

# **Peace River Broadcasting First Progress Report for Accessibility Plan (2024)**

## **General**

Peace River Broadcasting's (PRB) Accessibility Progress Report is presented in response to the Accessibility Canada Act (ACA) regulations to help bring about a more accessible Canada to people with disabilities. As such, federally regulated entities, which include those in the broadcast industry, are required to prepare and publish Accessibility Plan updates.

The Accessibility Plan can be found on our Company Websites:

[RiverCountry.fm/accessibility/](http://RiverCountry.fm/accessibility/) and [KIX.fm/accessibility/](http://KIX.fm/accessibility/).

The Accessibility Plan, Progress Reports and Feedback Survey can also be requested in alternate print format by contacting:

**Phone:** (780) 624-2535

**Email:** [reception@rivercountry.fm](mailto:reception@rivercountry.fm)

## **Feedback Process**

PRB has designated Jonathan Babiý – President – as the individual responsible for receiving feedback for any barriers to accessibility, as well as its Accessibility Plan.

Feedback can be provided by any of the methods outlined below...

**Mail:** Bag 300. Peace River, Alberta. T8S 1T5

**Phone:** (780) 624-2535

**Email:** [jon@rivercountry.fm](mailto:jon@rivercountry.fm)

**Online:** [RiverCountry.fm/accessibility/](http://RiverCountry.fm/accessibility/) and [KIX.fm/accessibility/](http://KIX.fm/accessibility/).

We welcome your questions, comments, or concerns on any accessibility barriers that you may have encountered in dealing with PRB as well as the implementation of our Accessibility Plan. Share feedback anonymously or include your name and contact information. Any personal information will be kept confidential and will not be shared by PRB.

We will acknowledge the receipt of all accessibility feedback by the same means in which we receive it. We will follow-up with any required action within the time frame noted in our acknowledgement.

### **Executive Summary**

In compliance and support of our commitment to a more equitable and accessible environment, PRB has published this update to share the progress we have made to make our workplaces, information and services more accessible.

During the development of the initial Accessibility Plan and development of the Progress Report, PRB has considered the following principles as outlined in Section 6 of the ACA.

- 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 are able and wish 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 faced by persons.
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of policies, programs, services and structures.
- 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.

### **Accessibility Summary**

PRB is committed to the treatment of all individuals in a manner which provides them with dignity, respect, independence and inclusion. With this, we strive to identify and remove barriers for our employees, customers and community members through the creation, review and update of our Accessibility Plan.

### **Areas of Accessibility - Barriers By Area (Section 5 of the ACA Employment Practices)**

#### **1 - Employment**

At PRB we understand accessibility, diversity and inclusion are the foundation of innovation and creativity, not just practices and policies. We are an equal opportunity company, free of discrimination and committed to

foster an inclusive, respectful work environment. We recognize all roles within the company are properly able to be performed by any person regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, or other factors.

We are taking the following actions to improve accessibility in our Employment.

***Barrier: Education and Communication*** – There is an opportunity to increase awareness on disability inclusion and accessibility mindfulness.

***Action/Status: Complete/Ongoing*** - We continuously review and communicate our Employee Handbook and policies to employees to ensure best practices and encourage feedback at anytime.

***Progress*** - Emphasis on employment practices in the form of education and communication were undertaken with an updating of our Employee Handbook which includes the addition of Accessibility, plus expansion on Health & Safety guidelines and Anti-Violence and Anti-Harassment policies. Acknowledgement of reading and understanding the updated Employee Handbook was required by PRB employees. Furthermore, PRB has published its final Pay Equity Policy. These policies and guidelines will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis and be updated as needed.

## **2 - Built Environment**

PRB understands the importance of creating spaces where everyone feels welcomed, comfortable, safe and supported. We continuously strive to

make our workspaces as accessible and inclusive as possible for staff and by appointment visitors.

We are taking the following actions to improve accessibility in our Built Environment.

***Barrier: Multi-Level Office Spaces*** – Given the multi-level office spaces of PRB studio locations, there is an opportunity to identify and consider potential areas of improvement and accommodation related to accessibility.

***Action/Status: Complete*** – Conduction of analysis of our multi-level studio locations and assessment of viable improvements to enhance accessibility.

***Progress*** - In relation to our Peace River owned office location. We recognize it is an older building that does impact accessibility. People with limited mobility may find challenges with navigating the stairwells as well as entering the building due to no ramp present.

Upon analysis, the installation of systems to ease accessibility around the office were not financially viable. However, we have undertaken actions to reduce these barriers which includes:

- The ability to perform tasks remotely through enhanced production software.
- Meet customers outside our office space, if need be, at a location better accessible to their needs. We can also accommodate

customers and visitors at the top entrance level of our Peace River office; reducing or eliminating stair navigation.

