



Entertains Informs Empowers

Accessibility Plan 2024



AMI Accessibility Plan – 2024

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Accessibility Statement

AMI is committed to accessibility and inclusion for all persons with disabilities and recognizes the critical importance of providing a barrier-free environment. We will ensure that all policies, programs, practices, and services implemented will focus on identifying and removing barriers to accessibility and will aim to prevent new ones.

AMI will strive to build a strong, diverse, and inclusive workforce by continuing to represent persons with disabilities in a professional and supportive manner through employment at all levels of the organization.

General

Feedback Process

AMI welcomes feedback regarding accessibility and any barriers that may be encountered by persons with disabilities.

The person responsible for receiving and responding to all accessibility feedback is a member of the Human Resources department.

Feedback can be provided to AMI in the following manner,

Mail to,

Accessible Media Inc - Head Office
Corus Quay
200 – 25 Dockside Drive
Toronto, ON M5A 0B5

Email to,

accessibilityfeedback@ami.ca

Online web form,

<https://www.ami.ca/accessibility-feedback-form>

Phone,

Telephone: 416-422-4222,
Toll free: 1-800-567-6755,

Confidentiality

AMI will respect each individual's right to privacy and confidentiality. Information can be provided anonymously. All feedback will be managed within the Human Resources department and stored in a secure document management system. Feedback will only be shared with individuals directly involved in improving accessibility.

Acknowledgement of Feedback

When feedback is received the following actions will be taken:

1. A representative of AMI will contact the initiating party and discuss the feedback using a manner that takes into account any accessibility concerns if identified.
2. If remedial action is required, the feedback details will be distributed to the senior management team for review.
3. Where applicable, recommendations and advice may be sought from legal representation, the accounting/financial team, accessibility consultant(s), relevant associations which serve and support persons with disabilities, and/or members of the disability communities.
4. If action is to be taken, all policies, practices and procedures documents will be updated to reflect the corrective action and distributed.
5. Once a course of action has been identified, the initiating party will be contacted to inform them of the solution.

How we will use your feedback

All feedback will be taken seriously and will be used to,

- Improve our overall accessibility.
- Understand barriers that currently exist.
- Develop and design plans to eliminate the existing barriers.
- Update accessibility plans and progress reports.

Alternate Formats

If requested, AMI will endeavour to provide alternate formats of items such as this document and other applicable reports where it is reasonable to do so and will not cause undue hardship to AMI. These formats may include, but are not limited to, such communication structures as:

- Verbal or audio
- hard copy with large font type
- electronic text

Message from the President & CEO

As the President & CEO of Accessible Media Inc. (AMI), I am extremely proud to present AMI's Accessibility Plan in compliance with the Accessible Canada Act.

AMI is a not-for-profit media company that originated as a reading service for the blind and partially sighted community. Over time AMI expanded its focus to firstly, becoming a leader in the mechanics of making media accessible and then evolving into a creator of content that is relevant to the disability communities.

Today, AMI's mission is to create original content that entertains, informs, and empowers Canadians with disabilities through the offering of relevant original content. Our vision is to establish AMI as a leader in the offering of accessible content providing a voice for Canadians with disabilities through authentic storytelling, representation, and positive portrayal.

Currently we have a staff of 75 permanent employees of which 22% are persons with a disability and a Board of Directors consisting of 14 individuals of which 50% are persons with a disability.

To achieve our mission and vision and remain relevant and sustainable as an organization AMI has developed the following strategic plan with a focus on six key corporate goals. They are,

Regulatory- Maintaining a relationship with regulatory agencies such as the CRTC and the Federal Government to encourage the continued support for services such as Accessible Media Inc.

Content: Create content that entertains, informs, and empowers Canadians who represent the disability community. Content that is produced for and by the disability communities with the goal of building a media company that is inclusive to all Canadians.

Audience: To be a trustworthy advocate for the disability community. To provide a media platform to share their stories of representation and positive portrayal.

Discoverability: Create a broad awareness of AMI and our goal of an inclusive media environment. Diversify digital distribution strategies to ensure that AMI's content is available on a variety of platforms.

