



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



# OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

Channel Zero Inc. and its subsidiaries, affiliates, and related companies are committed to promoting the independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity of persons with disabilities by ensuring the accessibility of our facilities and services. It is essential that accessibility is ingrained in the way we conduct our day-to-day business, and that we comply with all relevant legislation.

## GENERAL

We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs. We recognize that receiving feedback provides us with a valuable opportunity to learn and improve our service delivery. If you wish to request Channel Zero's accessibility plan or the description of the feedback process in an alternative format, or provide feedback, Channel Zero can be reached by:

### Mail:

Accessibility Champion  
Channel Zero Inc.  
2844 Dundas Street West,  
Toronto, Ontario, M6P 1Y7

### Telephone:

(416) 492 1595, extension 1900, from Monday to Friday, between 9am to 5pm Eastern Time.

### Email:

[accessibility@chz.com](mailto:accessibility@chz.com)

### Resources:

Documents related to our *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. To request these documents, please contact [accessibility@chz.com](mailto:accessibility@chz.com)

### Online Customer Service Form

[https://www.chz.com/additional/accessibility/#accessibility\\_form](https://www.chz.com/additional/accessibility/#accessibility_form)



# INTRODUCTION

Channel Zero is an independent Canadian media company that owns over-the-air channel CHCH-TV and specialty channels Rewind & Silver Screen Classics. Channel Zero's digital sales agency Junction Digital offers advertisers marketing solutions on our owned and operated websites and social media platforms and beyond via our trading desk. The film division of Channel Zero features Ouat Media, an Academy Award® winning film sales and distribution company, and Channel Zero Studios, a creative production arm that brings scripted and unscripted projects to life with innovative partnerships. Channel Zero's head office is located in Toronto, Ontario.

Channel Zero supports the Accessible Canada Act (ACA) and its efforts to make Canada free of barriers by 2040. As part of the ACA, Channel Zero is required to publish an accessibility plan that will identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers.

The ACA highlights seven areas of priority, of which six are relevant to Channel Zero. These priority areas include employment, the built environment, information and communications technologies (ICT), the design and delivery of tech, the procurement of goods, services and facilities, and transportation.

This plan summarizes the accessibility barriers identified relating to the previously mentioned priority areas. This plan will also explain how we plan to eliminate these barriers and prevent new ones from happening.



# CONSULTATIONS

We believe in a culture that values collaboration and connectivity and realize the importance of the involvement and participation of persons with disabilities. To develop the accessibility plan, we formed an Accessibility Advisory Committee to perform internal and external consultations to help identify, eliminate and prevent barriers.

We engaged with nearly one-thousand (1,000) individuals internally and externally. The results of both consultations have been reviewed diligently to develop this accessibility plan.

## INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

An internal anonymous survey was deployed to all Channel Zero employees at the beginning of May, representing approximately 160 individuals. The purpose of the survey was to collect any feedback from employees who may be aware of, or, have experienced any accessibility barriers.

The disabilities identified included physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, and communication or sensory disabilities.

Following the internal employee survey, a preliminary report of findings was developed by the Accessibility Committee. The barriers and next steps have been identified and detailed in the sections below.

## EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

In order to get feedback from external stakeholders and Canadians, including persons with disabilities, an invitation to complete an anonymous survey was launched on the company website, newsletter, social media platforms and was also mentioned on CHCH's very own show, *Morning Live*.

The survey gathered information such as whether the participant identifies as a person with a disability or a caregiver of someone with a disability, what disability they may have and how they have interacted with Channel Zero (and its subsidiaries) before and in what capacity.

Out of the eight hundred eighteen (818) respondents, two hundred fifty six (256) identified as being a person with a disability/disabilities and sixty nine (69) identified as being a caregiver of someone with a disability. The disabilities identified included physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, and communication or sensory disabilities.

Following the external survey, a preliminary report of findings was developed by the Accessibility Committee. The barriers and next steps have been identified and detailed in the sections below.



# EMPLOYMENT

## WHERE WE ARE:

Accessible employment at the Channel Zero group of companies means that employees with disabilities and those experiencing barriers are supported throughout their employee journey. From recruitment and hiring to onboarding and career progression, the goal is to ensure that all employees are supported to reach their full potential.

Channel Zero did a deeper dive on its current hiring and onboarding processes as well as past consultations done on employee wellbeing (accommodations).

