

# 2023 Accessibility Progress Report

## General

Position designated to receive feedback: Accessibility Specialist and Operations Support.

Feedback and alternate format requests may be received in a variety of different ways, such as:

- Phone - 204-227-1527
- Online feedback form – [Anonymous Feedback Process](#)
- Email – [accessibility@waa.ca](mailto:accessibility@waa.ca)
- Mailing address – 1970 Wellington Ave, Winnipeg MB, R3H 1C2
- Social media - [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

## Executive summary

In 2023, Winnipeg Airports Authority (WAA) created and launched an accessibility plan to reflect the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) regulations and our commitment to our mission of “connecting communities and partnering to build a sustainable future”. Since then, we have developed an internal policy that outlines our objectives, strategies, and initiatives aimed at enhancing accessibility and promoting inclusion throughout our services and facilities at Winnipeg Richardson International Airport (YWG).

To stay on target with our accessibility goals, WAA invested in a dedicated position *Accessibility Specialist and Operations Support*. This position is dedicated to removing barriers both in the terminal and within the organization, focusing on the built environment, services, communication, training and developing community partnerships.

This year, we were recognized by Airports Council International (ACI) with a Level 3 accreditation. Though we are proud to be awarded excellence in accessibility, we will continue to strive to curate a barrier-free experience at our airport.

YWG is making progress in removing barriers around the terminal while keeping a strong connection with the communities. This progress report measures our ongoing commitment to accessibility and introduces details on new initiatives developed in the last year. This progress report upholds the standards found in the Accessible Canada Act (ACA) sections 60(1) and 62(5). It reflects our progress on our Accessibility Plan and in support of the regulations found in the Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations (ATPRR) section 12 (1-3), 13 (1) and 14 (1).

## Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

We continue to provide all flight information and schedule changes, including delays and cancellations, on our website: <https://www.ywg.ca>. Our website remains compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA. We maintain our service alerts

informing passengers at the top of our website and on social media about any operational impacts in a time-sensitive manner. We have added to our public address system by creating new announcements in a different tone and creating a visual format with universal symbols as well as text in English and French. WAA understands that technologies evolve, and we continue to educate ourselves by attending webinars and workshops on best practices to stay current.

In compliance with the Accessible Transportation of Persons with Disabilities (ATPDR) regulations, we installed two curbside kiosks on our departures level curb to assist our passengers and created a schedule for regular maintenance checks. Additionally, we also perform regular checks on our self-serve check-in kiosks to ensure the accessibility features work perfectly.

### Communication, other than ICT

We continue to provide alternative formats such as accessible electronic formats, large print, audio formats, and braille, providing information in clear and concise sentences. Additionally, we have standardized the use of ASL at our public events by working with the local group of interpreters at ECCOE. On our social media platforms, we ensure all photos provide alt-text and use basic language for all captions. Internally, we have started to draft a document called *Effective Communication* in collaboration with several departments, such as Human Resources and Communications. The document will be distributed to WAA staff.

### Procurement of goods, services and facilities

This year, accessibility was added to the sustainable procurement guidance manual. It was reviewed by the Accessibility Specialist and other members of the organization. The manual includes recommendations for all purchases such as carpet, furniture, electronic devices, etc. In addition to the manual, we continue to use our procurement platform, Bonfire, when onboarding new vendors. This platform asks them to self-declare specific accessibility information, such as how many disabled employees are in their workforce.

### Design and delivery of programs and services

We continue to provide on-site “lived experience” tours to our accessible committee members. The feedback shared based on their experience moving through the terminal is vital to removing barriers. We expanded our Passenger Rehearsal tours for any passengers who would like to tour through the experience before their departure. We launched our sensory support kits and, to date, have handed out nearly 40 kits.

The mYWG Accessibility Committee consists of community individuals and community organizations that meet monthly. The mYWG Accessibility Committee expanded its members this year by welcoming seven new members from various organizations, including the Hard of Hearing Association’s local chapter, the Manitoba Deaf Association, and an independent accessibility consultant. We continue to invite WAA staff and airline representatives to attend

the meetings. With the new members, we reviewed our Terms of References and elected a Co-Chair to represent the communities. We introduced a full-day annual accessible meeting inviting varied WAA departments to present their accessibility work and gain insights from the committee.