Outsourcing: Continuously review AMI's internal technologies, processes and practices, and workflows to ensure operational effectiveness. Maintain a comprehensive IT Governance and Security Program.

Culture: Provide a work environment that is all-inclusive through programs, policies and best practices that attract, retain, and motivate a highly engaged workforce. Create ongoing opportunities for employment for persons with disabilities.

As AMI navigates the changes and challenges of the future, we want to express our full commitment to the creation and distribution of innovative and relevant content for the disability communities and will strive to provide a workplace that is accessible, inclusive, and barrier-free.

Sincerely,

David Errington, President & CEO

Consultations

Externally: In the fall of 2021 AMI engaged the services of an accessibility consulting firm to audit our organization's workplace policies, practices, and facilities with respect to accessibility. The consulting firm employs only persons from the disability communities and provides full consultation services based on lived experience. We continue to use their services on an ongoing basis as required.

With respect to the media services we deliver, external consultants are involved in reviewing our content for accessibility, quality, and relevance. This is done through focus groups and media consultants, all who are persons with a disability.

Internally: It has been a practice of AMI to consult with our employees who are persons with disabilities to review many of our internal events and initiatives. This ensures that accessibility is at the forefront of our decision making and is addressed in the initial stages of planning.

Additionally, in December 2023 AMI formed an Accessibility Advisory Committee. The advisory committee is comprised of employee volunteers with a majority of members being persons from the disability communities. Their mandate is to assist AMI in creating a barrier-free work environment for all visitors and staff of all abilities through the review of AMI's facilities, policies, programs, and services. The committee participated in the review of this plan.

AMI will continue to consult and work with persons with disabilities, internally and externally to ensure that we fulfill our mission and vision.

Executive Summary

In accordance with the requirements of the Accessible Canada Act, AMI will publish a multi-year accessibility plan by June 1, 2024. This is our first Accessibility Plan and in keeping with our mission, vision, and core values we will review and update this plan on an ongoing basis.

We will strive to embed accessibility into every aspect of how we conduct ourselves internally and externally through our policies, programs, and services.

We will consult persons with disabilities and ensure that our feedback processes are engaging and available to all who require access to them.

AMI understands that barriers exist, and we believe that even though we have implemented numerous actions to eliminate barriers to date, there is always room for improvement. This Accessibility Plan will highlight the efforts and actions that AMI will be taking to address the following priority areas on our quest to becoming a barrier free environment.

- Employment
- Built Environment
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
- Communication other than ICT
- Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities
- Design and Delivery of Programs and Services
- Transportation

Accessible Canada Act Priority Areas

Employment

AMI is committed to providing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities at all levels in the organization.

Additionally, we offer a work placement program for persons with disabilities that includes, apprenticeships for individuals interested in programming and

production and internships for students in all areas of study including Human Resources, Technology, Finance, and Marketing & Communication.

As part of our accessibility audit that begun in 2021, AMI reviewed our policies and practices related to recruitment & selection, performance management, employee training and the HRIS system used to manage our processes. As a result, we implemented a number of changes, and it is our objective to continue reviewing and improving processes on an ongoing basis. Identifying and eliminating barriers related to employment is critical in ensuring diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Recruitment & Selection

Current Practices:

Job opportunities are posted on our website for candidates to apply via an accessible link and all job postings include the following statement,

*"Accessible Media Inc. is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from qualified individuals of all genders, racialized groups, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities. **Should you require an accommodation for the recruitment or interview process, please let us know**".*

Throughout the interview and selection process candidates are reminded that accommodation can be made available if required.

AMI's offer letters and new hire documents are provided in an accessible format which includes a self-disclosure form for tracking workforce demographics.

When a job has been accepted the candidate is asked if they will require any assistive devices or other adaptive technologies in order to perform the duties of their jobs. If accommodation is requested, the Human Resources department will work with the employees and their manager to determine the necessary requirements.

Barrier

- The accommodation process to date has been an informal one between the employee and Human Resources. This process needs to be formalized to ensure that all requests are processed consistently and equitably.