Channel Zero is quick to act on the needs of its employees, as they come up, including any accommodation needs. Should an accommodation need arise, an employee is invited to complete an accommodation form, in collaboration with their Manager and a representative from Human Resources. Solutions to barriers experienced by an employee may include specialized technology, modifications to the work environment or adjustments to work schedules or responsibilities.

All individuals employed by Channel Zero are also given access to the Company “Intranet” where resources such as the accommodation form and employment equity questionnaire can be found and completed confidentially. Other material available on this platform include the company’s current policies and procedures which were designed to meet or exceed relevant legislations such as the Canada Labour Code. Current Health & Safety policies are also found on this platform.

## WHAT WE HAVE GATHERED:

The internal survey asked a series of employment-related questions. Results from the fifty (50) individuals who participated informed us of the following:

**Recruitment:** Ten percent (10%) are aware of recruitment barriers at Channel Zero and two percent (2%) have experienced recruitment barriers.

**Onboarding:** Although all participants have indicated that they have not experienced onboarding barriers, ten percent (10%) are aware of onboarding barriers at Channel Zero.

**Job Opportunities:** When asked if they feel that Channel Zero is an organization that is welcoming to people with disabilities (as it pertains to new job opportunities), ninety percent (90%) answered yes.

**Training:** Fourteen percent (14%) have indicated that they are aware of training barriers and two percent (2%) have experienced training barriers.

An external survey was also conducted to get feedback from stakeholders and Canadians who have looked into employment opportunities at Channel Zero. Results from this survey show that out of the eight hundred eighteen participants, fifteen (15) individuals have sought employment at Channel Zero within the past five years. Three (3) individuals answered that they have experienced barriers to seeking employment at Channel Zero.



## BARRIERS IDENTIFIED:

Barriers identified from both consultations include:

- Lack of alternative methods to submit resumes and cover letters.
  - Job openings state that resumes must be submitted by email. No alternative methods are stated/provided.
  - Job openings are not fully accessible. I.e: the job posting on the company website and employee Intranet is in a PDF format. This does not accommodate people who are blind or partially sighted.
- Inconsistencies in addressing accommodation requests.
  - There is a lack of clarity on how to properly submit an accommodation request and what the next steps are once an accommodation request is submitted.
  - Some employees have raised concerns about not knowing what types of accommodation can and should be requested.
- Lack of awareness and training about different types of disabilities and how to respond to them.
  - Employees have raised attitudinal barriers at Channel Zero, including a lack of acceptance over disabilities that are NOT visible. Some have also raised concerns about conversations and opinions in the workplace that are not inclusive or accepting of people with disabilities.
  - The lack of awareness and training about the different kinds of disabilities have also created systemic barriers for some employees to progress in their careers, such as assumptions about competence or capacity due to their disability.

## THE WAY FORWARD:

- Make the hiring process more accessible.
  - Job openings will continue to be posted on the company's website which is being developed to meet or exceed WCAG and ACA standards. Links will identify that hyperlinked content is in accessible HTML and/or PDF formats. This will continue to support evolving accessibility tools for job-seekers to utilize, should the need arise.
  - To provide a greater understanding of the recruitment process, a condensed version of the company recruitment guide will be provided in accessible formats.
  - To be more welcoming to job-seekers with disabilities, applicants will be asked to specify how they would like to receive communication from the company. I.e: by phone, email, in-person, etc.
  - Onboarding materials can be requested in an alternative format. This will include accessible digital formats as opposed to only paper training materials. This will allow for assistive technology such as screen readers.
- Provide better communication and clarity on current company policies and procedures, including accommodation requests.
  - Educational and training resources will be available in an accessible format that takes into account the accessibility needs of a person with a disability.
  - To provide greater clarity, instructions currently embedded within the accommodation and other forms will be expanded upon in a separate intranet landing page from which employees can choose from a selection of accessible options.
- Provide Disability Awareness training to all employees.
  - Channel Zero's Accessibility Advisory Committee in collaboration with Human Resources will develop and train all employees on disability awareness to encourage an inclusive workplace. This training will offer a deep understanding of the different types of



disabilities, how to work with people with disabilities, the process of accommodation and examples of existing or potential accommodations and supports available.

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### WHERE WE ARE:

Channel Zero aims to ensure that all employees and visitors of Channel Zero have a barrier-free experience navigating through the Toronto and Hamilton offices.

