

Frequently Asked Questions

For alternate formats, please contact the Manitoba Accessibility Office at MAF@gov.mb.ca, or call 204-945-7613 or toll free at 1-800-282-8069 (ext. 7613).

1. Where can I learn more about Manitoba's accessibility laws and standards?

Visit AccessibilityMB.ca/law to learn more. Free online learning modules about accessible customer service and accessible employment are available at AMALearningMB.ca.

2. My organization would like to propose a project addressing Manitoba's newest accessibility standard for Information and Communication. What do we need to think about?

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service requires organizations to communicate in an accessible way with people disabled by barriers. The new standard targeting information and communications will provide further guidance on electronic accessibility. Similar to asking customers, "how can I help?", if someone is unable to communicate, or give or receive information, you can work with the person to find a solution. For organizations looking to make their websites more accessible, the current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA outline a minimum, globally accepted level of web accessibility.

3. Must all businesses and organizations comply with accessibility legislation? Where can I learn more about the requirements affecting Manitoba's businesses and organizations?

Currently, all businesses and organizations with at least one employee must comply with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. By May 1, 2022, all businesses and organizations must comply with the Accessibility Standard for Employment. Visit AccessibilityMB.ca for more information.

4. What is the Manitoba Accessibility Office?

The Manitoba Accessibility Office (MAO) is the administrative arm of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The MAO manages the Manitoba Accessibility Fund. The MAO also acts as secretary to the Accessibility Advisory Council and its committees. It develops resources and tools to promote accessibility and offers training to educate obligated sectors about compliance.

Application Process

5. Am I required to submit a letter of support with my application to the Manitoba Accessibility Fund (MAF)?

There is no requirement to submit a letter of support with your application.

6. How frequently does MAF accept applications?

There will be only one application intake.

7. Can my organization submit more than one application?

No. Applicants can submit only one application per intake period, but they can be listed as partners in multiple projects. Applicants can include the consultancy services of their partners in their budgets.

8. If my organization has already received a MAF grant, can we submit another grant application in the next intake period?

Organizations that have received a MAF project grant will need to wait one intake period before submitting a new grant application, if they meet one of the following conditions:

- an organization that has been allocated two MAF grant awards in a row
- an organization that has received a maximum of \$100K (or two projects receiving the maximum award of \$50K each)

For organizations where this situation applies, you will receive correspondence from the MAF team informing your organization that the MAF application has been paused for one intake period during the pre-screening process. This communication will inform you of the date which your organization can submit a new application to the MAF grant program.

Applicant Eligibility

9. Are all Manitoba organizations eligible to apply for MAF funding?

Eligible applicants include:

- non-profit organizations that have been in operation in Manitoba for at least one year
- local businesses (see question 10 below)
- large and small municipalities
- on-reserve businesses and organizations
- regional health authorities
- school divisions
- post-secondary institutions

The minimum requirement for unregistered non-profit organizations is to have a bank account that was created at least one year before application. A new bank account does not qualify, nor do bank accounts in the name of a board member.

The Manitoba government and the following Crown corporations are **not** eligible:

- Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries
- Manitoba Hydro
- Manitoba Public Insurance
- Efficiency Manitoba
- Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation

10. Are all Manitoba businesses eligible to apply for MAF funding?

Only local businesses or corporations based in Manitoba, providing services to Manitobans and registered with the Companies Office can apply. See the MAF Application Guidelines for details.

11. Are businesses and organizations on reserves eligible for MAF funding?

Yes, on-reserve businesses and organizations that meet all other eligibility requirements can apply for MAF funding. The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards apply to businesses and organizations on reserves. The Act does not apply to First Nations Bands.

Funding

12. Can I apply for multi-year funding for my project?

No, funding is only available for projects that are completed within one year.

13. When will my organization receive funding?

Once all applications have been assessed and the Minister responsible for Accessibility has approved the list of MAF grant recipients, then a letter of decision will be sent to all applicants informing them of funding approval or non-approval. The Manitoba government hopes to inform applicants within eight to ten weeks of the application submission deadline.

14. Will the government disperse the full grant amount to successful applicants?

The government will disperse 90 per cent of the grant after signing the project contribution agreement. The government will disperse the final payment of 10 per cent upon approval of the final report and financial report form.

Eligible Activities

15. What are some examples of awareness and compliance activities that the MAF will fund?

The MAF will fund a variety of activities or programs. Some examples include:

- A community club plans to design a training program on the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service or Employment with a focus on its services and participants. It will expand the project's impact by collaborating with similar community organizations.
- A construction company plans to hire more employees with disabilities, including people who are Deaf and hard of hearing. It wishes to consult with employment

agencies and disability organizations about employment accommodations in the construction sector. It will also do some research about best practices for inclusive employment in the construction sector. It will expand the project's impact by sharing a best practices document with the Manitoba construction sector.