- Ensure PRB office spaces are free from clutter and easy to navigate. A note emphasized through a consultation session PRB reviewed conducted by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.
- PRB is also prepared to invest in remote work equipment. This would be put in place should an employee be unable to navigate the current environment or we hire an individual unable to navigate the current built environment. This would provide the ability to perform work tasks remotely due to any accessibility issues. Dollars have been earmarked.

Should there be a time where we re-locate our Peace River office, accessibility will certainly be addressed in our decision making.

Pertaining to our leased High Level office. Upon a site visit we confirmed there is an elevator within the facility, and it is in operation. This provides access to our second level office through this avenue if needed. It was also discussed that our High Level location is at one of the highest points in town which delivers one of the best sight lines to transmit our signal.

***Barrier: Peace River Office Bathroom Door Sticking*** – Due to seasonal shifting, a bathroom door was prone to sticking. To the point where it caused excessive difficulty to navigate.

**Action/Status:** Complete – Through encouraged PRB staff feedback related to accessibility, this barrier was brought up within the First Progress Reporting period through an internal consultation by a PRB staff member.

**Progress** - Door has been adjusted and accessibility issue resolved.

### **3 - Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

PRB operates 2 company websites; [RiverCountry.fm](http://RiverCountry.fm) and [KIX.fm](http://KIX.fm), Apps for each radio station and a Social Media platform. Our objective is always to ensure our content is barrier free through both creation and communication.

We are taking the following actions to improve accessibility in Information and Communication Technologies.

**Barrier & Action: Website and App Redesign** – PRB strives to ensure our websites and digital presence comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and few barriers exist when it comes to our information and communication technologies.

**Action/Status: In Progress** – Our online content provider (websites and apps) continuously updates its portal to enhance ease and functionality for staff use with timely support in place. Going forward, our next website redesign has ease of message delivery as a top priority.

**Progress** - PRB is undergoing website redesign consultations. Mindfulness of accessibility being a top priority. This includes elements



such as text, audio and video being as accessible and easy to navigate as possible, for both content creation and communication. Importance was further emphasized through a consultation session PRB reviewed conducted by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

***Barrier & Action: Closed Captioning on Video Postings*** – There is an opportunity to ensure video social media postings are accessible to the hearing impaired through the inclusion of closed captioning. Once again, importance was further emphasized through a consultation session PRB reviewed conducted by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

***Action/Status: Complete*** – Direction was communicated, with provided training as needed, as to video posting procedures. Ensuring closed captioning is incorporated into all videos; social media included.

***Progress*** - PRB has adjusted steps in its social media video postings process. We no longer post “live videos” which do not have closed captioning capabilities. Instead, we are pre-recording videos then uploading. This adjustment now gives the videos accompanying closed captioning on social media. Much like our website accessible YouTube videos.

**Barrier & Action: Accessibility of Reporting** – From a consultation session PRB reviewed conducted by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, we have learned about elements to help enhance reader accessibility. Arial font size 14 is more readable for individuals with visual impairments. As well as the use of high contrast color combinations, such as white on black.

**Action/Status:** Complete – For this First Progress Reporting period and going forward, PRB will use Arial font size 14, along with high contrast color combinations in its accessibility reporting.

**Progress** - To improve accessibility, we have updated the publishing of our accessibility reports. They will now published in PDF form, which enables us to specifically use Arial font size 14, a size more readable for individuals with visual impairments. We have also ensured that the report features high-contrast color combinations, such as white on black, to enhance visibility and readability for all readers. These changes ensure that the report is now more inclusive for individuals with visual accessibility needs.

#### **4 - Information and Communication Other Than (ICT)**

Being in the broadcast industry, PRB recognizes the value of accessible and effective communication internally to employees and externally to our audience, community and clients.

We are taking the following actions to improve accessibility in Information and Communication Other Than (ICT).

***Barrier: Peace River Office Community Connection Due To No Longer Being Open To The Public*** – Opportunity to evaluate and make any necessary improvements to best maintain our objective of a high level of engagement and ease of accessibility to the public.

***Action/Status: Complete/Ongoing*** - As outlined in our Initial Accessibility Plan (2024), PRB made the decision to have its Peace River office continue to no longer be open to the public – a change which started out of necessity during the covid pandemic. The decision to continue this route was carefully considered with many elements in play such as staffing, budget and safety due to an increase of homelessness, vagrancy, and crime in our office's downtown core.

***Progress*** - Despite our shift in public access, we have adjusted to best maintain the same community accessibility as when the office was open to the public. This includes prizing being mailed or sent digitally, implementing text lines and messaging through our apps and social media as added forms of contact. Our phone tree navigation includes a general voice message option. These messages are then relayed on to the appropriate person/department by staff and responded to in the timely manner. The public can also still access our Peace River office building by simply calling a number posted on the front door.

