



BC Maritime
Employers Association

BC MARITIME EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION

BCMEIA.COM

BCMEA

2024 Progress Report

Accessibility Plan

GENERAL

Summary

The British Columbia Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) has made significant progress towards most of the goals set in our Accessibility Plan. Our Accessibility Plan consisted of 12 goals with 32 associated actions. Additionally, we have added 1 new commitment with 2 associated actions to our Design and Delivery of Programs and Services section. Of these we have:

- Completed 7 action items
- Made progress on 16 action items
- Have 11 pending action items

In our commitment to accessibility and providing a barrier-free work environment, 2 of the goals we set in 2023 have become established processes that will be ongoing business practices. Many of the goals that we have not started are dependent on the completion of the goals in progress.

Accessibility Statement

The BCMEA is committed to providing a barrier-free, accessible environment to BCMEA employees, union members, and association members whenever possible.

Our commitment is to advance as a workplace and association that is accessible for everyone and ensures progress through participation and opportunities that are barrier-free and equally accessible across all identities and irrespective of one's abilities.

Accessibility Committee

An Accessibility Committee will be established as a sub-committee within a broader Diversity & Inclusion Committee. Our current Accessibility Plan project group includes:

1. **Navi Dhesi**
LR Officer
2. **Colleen Sheehy**
HR Manager
3. **Heather Wright**
VP – People and Technology

Feedback Process

The BCMEA is committed to providing an open and transparent feedback process. For more information, to provide feedback, or to request alternative formats of this Plan, please contact the BCMEA through one of the following methods:

- Anonymous [feedback form](https://forms.office.com/r/25Hvy0ik3J) (<https://forms.office.com/r/25Hvy0ik3J>)
- Direct mail: 349 Railway St., Vancouver, BC, V6A 1A4
- Telephone: 604-688-1155

Alternative Formats

The BCMEA's Accessibility Plan is available in the following formats:

- Print
- Large Print
- Electronic
- Audio

A Braille copy of the BCMEA's Accessibility Plan may be requested by phone at 604-688-1155 or through our [online form](https://forms.office.com/r/25Hvy0ik3J) (<https://forms.office.com/r/25Hvy0ik3J>).

PRIORITY AREAS

Area 1: Employment

Our Accessibility Goal

At the BCMEA we are proud to support and value diversity and inclusion amongst our teams and in our workplace. Our goal is to create a welcoming, accessible, barrier-free workplace environment for all employees and prospective candidates.

Actions

Commitment 1: Provide a safe and welcoming environment for employees with disabilities by:

- 1.1 Completing a detailed audit of our current accommodation process to understand how the BCMEA has or would meet employee accommodation requests by January 2024.

Status: Complete

Actions: The BCMEA engaged a 3rd party HR consulting group with experience in accommodations processes and policies to conduct a non-biased review of our existing accommodation process. The results of the audit determined that a new policy and process were needed to fully meet all possible requests.

- 1.2 Establishing guiding principles for meeting accommodation requests by January 2024.

Status: Complete

Actions: Our HR team has developed a new Accommodation Policy which outlines instances where workplace accommodations might be required, along with practical examples. The Policy is due to be published for employees and managers to access in 2024. Additionally, we developed a “Best Practices Guide” written in plain language to accompany the Policy that guides managers on how to navigate workplace accommodations, their responsibility in the accommodation process, and how to participate in conversations with employees regarding their accommodation requests.

- 1.3 Developing a formal process for employees to request accommodations including a process of requesting feedback from employees on their requests by January 2025.

Status: In Progress

Actions: In the development of our Accommodation Policy, we have included a process for both employees and candidates to request an accommodation and additional information regarding the policy.

The next step is for the BCMEA HR team to provide employees with a simplified version of the process and to incorporate the process into our communications with candidates. This is on track to be completed by January 2025.

- 1.4 Review the Violence and Harassment Policy and add an anti-discrimination clause by June 2024.

Status: In Progress

Actions: The review of our Violence and Harassment Policy aligned with our full review of the Violence and Harassment Prevention Program which has caused a small delay in our anticipated timeline. The review is well underway and is anticipated to be completed this year. Since the program and its related policies are being reviewed jointly, there are more stakeholders involved and wider spread implications for the entire BC Waterfront that need to be taken into consideration.

- 1.5 Planning the rollout, including budget, timeline, and accountability standards, for a formal DEI training program for all people leaders with an emphasis on workplace accessibility training starting with a pilot project to run in 2025.

Status: In Progress

Actions: The BCMEA has recently re-launched our DEI Committee in 2024. Identifying and planning DEI training opportunities, including those related to accessibility, has been added to the action plan for the committee in 2024.

