



blue ant
media



Accessibility Plan

2023-2025



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1.0 General

1.1 About Blue Ant Media

Blue Ant Media is a privately held, Canadian-controlled international content producer, distributor of television shows and documentary films, and channel operator headquartered in Toronto.

Our Canadian channels and media business includes seven CRTC-licensed Canadian TV channels, including Cottage Life, Smithsonian Channel, BBC Earth and Love Nature, in addition to free streaming channels Haunt TV, CrimeTime and Homeful, which are available on platforms such as Samsung, Roku, and Amazon. Blue Ant also runs Cottage Life Magazine, the MobileSyrup technology news website, and operates consumer trade shows including the Fall and Spring Cottage Life Shows at the International Centre in Mississauga, Ontario, the Toronto Home and Baby Shows at the Enercare Centre in Toronto, Ontario and the Baby Show in Canada Place, Vancouver, British Columbia.

1.2 Statement of Commitment

Blue Ant Media is committed to working towards providing an inclusive and accessible environment for everyone. The company recognizes and fully supports the Accessible Canada Act (ACA), which aims to create a barrier free Canada for persons with disabilities.

As a federally regulated business, Blue Ant is subject to two sets of regulations under the ACA: the Accessible Canada Regulations, and the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) Accessibility Reporting Regulations. This document specifically describes Blue Ant's plans to identify and address barriers in the following areas, as set out in the Accessible Canada Regulations: (i) employment; (ii) the built environment; (iii) communication, as it relates to these categories (e.g., excluding broadcasting); and (iv) transportation.

We recognize there may be actions we can take to reduce barriers and improve the accessibility of our content, channels, and external websites. By June 1, 2024, we will update this plan to include an overview of our additional goals and commitments as a broadcaster, related to the areas identified under the CRTC Accessibility Reporting Regulations, including: (i) Information and communication technologies (ICT); (ii) communication (as it relates to broadcasting); (iii) the procurement of goods, services and facilities; and (iv) the design and delivery of programs and services.

1.3 Contact Information & Feedback Process

Blue Ant Media welcomes all feedback, including anonymous feedback, about our preliminary Accessibility Plan and any accessibility issues anyone encounters when viewing our content, channels or using our websites. We are committed to reviewing the comments we receive and taking steps where reasonable and necessary to provide accessibility improvements in all areas of our business.

You may provide your feedback by contacting Blue Ant Media's Head of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through any of the following methods:

[Feedback Form](#)

Email address: feedback@blueantmedia.com

Phone: 416-646-4434 or 1-888-259-0555

Mail: 99 Atlantic Avenue, 4th Floor, Toronto, ON Canada M6J 3J8

1.4 Alternative Formats

If you require a copy of our Accessibility Plan in a different format, please contact us and we will give it to you.

Blue Ant Media will provide the specified alternate formats within these timelines:

- Print: 15 days
- Large print (larger text): 15 days
- Braille (a system that uses raised dots to represent letters and numbers that people who are blind or have low vision can read with their fingers): 45 days
- Audio (a recording of a person reading the text out loud): 45 days

[2.0 Consultations](#)

Blue Ant Media conducted consultations with employees with disabilities and other stakeholders to help us identify barriers to accessibility in the applicable priority areas as outlined in the Accessible Canada Act. The information we gathered enriched our learning and helped us to create and prioritize the goals that we have set out in this Accessibility Plan.

For this plan, we consulted with people with disabilities in the following ways:

- We ran an anonymous electronic survey using a third-party administrator. We sent the survey to employees who self-identified as being a person with a disability as a part of our Employment Equity compliance process. The survey asked employees to share their accessibility experiences at our company based on key priority areas, as set out in the Accessible Canada Regulations. The common feedback we received was about our office space, flexible and hybrid work, and barriers in our hiring and retention practices.
- We held a focus group session with employees who are members of the Blue Ant Diversity Council and the Employment Equity Committee. This group comprised both people with disabilities and people who do not have a disability but wanted to participate by sharing their feedback and support our accessibility efforts. We asked the focus group to share their accessibility experiences and captured their feedback on an electronic whiteboard. The common feedback shared was about our office space, workplace culture, flexible and hybrid work, and broad accessibility considerations in communications.
- We conducted interviews with two accessibility experts. To guide our interview discussions, we provided both experts a link to the Canadian Human Rights Commission report titled, “Horizontal Audit in the Communications Sector: Improving Representation for People with Disabilities” and, asked each expert to review the commonly reported barriers to employment and best practices noted in the report. Both experts emphasized in general the importance of improving accessibility in hiring and promotions, job advertisements, providing disability awareness training and resources and provided specific goals and recommendations including how to make documents (including this Plan) more accessible.

3.0 Priorities under the Accessible Canada Regulations

3.1 Employment

At Blue Ant Media, we want to create an inclusive culture where all employees are treated with respect and dignity.

