

Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan

2016-2018

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Part 1: Baseline Report

A. Overview of Programs and Services

The Manitoba government develops and delivers services for Manitobans in a broad range of areas, including healthcare, education, law enforcement, infrastructure, culture and recreation and economic development.

The Manitoba government operates in all regions of the province, collaborating with other levels of government and numerous community stakeholders for the benefit of individuals, families and communities.

B. Accessibility Achievements

As an organization with a longstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion, the Manitoba government has continuously worked to achieve greater accessibility, with activities such as:

- establishment of the Manitoba Policy on Access to Government Publications, Events and Services (MPAG)
- establishment of disability access co-ordinators in each department to act as key contacts and advisors for implementation of the MPAG and other accessibility efforts
 - The role was redesigned in March 2016, into a new accessibility co-ordinator role to support implementation of initiatives related to the Accessibility for Manitobans Act.
- investment in government buildings and negotiation of leases to improve accessibility, based on the requirements of the National Building Code and the Manitoba Building Code
- establishment of Office Space Standards Guidelines, which reflect universal design principles in upgrades, refreshes and new builds

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA, incorporated into Manitoba government website standards
- establishment of the Manitoba Government Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to achieve an exemplary, inclusive civil service that reflects the population it serves, and best serves the needs of a diverse Manitoba population
- establishment of a Supportive Employment Services unit to support accommodations for employee illness, injury and disability within the Manitoba government
- development and delivery of disability-related training and learning events (e.g., creating accessible documents and websites, disability awareness, duty to accommodate)
- creation and distribution of a Words with Dignity information sheet, which outlines respectful language when referring to persons with disabilities
- award-winning human resource policies and practices (e.g., Employment Equity in Staffing, Reasonable Accommodation, Barrier-Free Recruitment, Supportive Employment)
- development of an Accessibility Toolkit, containing guidance, checklists and resources to support accessible practices
- development of a Disability Access and Inclusion Lens for use in policy and program development

C. Accessibility Barriers

Consultations conducted in the development of this plan identified barriers to accessible operations that still remain. The most significant barriers identified, which this plan aims to address, are:

- Attitudinal barriers:
 - lack of awareness of the range of accessibility barriers that exist and how to support accommodations
 - lack of awareness, among some employees, of accessibility legislation and policies in force
- Systemic barriers:

- inconsistent availability of support resources (e.g., service providers, accessibility expertise, equipment and facilities) for accommodations, both internally for employees and externally for public service, particularly in northern and rural locations
- inconsistent processes for addressing accessibility complaints and ensuring satisfactory resolutions
- Information and communication barriers:
 - inconsistent employee awareness of communications and practices appropriate for interactions with members of the disability community (e.g., appropriate terminology, appropriate interaction with service animals)
 - inconsistent capacity across service areas to provide alternate format documents in a timely manner
- Technological barriers:
 - web documents, including application forms, templates and brochures on government websites, not consistently accessible to screen reader devices
 - areas of the government website not designed or developed with accessible navigation in mind
- Physical and architectural barriers:
 - Some offices used for government operations are not physically accessible, particularly in some remote and rural locations, and are missing such features as:
 - accessible parking options
 - alternate options to doors and stairs that present barriers to individuals with mobility disabilities
 - service counters set at a lower, accessible height
 - accessible washrooms
 - braille indications or voice floor announcements in elevators
 - pathways to buildings that are cleared of snow and ice in winter
 - fire alarm systems with flashing lights

- accessible recreational services in provincial parks and campgrounds

Part 2: Accessibility Plan

A. Statement of Commitment

The Manitoba government is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for persons with disabilities. The government is committed to the principle of inclusion. It is committed to meeting the needs of people who face barriers and will treat persons with disabilities in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity and independence.

B. Policies

- [Manitoba Policy on Access to Government Publications, Events and Services](#)
- [Reasonable Accommodation Policy](#)
- [Removing Employment Barriers Policy](#)
- [Barrier-Free Recruitment Policy](#)

C. Actions

| 1) General Measures | |
|---|---|
| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the Manitoba Policy on Access to Government Publications. • Update accessibility tools and resources to support accessible operations (e.g., Accessibility Toolkit). • Establish a feedback process for the public to report accessibility issues they encounter. • Update the Disability Access and Inclusion Lens. • Review and update procedure manuals to ensure accessible administration and procurement processes. • Investigate a means of centrally managing accommodation resources for employees with disabilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more consistent government practice in ensuring accessible operations • improved ability for on-going assessment and improvement of accessibility measures • improved accommodation practices for employees with disabilities |

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance awareness activities to highlight the responsibility of employers to improve accessibility. | |
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2) Customer Service

| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide training to employees on accessibility legislation, and incorporate additional accessibility content into existing training courses.• Supplement general accessibility training with department-specific or site-specific training on accessible customer service, where needed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improved civil service awareness of accessibility issues• improved customer service for members of the public facing barriers to government programs and services |

3) Employment

| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to review human resource policies, programs, guidelines, and information resources in support of removing employment barriers.• Provide additional information internally for employees to increase awareness of the role of Human Resources in addressing accessibility issues in the workplace.• Look into providing a training module for each applicable accessibility standard, as it is established.• Ensure that emergency plans and business continuity plans are provided in a format that accommodates employees with disabilities.• Incorporate a proactive offer of accessibility accommodation into the orientation for new employees. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improved Manitoba government and civil servant awareness of workplace accessibility barriers, and the ability to provide effective accommodations for employees |

4) Information and Communications

| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Manitoba Government Inquiry practices to ensure persons with disabilities receive proper access to the services they need.¹• Update the Publication Style Guide for Manitoba Publications and Websites for guidance on inclusive language in government communications.• Wherever possible, update website policies to ensure compliance with Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA standard.• Determine which assistive technologies are compatible with government networks and can best be supported for employees with disabilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improved access to government information for members of the public• improved access to internal government information systems for Manitoba government employees |

¹ [Manitoba Government Inquiry](#) is a service for general inquiries from the public about government services, or help locating more specific information.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop plans to conduct audits of departmental public websites to ensure accessibility requirements are being followed. | |
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| 5) Built Environment | |
|---|---|
| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically update office space guidelines for Manitoba government workplaces. Consider barrier-free, universal design principles and the accessibility of the work environment when undertaking any project for new buildings, leased space or upgrading or refreshing current buildings Ensure that audible and visual fire alarm systems are incorporated in all new buildings, as per the National Building Code and the Manitoba Building Code. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved physical access to government office locations improved safety conditions in government office locations for emergency situations |

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