



Accessible Canada Act

General

Executive Summary

Austin's Courier Ltd. is committed to building a culture of inclusivity and accessibility. Not only is this part of our Company culture but opening access to all is imperative to our continued growth and competitiveness as an employer in the transportation industry. We will contribute to a barrier free Canada by building an accessibility framework that will support employees and the public we serve, to have the best experiences possible with our services, and facilities.

We recognize that creating a barrier-free Canada will be a significant undertaking and will take time, and the work of many, but we are committed to removing and preventing barriers in our workplace. Austin's Courier will continue to build on our efforts through the development of our initial accessibility plan as required under the Accessible Canada Act. The Accessibility Plan will guide our company towards meeting our accessibility commitments and in building an accessibility confident culture.

To address the gaps in areas of our business, it is important to understand and recognize the needs of those with disabilities. For this reason, this plan was developed in consultation with employees who identify as having a disability through one-on-one interviews, as well as external peoples with disabilities were also consulted. A summary of the initial opportunities include:

Improving the attraction of persons with disabilities to jobs in our company and the transportation sector.

Being better prepared to provide information in accessible formats when required.

Being better at creating alternate ways for our workers with disabilities to have more of an impact on the way our business works, and have more of a say to help in decision making.

Feedback Mechanism

Austin's Courier's Human Resources/ Safety Coordinator is responsible for the feedback process and progress reporting on this plan. For inquiries or feedback about this plan please contact us in the following ways.

Contact: Jamie Leek-Hilmoe

By mail: Jamie Leek-Hilmoe

C/O Austin's Courier
1815 North Service Road West
Swift Current, Sask
S9H 3T2

Email: Safety@austinsgroup.ca

Phone: 306-773-1311

Website: <https://austinsgroup.ca/>

All individuals can provide anonymous feedback through the above mechanisms.

The Accessibility Plan is available in alternate formats upon request through the above mechanisms. Formats available upon request are:

Print;

Large Print;

Braille;

Audio; and

Electronic.

The Accessibility Plan will be made available as soon as feasible. In the instance of a request for the plan in a Braille or audio format, it will be provided 45 days after the day the request was received. Requests for other formats will be provided within 15 days after the day the request was received.

Statement of Commitment

Austin's Courier is committed to working towards a barrier free environment in which our Company and the services we provide are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities.

Our Human resources/ Safety Coordinator at Austin's Courier is responsible for the development and coordination of this Accessibility Plan in accordance with regulations under the Accessible Canada Act.

Reporting Our Plan

As required by the Accessible Canada Act, we will publish a status report every year. We will also review and update our Accessibility Plan every three years.

These annual updates will be done in conjunction with feedback from persons with disabilities to ensure we are progressing towards our accomplishments.

Definitions

Barrier: Anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal that is based on information or communications, or anything that is the result of a policy or practice that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment, including physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory, or a functional limitation.

Disability: Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, and sensory impairment, or functional limitation that is either permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature. It can be evident or not in interaction with a barrier to hinder a person's full and equal participation in society.

Accessibility Plan: This Accessibility Plan includes an overview of our policies, programs, practices, and services in relation to the identification and removal of barriers and the prevention of new barriers. The Accessibility Plan was prepared and published by June 1, 2023, and will be updated every three years following that, or sooner if necessary.

The Accessibility Plan was developed in consultation with persons with disabilities and indicates how they were consulted. This process is followed for the creation of any updates to the plan. Austin's Courier adheres to all requirements made by regulation in the development and ongoing maintenance of the Accessibility Plan.

EMPLOYMENT

Austin's Courier 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. Austin's Courier reviews its practices and procedures to identify, remove, and prevent barriers by developing inclusive employment procedures that support persons with disabilities. Where necessary, accommodations are made during the recruitment and selection stages, and throughout the employment lifecycle. Technological and systemic barriers may exist for employee orientation and training, as such, training and development programs provided by Austin's Courier should be reviewed to consider an employee's barriers and abilities. Systemic barriers can be identified with respect to conventions associated with the hiring process.

Barrier #1: Our organization continues to experience competition for employees and is currently not attracting a high volume of qualified candidates from underrepresented populations such as persons with disabilities.

Actions:

- Austin's Courier will review current job application processes for persons with disabilities who experience barriers, and evaluate potential alternatives.
- Review policies, with the support of Management and Partners in Employment, that pertain to accommodations for employees and candidates with disabilities and make plans to remove any barriers that are discovered.
- Train those responsible for hiring on the barriers that may exist in the hiring, selection and accommodation process, with support from Management.