Blue Ant Media strives to be reflective of Canada’s diversity and reports annually under the Employment Equity Act on its employee representation in Canada for the four (4) designated groups (i.e., women, Indigenous people, racialized persons, persons with disabilities). We recently expanded our workforce self-identification questionnaire to

gain a better understanding of the kinds of disabilities, both visible and invisible, of our Canadian employees.

The company recognizes that barriers exist for employees and applicants with disabilities. We learned through consultations that the top employment barriers are a lack of disability awareness, attitudes and behaviors in the workplace, and a lack of awareness of the systemic issues and barriers faced by people with disabilities in hiring and retention.

Our goals to improve accessibility in employment (applicable to both current and future employees) include:

Short term:

- Review all job postings to ensure they are appealing to a diverse candidate pool.
- Educate hiring leaders about accessibility and accommodation and how they can create a barrier-free hiring and selection process.
- Provide learning opportunities to increase disability awareness and foster a workplace culture of inclusion (e.g., run a session on invisible disabilities during employee Learning Week).
- Add a question(s) to the annual employee engagement survey to measure employee perceptions of accessibility and/or solicit feedback on areas to improve.

Medium to long term:

- Educate leaders about accessibility and accommodation and how they can better support employees with disabilities (e.g., add to internal offerings including Blue Ant Manager 101).
- Provide learning opportunities and resources to increase disability awareness, reduce stigmas and stereotypes, and foster a workplace culture of inclusion.
- Review employee survey results (e.g., onboarding, training, employee engagement, exit) with an accessibility lens to identify barriers and trends and determine appropriate follow up actions.
- Continue to review job postings for inclusive language, essential job requirements, and accessibility and enhance our career page for accessibility and inclusion.
- Continue to review human resource policies and processes with an inclusion and accessibility lens.
- Partner with organizations that support persons with disabilities to increase our disability awareness and reach a wider range of candidates with disabilities.

3.2 The Built Environment

In 2022, Blue Ant Media moved its head office to a new space in Liberty Village, Toronto. Prior to the move, the company worked extensively with a design firm to create a workplace that reflects a modern and creative company and addresses the varying needs of employees. Employee consultation was an important part of the design process – our previous workplace environment had many physical accessibility barriers so great care was taken in selecting and designing a new space. Highlights of the new premise include various meeting spaces for working and collaboration, sit-stand desks, hand activated door openers, and a wellness room for meditation, prayer, breastfeeding mothers, or other reasons employees may need a quiet place to rest. Since that time, we have learned that some aspects of our open office space present a barrier – bright overhead lights, noise, and lack of private space do not suit the working styles of some employees with sensory and/or neurological disabilities. Other identified barriers include kitchen cabinet contents including cups and plates at heights that may be inaccessible and the need for a post pandemic refresher on emergency planning.

Our goals to improve accessibility in our built environment include:

Short term:

- Establish “quiet workspace” areas so employees can work in a quiet and private space if they need a break from the open-office plan.
- Review and update our emergency evacuation plan for persons with disabilities.

Long term:

- Review our current office space and assess the need for further accessibility improvements. Consult with employees with disabilities and where possible work with our landlord and property manager to prevent barriers and address identified barriers to accessibility.

3.3 Communication

Blue Ant Media uses a variety of communications tools including our public website (<https://blueantmedia.com>), social media platforms, as well as our internal website, systems, and communication tools for employees. We recognize there are actions we can take to reduce barriers and improve the accessibility of our public website - making key documents available in alternate formats is one example. Through consultations, other barriers discussed included education about the available tools to improve accessibility and a refresher on the process to request accommodations.

Our communication goals include:

Short term:

- Review and update Blue Ant Media's Accommodation Policy and share a policy communication reminder with employees.
- Create and implement a process to make internal employee meetings and events more accessible (e.g., Town Halls, Blue Ant Table Talks, Panels, EDI events, etc.).
- Provide accessibility training for all employees and teams who create communications content internally and externally.

Long term:

- Continue to evaluate and improve the accessibility of communications – both internally and externally.
- Continue to engage with stakeholders from the disability community to get feedback on our communications accessibility and to understand how to improve our services and offerings.
- Conduct a communications accessibility audit to identify barriers and help us set timelines to address them (e.g., implement alternative text).

3.4 Transportation

Transportation is a priority area not relevant to Blue Ant Media's operations.

4.0 Conclusion

Blue Ant Media is dedicated to playing our part to improve accessibility by implementing this Accessibility Plan. Our position within the media industry gives our company both a platform and an opportunity to influence change and promote a more inclusive world, and we are consistently evolving to live up to that responsibility. As per the ACA, we will update this plan every three years and report on our progress annually. By June 1, 2024, we will update this plan to include an overview of our additional goals and commitments as a broadcaster, related to the areas identified under the CRTC Accessibility Reporting Regulations as noted in Section 1.2 of this Plan. Finally, we plan to continuously consult with our employees with disabilities and other stakeholders to ensure that accessibility is being addressed and moving forward.

5.0 Appendix

5.1 Definitions

Barrier: The Accessible Canada Act defines a barrier as “anything – including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything 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 persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or functional limitation.”

Disability: The Accessible Canada Act defines a disability as “any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.”