Commitment 2: Further promote employment opportunities and growth for individuals with disabilities by:

- 2.1 Updating the BCMEA's Equal Employment Opportunity Statement to include links to our Violence and Harassment Policy, and Anti-Discrimination Policy and include the statement on all job ads by June 2024.

Status: Not Started

Actions: The delay in updating the BCMEA's Equal Employment Opportunity Statement stemmed from a combination of resource constraints and shifting priorities within the organization. We wanted to focus on getting the new program and policy out and will be focusing on the review this year.

- 2.2 Completing a detailed audit by June 2024 of our internal recruitment process to fully understand how the BCMEA has or would meet accommodation requests during the recruitment process.

Status: Complete

Actions: The BCMEA engaged a 3rd party HR consulting group with experience in accommodations processes and policies to conduct a non-biased review of our recruitment process. The results of the audit determined that a new policy and process were needed to fully meet all possible requests during recruitment.

- 2.3 Adding a process for candidates to request accommodations during the interview process on all job postings by January 2025.

Status: In Progress

Actions: The process for candidates to request accommodations during the interview process has been written. Our next steps are to determine best practices for when and how to provide this information to candidates and then to put this into practice with our recruitment team.

Commitment 3: Plan an employee communication campaign starting in 2023 to inform them of new accessibility policies and services available to them. Communications will include awareness of disability definitions and common barriers to accessibility.

Status: In Progress & Ongoing

Actions: The BCMEA HR team began communicating details of the Accessibility Plan and the resulting action items in 2023. In addition to the Plan being made available to all employees throughout the website, the initial publication was shared with Directors and Managers.

We are committed to continuing to provide transparency for employees and will continue to communicate new programs and policies that are developed as a result of the Accessibility Plan initiatives.

Area 2: Built Environment

Our Accessibility Goal

The BCMEA aims to ensure that all our facilities are barrier-free for our employees, union employees, customers, individuals from member companies, and the public. We need to understand the safety and security of our facilities and the jobs performed on-site to prioritize accessibility upgrades.

Actions

Commitment 1: Create a physical environment that is free from barriers and provides safe access to all employees by:

- 1.1 Removing all obstructions from hallways and refuge areas at our head office by December 2023.

Status: Complete & Ongoing

Actions: The BCMEA made an initial effort to remove obstructions from the hallways and refuge areas at our head office; however, this will be an ongoing effort. From time to time, obstacles such as boxes, are stored in the hallways temporarily (e.g., during construction). The team is diligent in ensuring that pathways around the office remain wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through, for example, and do not limit movement throughout the place. Boxes and other obstructions are removed as soon as possible.

- 1.2 Providing our Health & Safety Committee Members and Floor Wardens with training on how to engage and support people with disabilities in case of emergencies by June 2024.

Status: In Progress

Actions: There has been some delay in identifying an appropriate training course for our Health & Safety Committee and Floor Wardens. We are still in the process of researching options and with the recent onboarding of a Health & Safety Manager, we are confident that we will be able to make progress towards this goal this year.

- 1.3 Conducting a formal inventory and list of upgrades for all common spaces, including but not limited to, lunchrooms, washrooms, shower facilities, common areas, access points, and parking spaces that will need to be upgraded with accessibility features by June 2025.

Status: In Progress

Actions: We have begun the process of identifying areas of renovation with our head office and are on track to have a full list by June 2025. Where possible, we have already begun renovations on some of our highest-traffic areas.

In 2024, we completed a renovation to open our main office space and provide more room for people to move and work without barriers. We have several additional renovation projects planned for 2024 and 2025

including a new enclosed parking lot that will provide additional safety and designated accessible parking spaces. Our goal is to engage a contractor with experience in universal and accessible design.

1.4 Establishing a priority list and budget for all accessibility upgrades by June 2026.

Status: In Progress

Actions: As we identify areas for renovation, we are prioritizing them based on the level of traffic from our employees and visitors to the space. See the previous action item for more information on the renovations that have already started.

1.5 Developing a standard for accessibly designed signage throughout all our facilities by June 2026.

Status: Not Started

Commitment 2: Provide the opportunity for non-union employees, contractors, association members, and guests to attend meetings virtually, when possible, by:

2.1 Establishing a virtual attendance policy that accounts for which roles can be performed remotely and general etiquette for virtual meetings by June 2025.

Status: In Progress

Actions: An informal policy has been established and HR is working toward the development of a written policy that can be shared with employees by June 2025.

2.2 Ensuring that all employees have access to the correct tools and equipment, including adaptive technology when needed, to attend meetings virtually and fully participate with their colleagues by June 2026.

Status: Not Started

Area 3: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Our Accessibility Goal

The BCMEA's goal is for ICT to provide all users, including persons with disabilities, with progressive tools that support efficiency and reduce barriers to communication for BCMEA employees, union employees, customers, individuals from member companies, and the public.