Channel Zero owns two locations in Ontario. Both offices operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Channel Zero actively stays engaged in identifying, removing and preventing all built environment barriers. These objectives were on top of mind during the design and construction of the new building in Hamilton (officially opened in 2022) as well as the retrofits and improvements that are occurring in the Toronto office.

### WHAT WE HAVE GATHERED:

Participants of the internal survey were asked a series of questions regarding the built environment at Channel Zero. Results informed us of the following:

**Architectural and Physical Barriers:** When asked if they are aware of architectural or physical barriers at Channel Zero, thirty-five percent (35%) answered yes. Six percent (6%) have experienced architectural or physical barriers.

**Areas of experienced architectural and physical barriers:** Main areas of concern include the elevators, communal spaces, as well as some workspace arrangements.

Of the eight hundred eighteen (818) individuals who participated in the external survey, sixty-nine (69) have visited the Hamilton office, five (5) have visited the Toronto office and three (3) have visited both Hamilton and Toronto offices in the past five years. When asked if they have experienced any barriers with the built environment in either offices, ninety-three percent (93%) answered no, and seven percent (7%) answered yes.

### BARRIERS IDENTIFIED:

More Built Environment barriers have been identified in the Toronto office due to it being an older building. With this office also being physically attached to other businesses, external renovations and retrofitting prove to be a challenge. Other areas of concern in this office are below:

- Lack of training regarding the use of the manual freight elevator. This presents a physical barrier for those who do not know how to operate the elevator and cannot use the stairs and need to rely on those trained to operate it.
- The basement is currently being used as a workspace and storage area. This has created hazards and mobility barriers in the hallways.
- The rear entrance is not equipped with a ramp and is not accessible.
- Lack of ergonomic furniture.



With accessibility in mind during the design and construction of the new building in Hamilton, only a few barriers in this building were mentioned:

- Concerns regarding the placement/storage of shared items in communal areas was mentioned. For example, there was a concern that dishware in the canteen is located on higher shelves, making it difficult for some to reach for their own glass/coffee mug.
- Some areas are not accessible for people with mobility issues. For example, two of the news sets in the studio are elevated.

### THE WAY FORWARD:

We will continue to analyze and review the built environment to resolve the barriers identified. Given that our Toronto office is physically attached to other businesses, we do not have full control of its built environment. However, we strive to remove barriers in the built environment that we have control over. A number of short-term items will be targeted to start, including the following:

- Make the workplace more accessible for persons with mobility issues so that they can move freely on their own.
  - Offer training on how to operate the manual elevator in the Toronto office.
  - Dedicate a storage area in the Toronto office, away from any workspaces and hallways.
  - Reorganize where shared items are placed in communal spaces.
  - Invest in ergonomic furniture such as height-adjustable desks and ergonomic chairs

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

### WHERE WE ARE:

We are committed to providing information and communication in the most effective and efficient way to our employees and audiences of all abilities. We aim to be more digitally accessible by identifying and eliminating barriers found in our websites, mobile applications, telephone communications and face-to-face interactions. Our efforts towards this commitment include the following:

- All new and existing websites are regularly being updated to comply with WCAG and ACA standards. Existing captchas on our websites are also regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that accessible alternatives are offered to users of all abilities.
- All operating systems used by employees have built-in accessibility and assistive technology tools.
- The I.T. department is readily available to support users who need to access and/or provide information in accessible formats.

### WHAT WE HAVE GATHERED:

Participants of the internal employee survey were asked a series of questions regarding our existing information and communication practices. Results from this survey informed us of the following:

**Informational and Communications Barriers:** When asked if they are aware of information and communication barriers at Channel Zero, twenty percent (20%) answered yes. Eight percent (8%) answered that they have also experienced information and communication barriers.





**Accessibility Aids:** The survey informed us that the top accessibility aid used by the participants to watch, read, or listen to media content in the past month is closed captioning, followed by described video, audio transcripts and screen reader. None of the participants have used sign language interpreting.

When asked if they have had any issues with using accessibility aids to watch, read or listen to Channel Zero content in the past month, fifty-one percent (51%) answered no and the remaining forty-nine percent (49%) answered that they have not used any accessibility aid.

**Technology Barriers:** When asked if they are aware of any technological barriers to services that impact people with disabilities at Channel Zero, six percent (6%) answered yes. When asked if they have experienced technological barriers at Channel Zero, one hundred percent (100%) answered no.