The Accessibility Specialist hired continued their development by completing the *Certified Autism Travel Professional* course and *Neurodiversity in the Workplace* certification. In collaboration with other Canadian airports, we launched our new online training, *Accessibility Training Canadian Airport Council*. Internally, we developed hands-on training and delivered it to our customer service group. Combining the two training models ensures the trainees receive adequate information on the following concepts.

- Human rights framework and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- The role of the CTA and the ATPDR
- Key terminology and definitions
- Types of mobility aids and devices
- Types of assistive devices
- Language of dignity
- Identification of the five barriers to equal access
- Providing assistance and interaction with the public
- Physical assistance
- Handling mobility aids and equipment
- Service dogs and support persons
- Recognition of common symbols throughout the terminal
- The role of the mYWG Accessibility Committee
- Summary of programs and services available at YWG
- Accessibility complaints, compliments, and suggestions process

Lastly, we created in-depth working instructions and training around our curbside assistance service to ensure that all customer service staff understand their roles and best practices when assisting passengers to and from the curb.

## Transportation

We continue to develop working relationships with all our transportation providers by providing them with accessibility training to comply with the regulations. We work closely with hotel shuttle drivers, taxi companies, and car rental companies to ensure they offer accessible services and products. We evaluate our transportation service partner offerings in collaboration with our mYWG Accessibility Committee members.

## Built environment

We continue to design all terminal improvements according to the universal design principles. We hold our tenants to the same standards and require them to design their spaces following the same principles. In the terminal, we improved our ATAPs 2113 by creating an oversized space with oversized doors, automatic door openers, and a second iris scanner at an accessible height. We have redesigned the spaces in all washrooms (including men's and accessible washrooms) where our feminine products are being dispensed, considering the height of the dispensers and other barriers. Through the feedback of our passengers and committee members, we have created a list of updates for future improvements.

## Provisions of CTA accessibility-related regulations

We remain committed to the requirements of the ACA, the ATPRRs, and the Accessible Canada Regulations (ACRs). WAA is subject to the CTA's ATPDRs and the provisions of these regulations. We remain compliant, and to maintain that compliance, we have moved our training tracking to our Learning Management System (LMS), have made improvements to our anonymous feedback process and remain on target for all actions captured in our 2023-2025 Accessibility plan.

## Employment

As an employer, WAA continues to welcome a diverse workforce and address systemic barriers through a variety of policies. To advance this work, we have created a DEIA Committee and hired a Recruitment Specialist responsible for creating a diverse recruitment practice. The Recruitment Process Map being developed by our Human Resources department has created standards for plain language job posting, tested the sites where we post our job postings, and developed a series of interview formats to ensure accommodations are met.

Additionally, the DEIA Committee launched a staff survey to gather information about our staff's barriers in the workplace. The results will remain anonymous, however, they will inform us of the staff's abilities and help us make informed decisions on future staff initiatives. Additionally, we created a staff survey to measure the accessibility knowledge of the staff to help inform us on what training refreshers need to be developed.

## Feedback information

Via our numerous feedback platforms, we have collected a good amount of feedback. The feedback we heard the most was a lack of personnel training and knowledge, which we addressed with the launch of our new accessible training models. We also recognize the need for refreshers to keep the information fresh. Another popular theme in the feedback received concerns accessible parking stalls and spaces on the arrivals level curb. This feedback is still being reviewed by a variety of internal departments. Some of the feedback received was positive and complimentary to the services provided, which helped us measure our programs and services.

Additionally, we launched a WIFI survey to collect information from our passengers. The survey was posted for two weeks during the Spring Break rush. It informed us what features our passengers are familiar with, what features they would like us to develop in the future, and how best to communicate our updates. The results informed us that our passengers lack knowledge of our accessibility features, which we are addressing by creating multi-communication campaigns. The survey also resulted in feedback about our announcements and the need to further develop accessible audio components by the gates.