2024-2025 – We have not had any employment turn over or hiring in the last year.

Barrier #2: Improve awareness opportunities for candidates to request reasonable accommodations during the recruitment process.

Actions:

- Review human resource policies for improvements with respect to inclusion and accessibility, with support from Management and inclusion of Partners in Employment.
- Provide online learning on accessibility and inclusiveness to employees.
- Offer training on unconscious bias to human resources employees to improve awareness of accessibility issues.
- Review potential opportunities, where suitable, for establishing mentorship for employees of Austin's Courier that are persons with disabilities.

2024-2025 If any employee is in need of assistance with training, someone is appointed to help them with any questions they may have.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Austin's Courier wishes to improve its publicly accessible facilities with a goal of working towards making such facilities free of physical barriers, in order to promote a space of inclusivity. Physical barriers may exist in Austin's Courier offices and facilities, that can be improved upon.

Barrier #3: Wheelchair accessibility.

Actions:

- With support from Management, Austin's Courier will evaluate its offices and facilities to assess the need for further accessibility features.
- Austin's Courier will review and update, as necessary, its emergency and disaster response plans to account for employees, and visitors with disabilities.
- Review Company workspaces, and customer facing facility areas to identify any physical barriers, by the end of 2025 and plan improvements.

2024-2025 Any customer can call and we will accommodate their experience at Austin's Courier. Ie. Bring their packages and paperwork out to them, deliver or pick up packages, etc.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

Software with accessibility functionality is already utilized by Austin's Courier; however, Austin's Courier recognizes that systemic barriers exist within technology and presumptions made about its use. Austin's Courier wishes to remove barriers and improve accessibility for employees with disabilities, by making such technology more accessible.

Barrier #4: Computers and applications can be difficult to use at times.

Actions:

- Add accessibility as an evaluation metric when acquiring or developing new software or technology, with support from Management.
- Review website content for any minor barriers, including assessing the following:
 - Text contrast;
 - Text size;
 - Navigation and compatibility with screen readers; and

- Clear formatting.
- Provide guidance and support on the accessibility features of utilized software with existing accessibility features.
- It could involve using an ergonomic keyboard, monitor or different programs.

2024-2025 When implementing any computer program into the company, make sure that at least one person fully understands how to use it, and they are available to answer any questions that anyone may have.

COMMUNICATION OTHER THAN ICT

Austin's Courier acknowledges that content and medium are both important in providing accessible communication to its customers, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors that access the premises. Communication barriers exist in the content and format of online information, in-person interactions and meetings and presentations. One of Austin's Courier goals is to work towards providing more accessible communications.

Barrier #5: Learning New computer systems.

Actions:

- Provide training on accessibility and barriers for employees who work on communications, including information on potential different communication styles.
- Evaluate website, social media posts, meetings and presentation conventions and practices to create a plan to address barriers to accessibility if discovered, including assessing the following:
 - Adding alternative text for images;
 - Using high contrast font; and
 - Providing transcripts of audio and video posts, where appropriate.
- Review orientation processes and resources for new employees for improvements to accessibility, with the support of Management.

2024-2025 When implementing a new computer program into the company, make sure that at least one person fully understands how to use it, and they are available to answer any questions that anyone may have.

Transportation

Transportation for this purpose refers to transportation of people, not goods. Austin's Courier does not coordinate a transportation system, or a fleet of transportation vehicles as defined in the Accessible Canada Act and is not included in the scope of this plan.

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

The "procuring (buying) goods, services, and facilities" area ensures that accessibility is considered at the beginning of the buying process.

Barrier #6: Austin's Courier procurement procedures and practices only sometimes take into consideration accessibility requirements.

Action:

- Review vendors accessibility capabilities to ensure they can deliver goods and/or services consistent with our current accessibility needs.
- Ensure accessibility needs are considered when purchasing software, equipment, and food items.
- Review digital accessibility needs when receiving Request for Proposals from external customers.

2024-2025 This is an ongoing process and will continue to be.

Consultation

Austin's Courier understands that collaborating with persons with disabilities is an important factor in developing an Accessibility Plan. We currently have a few people with a variety of different disabilities employed with Austin's Courier that have been collaborated with as well as have been in contact with Partners in Employment in Swift Current.