



*MLAs divide their time between their constituencies and their work in the Assembly.*

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Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**What is an MLA?**



### What Is An MLA?

An MLA is a Member of the Legislative Assembly, someone elected by the people of Manitoba to serve as their representative in the Legislature. When we have a provincial election, every Canadian

citizen living in Manitoba who is over 18 years of age and eligible to vote has the right to cast a ballot for the person they think will do the best job as their MLA.

Manitoba is divided up into 57 different areas called "constituencies." Each of these areas elects one MLA. That means there are 57 MLAs in the Manitoba Legislature.

### What Do MLAs Do? They Make Laws!

An MLA's main job is to make laws. Laws are the rules we all follow, and in Manitoba MLAs are the people who make those rules. MLAs take this responsibility very seriously. They spend a lot of time carefully discussing how to make the best laws possible.

### Keeping Track of Public Money

Another important job for an MLA is discussing how public money should be spent on government programs and services. A big part of this job is the Budget process. Every year the government prepares a Budget document explaining how money collected through taxes and other sources will be spent. MLAs spend eight full days discussing and debating each Budget. After the Budget debate, Members discuss a set of related documents called the "Departmental Estimates," which explain how each separate government department plans to spend its portion of the Budget.

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### Where do MLAs Work?

MLAs divide their time between their constituencies and their work in the Assembly. For MLAs from rural or northern parts of Manitoba, this part of the job involves a fair amount of travel.

### MLAs Duties Vary

MLAs' duties will vary, depending on whether they are a Member of Cabinet, a Member of the Opposition, or a Government Member.

### "House" Work

- All MLAs spend time in the Legislature when the House is in session.
- Both Government and Opposition MLAs participate in debate in the Legislative Chamber.
- For Opposition MLAs, work in the House means spending time researching issues and asking questions in the Legislature.
- Both Government and Opposition MLAs spend time helping their parties develop policy and strategy.

### Committees of the House

- MLAs also serve as Members of Committees in the Legislature. This work is similar to that in the House, except slightly different rules are followed.

### Cabinet Ministers

- MLAs who are Ministers of the Crown (Cabinet Members) spend time overseeing their assigned departments. Every department has a Minister, whether it's Manitoba Health, Finance or Agriculture, etc. Ministers are in charge of the entire department, including all of the people who work there (sometimes hundreds of them) and all of the money they spend doing departmental business (sometimes billions of dollars).
- Cabinet Ministers also spend time putting forward Government Bills, and they must be prepared to answer questions from the Opposition on a wide range of issues.

### Working with Constituents

- Much of an MLA's time is spent handling constituents' individual problems, answering questions and concerns.
- MLAs keep in touch with their constituents through personal contact, by phone, in writing, through the Internet and e-mail, and through information mailed out to all of the households in each constituency.