Actions

Commitment 1: Further assess and understand the barriers that exist in our ICT infrastructure by:

1.1 Creating an Accessibility Assessment tool for ICT systems, possibly in collaboration with an external subject matter expert vendor, that identifies areas for enhanced accessibility by 2024.

Status: Complete

Actions: The BCMEA developed an internal Digital Accessibility Assessment tool that can be applied to both internal ICT systems and 3rd-party applications. We consulted the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to inform the development and engage the BC Centre for Ability to review and provide feedback on the tool.

- 1.2 Determining feasibility, priority, and budget for completing an Accessibility Assessment of all ICT systems to identify areas of improvement and develop a plan to address existing barriers by 2025.

Status: In Progress

Actions: We have started looking at the list of tools that will need to be assessed and are on track to have a full list and understanding of the time commitment by 2025.

- 1.3 Conducting an Accessibility Assessment of BCMEA’s website, the Union employee portal, the member portal, and the external third-party provider portal ICT systems by June 2026.

Status: Not Started

- 1.4 Establishing a prioritized plan to implement the Accessibility Assessment tool across all ICT systems by June 2026.

Status: Not Started

Commitment 2: Ensure plans are in place to identify and remove barriers where possible and upgrade our standards to WCAG 2.2 by:

- 2.1 Aligning with principles of WCAG 2.2 on ICT systems, including BCMEA’s website refresh that is to begin in Fall 2023, by December 2026.

Status: In Progress

Actions: Due to some shifting resources towards the end of 2023, we have adjusted our timeline for launching the website refresh to October 2024; however, we are still on track to be aligned with the WCAG 2.2 AA standards by December 2026.

Before launching the new website, we will seek to have the page tested by people with disabilities to ensure we have effectively met AA standards.

- 2.2 Including digital accessibility tools as part of the accommodation process for employees and applicants on BCMEA’s website (e.g., screen readers, text-to-voice, etc.) by 2026.

Status: Not Started

Area 4: Communication, other than ICT

Our Accessibility Goal

We seek to ensure that our mode of communication and communication tools enable all employees to thrive and express their unique perspectives and contributions, connect with their team, and feel respected, included, and heard organization wide.

Actions

Commitment 1: Develop a communication standard for the BCMEA that is designed to be barrier-free and supports accessibility from inception by:

1.1 Reviewing communications materials to identify large-scale revisions to templates and branding to support standardization and integration of accessibility principles, design, tools, and plain language across the BCMEA’s communication(s) by 2026.

- Considering accessible design during the rebranding process and in the designing of future communication templates.
- Establishing branding and communication guidelines that incorporate accessible design and communication standards.

Status: In Progress

Actions: The BCMEA Communications team has started to work toward incorporating accessible principles into our branding. We have revisited our font choices, and colour schemes, and are in the process of launching a new logo which will increase legibility through higher contrast simplified text.

1.2 Collecting feedback from employees and association members regarding our overall communication strategy and the level of accessibility starting in 2026.

Status: Not Started

1.3 Training employees responsible for communication, including those in HR and Marketing, on accessible communication best practices and the use of plain language starting in 2026.

Status: Not Started

Area 5: Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

Our Accessibility Goal

The BCMEA aims to work with vendors and providers who share our values and good business practices. As such our goal is to ensure accessibility and accessible design are included in our evaluation of all contractors providing products, services, and facilities to the BCMEA.

Actions

Commitment 1: The BCMEA will actively seek out vendors who have a strong commitment to accessibility and promote the use of accessible technologies and tools that are designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities by:

1.1 Developing and publishing a new Procurement Policy that prioritizes the selection of goods, services, and facilities that promote access to employment, accessible design, and provide a barrier-free procurement process by June 2024.

Status: In Progress

Actions: We have started working on a list of preferred vendors who promote access to employment and accessible design, but the process has been much more complex than we had originally anticipated. Our procurement policy and process must take a fully inclusive lens to include people with disabilities but also other minority groups including women, Indigenous people, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and visible minorities.

While we have had to delay the completion of this action, we are committed to continuing to progress accessibility in our procurement practices.

- 1.2 Training all employees responsible for procurement on the new policy and how to identify accessible design starting in 2024.

Status: Not Started

Actions: We are still on track to start training this year.

Area 6: Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Our Accessibility Goal

Design services that are inherently accessible in their design and address barriers in existing services.

Actions

Commitment 1: To review all training programs for potential accessibility enhancements while considering bona fide occupational requirements as they relate to the safety of the work sites.

- 1.1 Working with our training and communication teams to provide alternative formats, including large print, audio, and E-learning for training materials starting in 2025.