Actions

- In 2023 the Human Resources department developed a formal accommodation process that includes the documentation of an 'Individual Accommodation Plan'. The communication of this new process will be completed and rolled out to staff in the summer of 2024.

Barrier

- To date AMI's internal Human Resources department has adjudicated accommodation needs and requests. To ensure a full and fair assessment it has been determined that external experts need to be consulted when the request is complex.

Actions

- AMI has engaged the services of a third-party Disability Management Consulting firm that specializes in disability management, accommodation and return to work plans to assist AMI with complex requests.

Barrier

- AMI's work placement program has been very positive to date however funding and the availability of applicants can be somewhat of a barrier in creating more employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Actions

- AMI will continue to work and build external relationships by attending a variety of conferences, job fairs and other events dedicated to the employment of persons with disabilities.
- AMI will improve awareness of the work placement program by advertising the program on our website, Apps and on our network.
- AMI will reach out to other organizations as potential partners to co-fund these initiatives.

Employee Training**Current Practices:**

As part of our ongoing training program AMI has offered staff the following,

- Disability and Accessibility Awareness Training every 2 to 3 years. (delayed slightly during the pandemic)
- Informational package on working with persons with disabilities is provided to all new hires as part of the onboarding process.
- Creating accessible documents training was provided to all staff in 2022.
- Advanced Web Accessibility was provided to the digital team to ensure that the AMI websites and Apps maintain the required standards.
- Accessibility and Event Planning (this training was provided for the Executive Assistant to the Board of Directors).
- Advanced document accessibility courses have been provided to the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Provided JAWS (screen reader) training on Microsoft Teams.

Barrier

- AMI strives to maintain a high level of learning in the organization which can be challenging based on funding and availability of programs.

Actions

- AMI has developed an updated version of the Accessibility Awareness training which will be rolled out to all employees in the summer of 2024 and will replace the information package currently being provided as part of the onboarding of new hires. This training covers the following topics,
 - The Importance of Accessibility and Inclusion
 - Understanding Disabilities
 - Understanding Barriers to Accessibility
 - The Accessible Canada Act
 - AMI's Responsibility
- JAWS (screen reader) training on the new version of Microsoft Teams will be provided in June 2024
- Creating accessible documents will be offered in the fall of 2024 and will include Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and PDF's.
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee will be developing an ongoing training plan for all staff to be rolled out in early 2025.

The Built Environment

Creating and maintaining a fully accessible workspace for employees and visitors alike provides an environment that is welcoming and safe. Eliminating physical barriers increases independence and quality of life for people with disabilities and ensures equal access for everyone.

NOTE: AMI currently has offices in two locations, the head office in Toronto and an office in Montreal to support the Francophone market. Both offices will be relocating over the next year, the Toronto office effective July 1, 2025, and the Montreal office effective December 1, 2024. The new facilities for both locations have been reviewed for accessibility and meet AMI standards. The information below is based on our current locations and an update on the relocations will be provided once we have moved.

Current Practices:

AMI's head office facility in Toronto was designed with accessibility at the forefront of the decision-making process. The following features were implemented in the initial build,

- Braille signs are provided on hallway and individual office signs,
- Automated doors are available at all entry and exit locations and washrooms,
- There is tactile flooring at hall intersections to assist persons who use a cane to navigate the space,
- The walls have been painted with a strong colour contrast,
- Workstations are adjustable and other assistive devices such as sit-stand desks, fatigue mats, and raised steps are available.

The Montreal office, a smaller location, when leased was reviewed for accessibility standards and similar features to the Toronto location were implemented, (i.e. automated doors, flexible workstations, ramps for studio sets).

In 2022, AMI had the head office site in Toronto audited and received the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) Accessibility Certification. The consultants that performed the site audit also provided an assessment of our new Control Room build in 2023 and provided recommendations based on their findings. The Montreal office was to be scheduled for an audit however the decision to relocate was made and the audit is no longer necessary.