As of January 2025, it is also now company policy to respond to forms of digital audience interaction with quality messages in a timely manner. This

includes text messages, app messages, social media messages and comments.

Our leased High Level office is also located within a building not open to the public. In this case, we apply similar audience engagement processes as our Peace River office to maintain our community presence and accessibility.

Maintaining our high level of engagement and ease of accessibility to the public while keeping a safe and secure work environment remain top priority for PRB.

## **5 - Procurement of Goods and Services**

PRB buys products and services which support our business operations. Accessibility in this manner continues to be evaluated and still at this time is not considered an issue. Measures will be put in place to overcome any related barriers which arise.

## **6 - Design and Delivery of Services**

As a local media information provider, PRB strives to make its content as accessible as possible to our local coverage area. This includes communication in a clear, direct and easy to understand way. We consistently evaluate our communication means so our messages can reach as many as possible, including those with disabilities.

We are taking the following actions to improve accessibility in Design and Delivery of Services.

**Barrier & Action: Digital Engagement** – There is opportunity to enhance our community accessibility related to communication in today’s expanding digital landscape. This barrier was identified and implemented internally by PRB management.

**Action/Status: Complete** - A policy of “virtual face-to-face conversation” has been put into place which emphasizes consistent, quality and timely response.

**Progress** - PRB has increased the level of its social media, text and app message audience engagement. With this, we’ve seen an increase in the quality and volume of audience interaction. This has helped improve our community content and connection.

## **7 - Transportation**

With community presence and accessibility in mind, PRB continues to evaluate and ensure its company vehicle fleet and policies best provide the opportunity for effective community engagement.

We are taking the following actions to improve accessibility in Transportation.

**Barrier: Evaluation of PRB Vehicles** – PRB identified the opportunity to evaluate our company vehicle situation to best accommodate accessibility to the communities we serve. This barrier was identified and implemented internally by PRB management.

**Action/Status:** *Complete* – Within this First Progress Report period, PRB has updated its company vehicle fleet based on analysis of usage, safety and reliability.

**Progress** - For the Peace River office site, with staff safety, reliability and accessibility in mind, a new company vehicle has been purchased. We chose a vehicle which has dependability for travelling within our Northern Alberta conditions, while also providing ease of access for staff and transportation of items.

Staff continue to have access to our Peace River office site vehicle for company related activities such as remotes, news stories, client visits etc. This is based on having a valid drivers license and insurance coverage on the company policy or; if required, through their own insurance provider.

Due to minimal usage, PRB has removed its company vehicle from the High Level office site. Based on the PRB vehicle usage policy related to personal vehicle use for business matters, our High Level office staff will continue to have the same level of community accessibility, even without a company owned vehicle onsite.

PRB continues to provide the need for flexibility and allowances.

Employees may be eligible to use their own mode of transportation if it best accommodates their needs given a disability or otherwise. A policy is in place for compensation of personal vehicle use for company related travels.

## **Consultations**

Externally, consultations were held in-person with onsite visitors and with attendees at events such as trade shows.

Onsite consultations typically centred on Built Environment; mainly with seniors and those with limited mobility. In these cases, we made any necessary arrangements to ease their access so they could attain what was needed in a comfortable manner. This included undertaking tasks and meetings in the upstairs/entrance area of our Peace River office; reducing or eliminating stair navigation.

Consultations at events revolved around Design and Delivery of Services, along with Information and Communication. Essentially, our community presence, and audience engagement. These interactions were predominantly with seniors who inquired about content and communication mediums.

PRB also continuously welcome individuals to submit feedback through our online accessibility survey.

Internally, PRB consults with our own employees directly when they are identified as having accessibility and/or disability issues. We respect the confidentiality and privacy of all employees, and as such, the identities of any participating employees are kept confidential. Employees are also welcome to submit feedback through our online Accessibility Survey; this can be done anonymously, should they choose. Should any issues arise

from these employee consultations, managers problem solve the situation and provide any needed assistance to address and eliminate encountered barriers.

In any consultation, areas addressed include office location (Peace River or High Level) and the barrier(s) encountered.

As part of our commitment to advancing accessibility, PRB also reviewed an in-depth summary from an engagement session/consultation with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) organized by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) in the spring of 2025. The discussion focused on a wide range of accessibility issues, from improved approaches for closed captioning and described video, to best practices in the workplace on how to create a more inclusive and accessible environment and culture.

The CNIB is a non-profit organization that delivers innovative programs and powerful advocacy that empowers people impacted by blindness. Through their Access Labs program, the CNIB offers resources to help individuals with vision loss and other disabilities to better navigate and engage with the digital and media landscape. They also engage with organizations seeking input from experts and individuals living with disabilities to create a barrier-free environment. The CNIB's engagement session/ consultation was led by an expert on accessibility and inclusion. It also included a panel of three individuals living with a disability.



