

# DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION LENS

## Introduction

Until recently, people with disabilities were a largely invisible segment of the population. This started to change in the 1970s, as people with disabilities began to speak out and represent themselves in public discourse. As a result, the Manitoba Government has also evolved in how it includes people with disabilities and their priorities.

Statistics Canada's 2006 Health and Activity Limitations Survey found that 15.7% of Manitobans have a disability. When family and friends of these individuals are considered, disability has an impact on a significant portion of Manitoba's population. Further, it is anticipated that people with disabilities will make up a larger part of the community as Manitoba's population ages in the coming few decades. Social policy developers must understand the needs of this segment of Manitoba's society.

The Manitoba Government has demonstrated its commitment to respond to the needs and concerns of people with disabilities in many ways. *The Human Rights Code* includes people with disabilities as a group deserving protection from discrimination. *The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act* outlines important rights for individuals who have intellectual disabilities. The 2001 policy document *Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability* describes a vision for how Manitoba's government will respond to disability issues. Such examples, and others, have advanced the status of Manitobans with disabilities.

## What is disability?

There is much debate about how to define disability. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), states that "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others." Please see [http://untreaty.un.org/English/notpub/IV\\_15\\_english.pdf](http://untreaty.un.org/English/notpub/IV_15_english.pdf)

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission "recognizes that *disability* should be interpreted in broad and flexible terms ... in determining what constitutes a *disability* the focus is on obstacles to full participation in society rather than on the condition or state of an individual, since discrimination based on disability may be based as much on perceptions, stereotypes and social constructs as the existence of actual functional limitations." Please see: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/hrc/english/publications/policies.html>

## **What is the impact of your initiative on Manitobans with disabilities?**

The *Access and Inclusion Lens* was developed to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities in *all* relevant policies and programs. It is complemented by resource materials, such as check lists, to further assist policy and program developers to consider persons with disabilities at all stages of their plans.

1. Manitoba's commitments to persons with disabilities are described in *Full Citizenship*. Have you considered how the principles of *Full Citizenship*, impact on your initiative? They are:
  - Rights and Responsibilities
  - Respect
  - Access
  - Universal Design
  - Freedom
  - Participation
  - Early Integration into Family and Home Community
  - Systemic Responsibility
  - Equality
  - Inclusion
  - Empowerment
  - Self Determination
  - Social and Economic Integration
  - Flexible Service Delivery
  - Awareness
  - Prevention
2. There are a number of provincial, federal and international laws and instruments to protect the human rights of people with disabilities. The two most important are the Manitoba Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canada also recently signed onto the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Have you considered how your initiative will support these pieces of legislation, and others, which speak to the rights of people with disabilities?
3. It is possible that a federal or municipal disability policy or program could affect your initiative. Have you ensured that your initiative complements and does not negatively affect disability programs from the federal and municipal levels of government?
4. If you are using research, does it include persons with disabilities? Is there enough information and are there sufficient data available to understand the problem in relation to persons with disabilities?
5. How will persons with disabilities be included in consultations held during the development of this policy or program?
6. Do your policy development process and program options consider the diverse needs, circumstances, and priorities and of various sub-groups within the population of persons with disabilities (e.g. physical, sensory, developmental and psychological disabilities, gender, age, family status, geographic location, Aboriginal status, official language minorities and ethnocultural minorities, income status, health status, etc.)
7. How do the policy or program options vary in terms of the advantages and disadvantages for persons with disabilities? Please consider both the direct and the indirect impact on persons with disabilities.

8. What steps can you take to ensure there is no conflict in your plans with one or more of the principles of *Full Citizenship* listed above, or with the Manitoba Human Rights Code and other legislation promoting the inclusion and/or protection of persons with disabilities?
9. If you plan to publicize the initiative, do you have a variety of strategies and formats to reach persons with disabilities? Suggested formats include plain language print and computer-based information, radio and television. Are persons with disabilities featured in the content of your communication?
10. Do your plans for monitoring and evaluation identify the inclusion and impact on persons with disabilities?

For more information, please contact the Disabilities Issues Office (DIO) at 945-7613 or at [dio@gov.mb.ca](mailto:dio@gov.mb.ca).) Please see also DIO's website: <http://www.manitoba.ca/dio>