Barrier

Site Audit (Toronto)

- Exit signs are traditional red with the word 'EXIT',
- There is no assistive hearing technology available,
- Washroom door widths and accessibility stall is not to code,
- Parking garage does not have automated doors,
- Pathway from administrative area to studio is not clearly identified.

Actions

Based on the identified barriers the actions to be taken are as follows,

- Work with the building management company to change the exit signs to the green running man.
- Inform building owners of the parking garage and washroom barriers as they are responsible for those areas.
- Review the options for assistive hearing technology and determine cost and timeline for implementation.
- Create or identify an accessible path of travel from the administrative area to the studio by adding the appropriate signage including braille.

Barrier

Control Room Build (Toronto)

- Lighting between the studio and control room is low,
- Panel controls are not at accessible heights,
- More area space is required around studio desk,
- New wall requires colour contrast to the floors.
- Both of the seats in the studio have armrests. This could make it difficult for a person wishing to transfer from a mobility device.

Actions

AMI will develop a timeline for the implementation of the following.

- Increase the lighting in the corridor between the control room and the studio.
- Install a more accessible studio desk, with more space available.
- Relocate all controls to accessible heights.
- Paint wall in a contrasting colour to the floors.
- Provide a variety of seating options in the studio. Other options are available in the office and can be moved to the studio.

Information & Communication Technologies

Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) barriers occur when technology such as computer hardware, software, websites, and phones are not accessible for persons with disabilities.

Current Practices:

As part of the Accessibility Audit in 2022 a review of the company's website and digital content was completed to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

In the summary provided the following statement was included, "Generally, the site as it exists is exceptionally accessible in comparison with today's landscape. Of course, this is to be expected. For one, the "Accessibility Preferences" menu is a beautiful feature, enabling users to take complete control of the verbosity level of accessibility tailored to their preferences."

Also included in the audit was a review of AMI's APPs. The report stated that, "the App as it stands, is quite accessible. It is also basic in its design and functionality. However, by correcting a few WCAG issues, and adding some features to improve the overall user experience, it could be much more user friendly and flexible".

The full report and recommendations were presented to our digital team for both the websites and Apps and the changes required have since been addressed.

Moving forward, AMI continuously looks for opportunities to improve technological accessibility and raise the level of the user experience. The following are other identified barriers and actions to ensure that we remain accountable.

Barrier

- Policies, practices, and procedures regarding technical and digital applications within AMI need to be reviewed and updated to ensure consistency and thoroughness with respect to accessibility.

Actions

- Human Resources will work with the Technology Services and Digital departments to update policies with respect to accessibility standards. This action is to be completed by December 2024.
- AMI will continue to test new technology with persons with a variety of disabilities to ensure that they will work prior to making changes or purchasing new technologies.
- The updated policies and practices will be reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee for feedback and amendments will be made based on their recommendations. The goal is to have this action completed by March 2025.

Barrier

- The job posting and application form on our current website takes several clicks to get to. This process can be time-consuming and cumbersome. Although it is accessible, individuals who use assistive technologies may have difficulty navigating the site.

Actions

- AMI has redesigned its corporate website and has created a more seamless application process. The new version launched in May 2024.

Barrier

- In the audit mentioned above it was noted that AMI did not have assistive listening or amplification devices available, particularly in areas where the ambient volume could be high.

Actions

- Human Resources with the assistance of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will research these devices and costs associated. A case study will be presented to the senior management team to determine next steps.

Barrier

- In a recent review of the Performance Management module of our HRIS system we received feedback that navigating the process can be challenging for persons using reading software.

Actions

- Human Resources will be conducting further research and will be contacting the vendor to provide feedback. This system was chosen because of its accessibility features, and we will work with them to assist in making any necessary changes.

Communication, other than ICT

AMI is committed to providing communication that is accessible and inclusive, not only through the content we produce, but through the internal and external communications provided to our employees and stakeholders. We will make every effort to identify and eliminate barriers that occur when individuals are unable to read, write, hear, speak, or understand information that is being presented to them.