## Consultations

We have maintained our accessibility committee, which was established in 2019. It has evolved by renaming it the mYWG Accessibility Committee and expanding the membership to ensure a well-rounded balance of representatives. We meet virtually once a month to address a standing agenda. The agenda provides updates to regulations, airport updates, and community updates. Once per quarter, we arrange a hybrid in-person meeting to review received feedback and gain insights from the committee. A new element we are piloting is meeting once a year for a full day of accessibility planning in collaboration with other departments.

mYWG Accessibility Committee members:

- CNIB
- Inclusion Winnipeg
- Senior Association of Manitoba
- St- Amant
- Manitoba Possible
- Hard of Hearing Association
- Independent advisor
- MB Deaf Association
- Two independent consultants

During the terminal tours, the themes of the feedback collected are about usability. The committee members are happy with the features, however, they require some minor modifications. In collaboration with the committee, we will continue to engage them when modifications are produced.

## Accessibility action plan, 2023-2026

- By the end of 2023, WAA will establish a Sustainable Meetings and Events Procedure. The procedure will include accessibility specifications and requirements to promote an inclusive and accessible environment for all meeting attendees.

**Update:** The document has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by various departments. We project the completion and launch of the document by the end of 2024.

- By the end of 2023, WAA will develop an Accessibility Policy. This distinct policy will describe WAA's commitment to barrier identification, removal, and prevention. This policy will guide WAA's actions and will align with strategic priorities supported by the senior leadership team. This policy will apply to WAA as an employer and a transportation service provider.

**Update:** WAA has met this action by developing and launching the policy on our intranet.

- Starting in 2023, WAA will enhance the consultation process. This will be achieved through enhancement of the mYWG Accessibility Committee by expanding membership to include more advocacy groups and consultation initiatives (e.g. lived experience focus groups). In addition, WAA will develop surveys to gather feedback from both employees and airport users on barriers/accessibility at WAA. WAA will also leverage social media and other formats to gather feedback about barriers in the workplace and airport.

**Update:** WAA met both actions by expanding our committee members and launching multiple surveys.

- Starting in 2023, WAA will increase employee awareness of accessible procurement practices to demonstrate WAA's commitment to embedding accessibility into business requirements and evaluation criteria.

**Update:** WAA has met this action by embedding our accessibility practices into our procurement practices. We will continue to work to develop these practices.

- In 2024, WAA will conduct a comprehensive assessment of all policies, services, and facilities that WAA offers to passengers. WAA will conduct a review of all internal employer-related policies/plans to address barriers to employment. In addition, WAA will conduct a review of all Information Technology (IT) systems to identify barriers specific to employees across departments. Furthermore, WAA will audit both architectural and sensory environments of WAA facilities.

**Update:** WAA remains committed to conducting a comprehensive assessment of all its policies, services, and facilities offered to passengers. This initiative aims to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all travellers.

- By the end of 2024, WAA will introduce new training for all WAA employees, including senior leadership. The training will focus on barrier identification and strategies to remove and prevent barriers from being introduced.

**Update:** As 2024 draws to a close, WAA is making significant strides in enhancing its organizational culture through the introduction of comprehensive training for all employees, including senior leadership.

- In 2025, WAA will develop a series of tools to support pre-planning the journey in advance of arriving at the airport. This will include the creation of a sensory guide for passengers with disabilities to support pre-planning.

**Update:** WAA is developing a series of tools to enhance the pre-planning experience for travellers before they arrive at the airport. This action continues to be developed.

- By the end of 2025, WAA will increase collaboration with disability advocacy organizations and recruitment agencies to identify and remove barriers to employment at WAA. WAA will review job descriptions and advertisements for employment to ensure they are barrier free and to attract diverse talent. In addition, WAA will develop plain-language job postings and strive for job postings that are 500 words or less.

**Update:** WAA is intensifying its efforts to foster collaboration with disability advocacy organizations and recruitment agencies. This strategic partnership aims to identify and eliminate barriers to employment within WAA and promote a more inclusive workforce. This action continues to be developed.