve after this plan is published:

- Continue to enhance our website to include the most relevant and new data
- Continuously improve training for current and new staff
- Develop and enhance improved communication with our customers.

2.4 Communication, other than ICT

Due to the leading-edge technology and diversity of our Company, Hay Communications Co-operative feels that this area of compliance has already been addressed. As a cooperative, we are always listening to the needs of our customers and have always and will continue to go above and beyond what is expected to comply with all requests.

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited understands that communication to and with the Company can take many forms and requires a variety of options to be inclusive of all individuals. The Company has implemented the following information and communication technologies to allow individuals to communicate with the Company:

- American Sign Language.
- Quebec Sign Language.
- Indigenous sign languages.

To help ensure compliance with these services, the Company has implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to communication other than ICT:

- Initiated contact with the “Ontario Association of Sign Language Interpreters” to provide assistance with procuring any sign language services we may require.
- Webpage: www.oasli.on.ca

The Company remains committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in relation to communication other than ICT. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practices, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in relation to communication other than ICT at the Company:

- No other barriers that we are aware and no issues were present in the feedback forms.

The Company will take the following actions in the short term to address these identified barriers, to be achieved in 12 months after this plan is published:

- Continue to monitor and improve or eliminate these barriers as they appear.

The Company will take the following actions in the long term to address these identified barriers, that will take three years or more to achieve after this plan is published:

- Continue to monitor and improve or eliminate these barriers as they appear.

2.5 The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited is committed to ensuring that all goods purchased support our employees, contractors and our customers.

- We acknowledge that some existing equipment that we procure does not necessarily meet accessibility standards.

To help ensure compliance with these services, the Company has implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to the procurement of goods:

- Continue to listen to customer issues.
- Research alternative equipment to enhance our customers' experience.

2.6 The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited is committed to ensuring that all its programs and services are designed in a manner accessible to all individuals. The Company has implemented the following methods to ensure this accessibility:

- Company website meets Level WCAG 2.2 Level A/AA criteria conformance set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- Online requests via e-mail or Smarthub.
- Telephone orders.
- In person.
- Provide three local offices to visit for in person consultation.
- Telephone and In-person support available seven days a week
- Several avenues via email and online for addressing any concerns or requirements.
- All employees are expected to provide the most beneficial, courteous and relevant information possible.
- On-site installation and support from a qualified technician

To help ensure compliance with these methods, the Company has implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to the design and delivery of its programs and services:

- Constantly monitor ways to improve the delivery of programs and services.
- Our website is currently being re-designed and will be more compliant for WCAG.

The Company remains committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in relation to the design and delivery of the Company's programs and services. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practices, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in relation to the Company's design and delivery of the Company's programs and services:

- Geographical boundaries exist for services due to the nature of our business.

The Company will take the following actions in the short and long term to address these identified barriers:

- Hay Communications is constantly expanding our service area as time and finances allow.
- Constantly communicate and train employees to be aware of accessibility issues from customers.

2.7 Transportation

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited strives to ensure accessibility for individuals with a disability being transported to our offices. Hay Communications does not provide any transportation service for customers. The Company has implemented the following methods to ensure accessible transportation:

- Entrance ramp or ground level entrances located at the front of our three business offices.
- Ample designated accessible parking for all individuals entering our offices.

To help ensure compliance with these services, the Company has implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to the Company's transportation services:

- If an employee cannot use conventional transportation services, the Company will provide an alternate accessible method of transportation. Options will take into account the availability of the transportation, the nature of the disability, and any associated safety concerns.

The Company remains committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in relation to the Company's transportation services. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practices, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in relation to the Company's transportation services:

- Handicapped parking spaces are not clearly identified and proper signage does not exist at our offices.

The Company will take the following actions in the short and long term to address these identified barriers.

- Clearly identify and properly mark handicapped parking spaces at our three offices.

2.8 Organization Wide Initiatives

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited will attempt to complete the following initiatives:

- Continue to educate and train existing and new staff on merits of accessibility.
- Continually address new barriers that may not have been previously noted.

- Identify any accessible issues when adding a new building or renovating any existing buildings.
- Explore alternative methods for obtaining feedback from individuals with accessibility issues.
- Be aware of any technical issues that may arise during the procurement of any new equipment.

3. Consultations

Hay Communications Co-operative Limited recognizes that persons with disabilities are equal participants in all areas of life. The Company is guided by the recognized principles of the *Accessible Canada Act*:

- All persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities;
- All persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they can and want to have regardless of their disabilities;
- All persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities;
- All persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities;
- 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 persons face;
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of policies, programs, services, and structures; and
- 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.

Accordingly, the Company is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are involved in all decision-making regarding its policies, programs, practices, and service delivery. In preparation of this accessibility plan, the Company consulted with ten persons with disabilities in the following manner:

- Employees were asked to complete feedback forms.
- Contacted community agencies looking for feedback on how to contact customers.
- Sent emails to over 8,000 customers with an email address on file for their contribution.
- Sent individual letters to 35 known customers with disabilities.
- Called six customers that were known to have disabilities.
- Attended a workshop hosted by the Municipality of South Huron where Julie Sawchuk from Sawchuk Accessible Solutions was the guest speaker.
- All this was done in the early part of 2024 to April 30, 2024.

The range of disabilities represented in consultations included:

- Visual
- Mobility
- Audio

Through this consultation process, the Company has learned that our customers have not identified any significant physical accessibility issues, but issues related to our services, specifically TV service have been identified. The Company intends to address these issues on a short- and long-term basis, as identified in each respective section of this accessibility plan.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Hay Communications is committed to ensuring all individuals have access to all of our goods and services without barriers. Our corporate accessibility policy reflects our commitment to inclusivity and equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their abilities. By implementing and adhering to this policy, we not only comply with legal requirements but also embrace a culture of diversity and respect within our organization.

Through accessible facilities, technologies, and services, we strive to create an environment where everyone can thrive and contribute their unique talents. Our dedication to accessibility not only enhances the experiences of our employees and customers but also strengthens our reputation as a socially responsible and forward-thinking corporation.

As we move forward, we will continue to review and enhance our accessibility initiatives, seeking feedback from stakeholders and leveraging emerging technologies to further improve accessibility in all aspects of our operations. Together, we can foster a workplace and community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.