Current Practices:

AMI believes that training is key to ensuring we fulfill our mandate to provide accessible communications. Over the past number of years, the following training has been offered to employees.

- Introduction to creating accessible Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents,
- Advanced Website Accessibility Design, (if the role requires this training)
- Creating accessible PDF's,
- Provided staff training on creating Alt text descriptions,

Barrier

- New employees to AMI are not always familiar with accessible communication and documentation.

Actions

- AMI will provide Accessibility Awareness training to all new hires as part of the onboarding process.
- An introduction to creating accessible documents will also be added to the onboarding process.

Barrier

- Although we have provided training on accessible documents there are still old communications that are not fully accessible.

Actions

- Human Resources will develop a plan working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to review all existing documentation for accessibility compliance and update where necessary. The review will be completed by spring 2025.
- Alternative formats will be offered as requested such as, large-print text, Braille versions of written material, or transcripts for screen readers.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

AMI will ensure that in the procurement process, accessibility will be at the forefront of consideration in the evaluation of the products and or services we purchase.

Current Practices:

AMI department managers have the responsibility of reviewing products and services for accessibility which includes consulting internal resources and external consultants as necessary. This includes new technologies, website updates, finance systems, HR systems, staff training and media content.

Barrier

The procurement process as it is currently being managed by individual departments is not consistent in its application and does not ensure best practices in meeting accessibility needs.

Actions

- AMI will review procurement policy to ensure that an accessibility assessment will be a requirement in the purchase of all goods and services.
- AMI will develop a standard criterion for accessibility requirements to ensure best practices when acquiring new equipment or services.
- AMI will provide training to staff involved in the procurement process on the policy and procedures.
- AMI will provide all new and existing vendors with the accessibility requirements necessary to meet our expectations and will work with them to identify and eliminate accessibility barriers.
- AMI will seek out vendors who are of like mind with respect to accessibility and have a willingness to adapt to the needs of the organization where and when possible.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

AMI as an organization exists to deliver media programs and services that are accessible to the disability communities. With three channels, AMI-audio, AMI-tv (English service) and AMI-télé (French service) the commitment to accessibility has and always will be the key element in fulfilling our mission and vision.

Current Practices:

AMI has been breaking down barriers to media accessibility from the onset of the organization. Originally a reading service for the blind and partially sighted community AMI expanded to television and provided programming that offers described video (DV) 100% of the time.

As DV became more readily available on the major broadcasters, AMI adjusted its focus to creating original content that was produced by and for the disability communities.

AMI employs Media Accessibility Specialists who vet our content for all features of accessibility, including DV, IDV (integrated described video) and Closed Captioning. These roles are responsible for quality control and will consult with persons with disabilities externally and internally.

Barrier

- AMI is seen as a leader in media accessibility, and it is important that we continuously look for ways to raise the bar and improve the experience of those who access our channels.

Actions

- Review advancements in technology on a regular basis to stay ahead of what is to come.
- Explore the future of AI and media accessibility.
- Review the ability to provide more ASL.
- Continue to develop content in which persons with disabilities are the creators of the content and/or who are in prominent production roles, in front of and behind the camera.
- Ensure frontline staff are trained in Advanced Accessible Customer Service, including security, maintenance, and administrative personnel.

Transportation

AMI does not have anything to report under this category at this point.

Requirements Under the Broadcasting Act

In accordance with the regulations of the Broadcasting Act, AMI is required to provide all programming with described video and closed captioning 100% of the time. AMI is in full compliance with these regulations and has developed accessibility features beyond the standard, such as Integrated Described Video (IDV), Live Described Video (LDV) and Descriptive transcripts to accompany promos or short style videos.

Conclusion

'Taking it to the next level', 'raising the bar', 'continuously improving', these are the phrases that are imbedded in the future accessibility goals of AMI. As an organization that exists to break down barriers in media accessibility, we are dedicated to deliver on these goals not only through the programs and services that we provide but our commitment to an accessible and inclusive workplace. We are extremely proud and passionate about the work we do and look forward to the role we will play in the quest of becoming a barrier free Canada.