Status: In Progress

Actions: We have started looking into options for alternative formats for our training program. Due to the cost and low demand for alternative formats, we will likely be providing this as an on-demand model.

- 1.2 Assessing the feasibility and logistics of revamping our training programs to be more accessible for people with a cognitive, learning, or mental health disability, by 2026.

Status: Not Started

Commitment 2: Enhance the accessibility of services designed by the BCMEA for association and union members by:

- 2.1 Creating an Accessibility Assessment Tool to analyze existing and new services to identify barriers and ways to remove barriers by June 2024.

Status: In Progress

Actions: Many of the services that we provide our members are delivered through ICT systems and/or are related to our training programs. With this in mind, we will use the Digital Assessment Tool created for our ICT systems (see Commitment 1 in Information and Communication Technologies) to evaluate the programs that are provided through digital means, while continuing to identify opportunities to improve the accessibility of our training program (see Commitment 1 of Design and Delivery of Programs and Services).

- 2.2 Analyzing existing and new services using the Accessibility Tool to identify and prioritize barriers to be removed by December 2026.

Status: Not Started

***NEW* Commitment 3:** Whenever possible, share the accessibility tools and knowledge that we have developed in the process of establishing internal processes with our member companies by:

- 1.1 Providing BC Maritime Employers with Accommodation Policy & Process templates to support the establishment of an industry-wide standard of accommodation for the BC waterfront by 2024.

Status: Complete

Actions: In the process of developing a new Accommodation Policy and Process for the BCMEA, we decided it would be valuable to establish an industry standard for accommodation. Once the policy was complete, we provided member organizations with a templated version that they could customize for their employees and their unique needs.

- 1.2 Develop and share a Digital Accessibility Assessment Tool for BC Maritime Employers to use in the assessment of their own ICT systems by 2024.

Status: Complete

Actions: Once we had developed the Digital Assessment Tool for our internal use, we shared the Tool with our member organizations. This helps to create consistency across the industry and ensures that our members have access to tools that have been assessed and created in collaboration with organizations representing people with disabilities.

Area 7: Transportation

Our Accessibility Goal

The BCMEA's goal is to ensure that employees who are transported for work purposes have access to safe, reliable, and accessible means of ground transportation.

Actions

Commitment 1: Ensure that the BCMEA's Policy for transporting employees by taxi for work purposes integrates accessibility to meet the needs of staff and actively seek out vendors who have a strong commitment to accessibility by:

- 1.1 Reviewing our Taxi Policy and modifying it to ensure that vendor companies offer accessible options and meet the accessibility needs of employees by December 2023.

Status: Complete

Actions: Our HR team has reviewed the taxi policy and confirmed that employees of the BCMEA have the option to request a taxi that is suitable for their needs.

FEEDBACK

In the first year following the publication of the BCMEA's Accessibility Plan, we have not received any feedback from employees, customers, or the general public. As such, we have been unable to incorporate any feedback into our first Progress Report.

We will continue to work with our accessibility working group to ensure we are actively seeking feedback whenever possible.

CONSULTATIONS

Summary

The concept of "[Nothing About Us, Without Us](#)" supports the notion that persons with disabilities must be involved in the ideation of the BCMEA's Accessibility Plan and Progress Reports. This further supports our efforts to identify opportunities to progress accessibility in our policies and procedures and built environment. We consulted the British Columbia Centre for Ability (BCCFA) in the development of our Accessibility Plan.

Consultation Process

We provided the BCCFA with a draft of our Progress Report as a Word document for their review. We followed this with a live session on May 16, 2024, to discuss the impact and significance of our actions towards our accessibility commitments.

The session was hosted virtually on Zoom and the consultation team from BCCFA was asked in advance about any accommodation that may be needed for the session.

During the session, participants had the option to turn on closed captioning. Each priority area of the Progress Report was discussed and accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation for everyone to see.

Results

During the consultation session, each of the BCMEA's commitments and corresponding actions taken over the last year to progress our Accessibility Plan forward.

Overall, the BCCFA provided feedback that our Report is easy to follow, and well-written using concise and plain language. The BCCFA recommended that we make more explicit our intentions to work with people with disabilities and/or appropriate accreditations in the development of our programs and policies.

Future Consultations & Feedback

Future versions of the BCMEA's Accessibility Plan will place greater emphasis on conducting a more comprehensive consultation process to fully align with the concept of "Nothing Without Us". Our goal is to engage broader mechanisms for consultation of organizations, employees, association members, and union members through testimonials and storytelling, feedback surveys, and facilitated consultative sessions. We recognize that the more robust our consultation phase is in future republications of our plan, the more likely it is that barriers will be identified and meaningful progress on accessibility and DEI will be achieved.



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