The CNIB outlined principles that CAB members can adopt to ensure their environments are accessible, emphasizing that workplace accommodations should be individualized, proactive and respectful, as well as begin with an inclusive design.

The CNIB also led a discussion on appropriate language and the stigmas surrounding disability, emphasizing that language is personal and evolving. The CNIB explained that using people-first language and avoiding stigmatizing terms helps normalize conversations about disability and fosters inclusion. The session emphasized the importance of normalizing conversations about disability and accommodation, using respectful and up-to-date language, and asking for clarification when unsure.

Through a range of discussions and videos, the CNIB highlighted that blindness exists on a spectrum, that many blind individuals are highly skilled in using technology, and that with the right support and inclusive environments, people with disabilities can fully participate in work, community, and daily life.

The CNIB provided feedback to CAB members on key practices to create accessible workplaces. The session explained how accommodation is not about fixing problems after they arise, but about proactively designing inclusive, barrier-free environments that respect the dignity and individuality of all employees. Effective accommodation requires engaging directly with individuals to understand their specific needs, while also making simple, organization-wide changes.

Discussions also highlighted how technologies like screen readers, magnifiers, and talkback features are essential tools that help individuals living with disabilities participate more fully in both the workplace and media spaces. The session highlighted how assistive technologies have become powerful tools for independence, enabling blind and partially sighted individuals to access information, navigate digital spaces, and fully participate in work and media environments.

This consultation also included direct conversations with individuals living with disabilities, who provided valuable feedback to CAB members, offering practical insights into how accessibility initiatives could be implemented and strengthened to meet community needs. These individuals living with disabilities explained that small, everyday actions, like keeping pathways clear, sharing information in multiple formats, and modelling inclusive language, can significantly improve accessibility across any organization. They also recommended proactively inviting feedback and designating a go-to person for accessibility to foster a more inclusive and responsive workplace culture.

The session with the CNIB also included a discussion with a panel of individuals living with disabilities, who shared their personal experiences and provided valuable feedback to broadcasters on how they can improve accessibility for both radio and television programming. They emphasized the need for high-quality audio descriptions in media. They also discussed the importance of customizable accessibility features like font size and contrast settings (14 point is effective; ariel font is preferred). The panel explained how using clear and inclusive language should be prioritized,

especially for audiences with cognitive barriers. They also focused on the role of high-contrast visuals and clear, accurate captions in improving accessibility. The session concluded with a Q&A, where participants engaged with the presenters on strategies for improving accessibility and explored how the CNIB's resources and feedback could help broadcasters enhance their accessibility practices.

Overall, this session reinforced the importance of accessibility for PRB. These sessions are part of our ongoing commitment to learning from and collaborating with persons with disabilities, experts in the area, and stakeholders. These takeaways and key learnings were very helpful and used to implement accessibility goals in our Accessibility Plan and inform the development of this year's Accessibility Progress Report.

We are looking forward to attending a number of other important engagement sessions/ consultations in the coming weeks with experts on accessibility and individuals living with disabilities. In particular, we are looking forward to attending sessions with the Disability Screen Office and the Broadcasting Accessibility Fund to learn more about the needs and interests of individuals living with disabilities who work in the screen-based sector. These sessions will be led by individuals living with disabilities.

### **Feedback**

Externally, ahead of this First Progress Reporting period, PRB did not receive any feedback directly in-person or through our online accessibility survey process related to barriers or implementation.

However, barriers and actions of note were reinforced through the reviewed in-depth engagement session/consultation with the CNIB organized by the CAB. These were related to Built Environment: Navigating Office Spaces, along with Information and Communication Technologies: Website and App Redesign, Closed Captioning on Video Postings, and Accessibility of Reporting.

Internally, as previously outlined, also ahead of this First Progress Reporting period, PRB did identify and consult with employees in person who had accessibility issues and addressed any needed barriers which required removal. This included Built Environment: Peace River Office Bathroom Door Sticking, Design and Delivery of Services: Digital Engagement and Transportation: Evaluation of PRB Vehicles.

We maintain our published feedback process and contact information on our company websites at [RiverCountry.fm/accessibility/](https://RiverCountry.fm/accessibility/) and [KIX.fm/accessibility/](https://KIX.fm/accessibility/).

We are committed to reviewing any received feedback and taking steps to make any needed changes.

## **Conclusion**

PRB is committed to the accessibility of its employees, customers and community members. We understand providing a barrier free work environment and associated policies are key in creating an inclusive, welcoming and respectful company.

We recognize accessibility is an ongoing process and will continue to examine practices and welcome feedback to help address barriers when identified. This includes internal and external consultations along with public feedback submissions.

## **Definitions**

***Barrier:*** 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 a person with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment, 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:*** Greater accessibility is achieved through 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 and use them, as independently as the person wishes.