

2024-2026 Accessibility Plan

May, 2024

for

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Limited

Brooke Telecom

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1 General

1.1 Statement of Commitment:

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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:

Geoff Greening

General Manager

3241 Park Street, Inwood, ON, N0N 1K0

geoff@brooketel.coop

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

Telephone: 519-844-2160

E-mail: accessible@brooketel.coop

Mail: 3241 Park Street, Inwood, ON, N0N 1K0

<https://brooketel.coop/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

Brooke Telecom wants to engage with our employees, customers and business partners in a way that makes everyone feel inclusive when it comes to accessibility. Our Health and Safety Representative and management 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

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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 Health and Safety Representative will continue to monitor accessibility issues indefinitely

- Management and 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

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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 office building that are not at ground level;
- Level entry or temporary ramps are located at each of the stores;
- Staff are aware of limitations of existing store fronts and are willing to assist customers that require assistance.
- 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 into the building.

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 retail locations for access to the washrooms.
- We lack automatic door openers for all locations and will continue to evaluate the potential utilization of additional accessibility devices in these locations and installation barriers since most of our locations are leased facilities.
- Work buildings such as Central Offices are not wheelchair accessible. However, these buildings are not open to the public and at this time do not currently present an immediate issue.

2.2 Employment

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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, but alternative entrances are available with assistance.
- Most workstations do not allow for the adjustment of height to accommodate different working height scenarios.

2.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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 Brooke Telecom for services such as remotes for TV service
- Difficulty using cell phone features and services

The company will take the following actions in the short term to address these identified barriers:

- 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 will look to re-developing our website in the future 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, Brooke Telecom 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.

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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 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:

- Utilizing other forms of communication such as sign language.

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

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines;
- Online requests via e-mail or SmartHub;
- Telephone ordering;
- In person ordering;
- Provide three local offices to visit for in person consultation;
- In-person support available five days a week;
- Telephone support available seven days a week;

- Several avenues via email and online for addressing any concerns or requirement;
- All employees are expected to provide the most beneficial, courteous and relevant information possible;
- On-site installation and support from a qualified technician.
- Use of voice activated remote controls for TV service.

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;
- Implement website re-design to further enhance accessibility.

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:

- Brooke Telecom 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

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. strives to ensure accessibility for individuals with a disability being transported to our offices. Brooke Telecom 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 main office.

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 main office.

2.8 Organization Wide Initiatives

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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

Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd. 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. We seek feedback in the following manner:

- Employees have access to the plan;
- Our customers have access to our approach to accessibility on our website
- Customers can request access to our accessibility plan at any time.
- We continually review the environment and seek feedback from customers with disabilities.

Our customers have not identified any significant physical accessibility issues. The company intends to continue to address accessibility issues over time as they are identified.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, Brooke Telecom 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.