**Existing Accessibility Tools and Settings:** Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents have answered that they are not aware of the accessibility tools and settings built into our operating systems. Of the remaining thirty-one percent (31%) who answered yes, the following accessibility tools they have used are identified below:

- Larger text and magnifier.
- Audio Transcripts.

A similar series of questions were asked on the external consultation. Of the eight hundred eighteen (818) respondents, sixty percent (60%) have accessed Channel Zero content on any digital platforms. Twenty-five percent (25%) have used either closed captioning, described video and audio transcripts. The remaining seventy five percent (75%) answered that they have not used an accessibility aid before.

#### **BARRIERS IDENTIFIED:**

Barriers identified from both internal and external consultations are noted below:

- The website is not always easy to navigate due to the large volume of information.
- Not all employees are familiar with the accessibility offerings built into our operating systems (Windows 10/11 and Google Workspace).

#### **THE WAY FORWARD:**

- Work with web accessibility industry leaders to adopt universal design principles and best practices in digital accessibility. This will ensure that our websites stay compliant with WCAG and ACA standards.
- IT staff will be provided training on configuring and deploying NVDA (Screen Reader). This tool will enable people with blindness, visual impairments and/or reading disabilities to browse websites by having the text read out loud.
- Provide clarity to the process of requesting IT-related accessibility accommodations to ensure that employees and audiences of all abilities are able to access information and communication effectively and efficiently.
- Implement training sessions on existing accessibility tools within our IT systems.



# THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## WHERE WE ARE:

At Channel Zero, we are committed to designing and delivering programs and services that are accessible by Canadians of all abilities. How we deliver our content plays an integral role to Channel Zero's Why Statement: *We tell engaging stories and share information so that our audiences can lead richer, more rewarding lives.*

Efforts toward this commitment include the following:

### Closed Captioning

- We provide 100% captioning on programs, promos and advertising materials on the traditional linear channel and live stream on the CHCH website.
- We have maintained closed captioning accuracy standards of one hundred percent (100%) accurate on off-line captions.
- We comply with live closed captioning NER standards, keeping an accuracy rate of ninety-eight percent (98%) on live programs.
- Annual reports on live closed captioning are reported and submitted to the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

### Audio Description or Interactive Described Video

- Our on-air talent is trained in providing audio description on informational programs so viewers with visual impairment can still receive the news without barriers.
- We regularly update our training on Interactive Described Video.

### Described Video

- CHCH, Silver Screen Classics and Rewind follow CRTC regulations and provide DV on all programs under categories - Drama & Comedy, Long-form documentary, Variety, and General entertainment and human interest that airs in prime time.

## BARRIERS IDENTIFIED:

- There are opportunities to expand the availability of video content with consistent and accurate Described Video (DV) and Closed Captions (CC) on our websites.

## THE WAY FORWARD:

- Expand our closed captioning offering for content on our websites
- Continue training sessions on Interactive Described Video services.



# THE PROCUREMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

## WHERE WE ARE:

We encourage the use of suppliers who are part of our supplier diversity program. Our procurement practices guide our *good, service and facility* purchasing decisions to prevent accessibility barriers. When interacting with new and existing suppliers, we make sure to communicate our accessibility expectations and requirements.

### Purchasing of Goods & Services - Things we Consider:

- Is the good/service accessible by people of all abilities?
- Can the goods/service be customized to meet a variety of needs?
- Are support materials, such as training manuals, available in accessible formats?
- What types of common assistive technology can be implemented?

### Purchasing/Rental of Facilities - Things we Consider:

- Can someone using a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair, get around the facility?
- Are wayfinding signs placed at an accessible height?
- What are the emergency procedures to assist people with disabilities?
- Can someone with a disability use the facility as quickly and as easily as a person without a disability?

## BARRIERS IDENTIFIED:

- Our existing procurement practices may not always meet accessibility requirements.

## THE WAY FORWARD:

Channel Zero is undertaking the following initiatives to further achieve accessible procurement:

- Review and update our current procurement accessibility criteria, on a regular basis.
- Continue to evaluate current procurement practices and policies to improve accessibility.

# TRANSPORTATION

Channel Zero does not offer transportation services except for company vehicles for our News and live productions while employees work on location. We've identified accessible transportation as a barrier in this category, and we will work to address this barrier under Employment accommodations with individual employees.