- A summer day camp includes children with disabilities but wants to exceed minimum requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. It will consult with other inclusive camps to enhance its policies and inclusive programs. It will apply the new model to its day camps followed by an evaluation that includes participants and their parents. It will share the findings with other Manitoba camps.
- A rural municipality wishes to review its information and communications to determine best practices and be fully inclusive of its diverse community members. It plans to consult with community members, disability organizations and experts on web accessibility, before paying a consultant to update its website. It will produce a project report to share with other small municipalities.
- An organization of Manitobans with disabilities (e.g. targeting mental health) plans to interpret existing accessibility standards under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act using its disability-specific perspective. It will create tools to help non-profit organizations and businesses improve customer service.
- An organization and/or professional association would like to organize an event with members to celebrate and/or connect people with disabilities and the disability community with one another. As part of event-planning, it will develop an accessible event guide, an event program that integrates expertise of persons with disabilities and provides opportunities during the event for discussion and networking. It will produce a report to share feedback about planning and implementing an accessible event.
- A Manitoba employment agency wishes to promote the Accessibility Standard for Employment by participating in Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM), which Manitoba celebrates annually in October. It plans to use a social media campaign to promote accessible hiring practices throughout the month, including a free webinar in which the agency offers tips on accessible hiring. It will collaborate with business associations to reach specific sectors (e.g. retail).
- Manitoba recognizes a number of national and international events that promote disability awareness and inclusion throughout the year. MAF applicants may consider projects that help celebrate these events, including Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW), Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), and the #PurpleLightup global awareness campaign of the economic contribution of people with disabilities. See also [AccessibilityMB.ca/training](https://accessibilitymb.ca/training).

Eligible Costs

16. What are some examples of eligible costs related to tools and technology that remove barriers to information and communications?

Digital enhancements must meet the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level AA, at minimum. Eligible costs include:

- hiring a consultant to improve accessibility of a website
- producing key information videos using American Sign Language
- adding a large-screen monitor or other equipment to help clients access services (e.g. for employment seekers with low vision to access online employment training)
- making a specific purchase of technical equipment or software for users, i.e., Yoto screen-free audio player for children to use at libraries, or a Meet OWL 3 for a faith-based non-profit organization, or an iPad with screen reader software for seniors.
- creating a best practice guide for educators teaching their students online, including speaking tips for diverse audiences, using available technology of various platforms, applying alt tags to images, and other accommodations
- staff training on how to create accessible documents (e.g. using Microsoft Word)
- staff training on how to provide accessible in-person communication, including people who are agitated or have difficulty understanding because of a disability

17. Why are physical building upgrades not eligible for funding under the MAF?

The Manitoba government created the MAF specifically to support implementation of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Retrofits and renovations affecting buildings, as specified in the Manitoba Building Code, are outside of the scope of the Act. Funding for these kinds of projects is available under the Manitoba Building Sustainable Communities grant. For more information, please visit [Manitoba Grants Online](#) or contact bsc@gov.mb.ca.

Selection

18. How can MAF applicants demonstrate their commitment to accessibility to fulfill the selection criteria called capacity?

Applicants should explain their efforts to be accessible with examples of barriers they have removed to improve access to their goods and services and to employment. Applicants can also list the employment policies they have in place to accommodate employees with disabilities and any related employee training.

Please note, free training to meet the minimum requirements of the first two standards affecting customer service and employment is available at AMALearningMB.ca.

19. How can MAF applicants reach out to stakeholders to fulfill the selection criteria for inclusion and impact?

For information about Manitoba disability organizations, visit 211 Manitoba or call 211. Click on the People with Disabilities quick link.

211 Manitoba also lists Manitoba disability organizations that provide accessibility consulting and disability awareness training:

Click on the People with Disabilities quick link. An invitation to filter your results will appear. Input your location or postal code. Click on the Disability Awareness checkbox. Click “Search.”

20. How does the MAF support Truth and Reconciliation?

Organizations and businesses on reserves with at least one employee must comply with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and are eligible for funding.

MAF inclusion selection criteria encourages applicants to include Manitobans disabled by barriers throughout project planning and delivery. MAF impact selection criteria favors projects that target an underserved population or region (e.g. Indigenous Manitobans or rural and Northern regions).

About the Endowment Fund

21. What is the role of the Winnipeg Foundation in this initiative?

The Winnipeg Foundation will manage and invest the \$20 million endowment fund, which the Manitoba government created in March 2021. The Winnipeg Foundation will provide the Manitoba government the annual growth on the fund, without touching the original \$20 million. Manitoba Families will administer the annual grants program.

22. Why is the Manitoba government choosing to establish an endowment fund versus providing \$20 million in grants to organizations right now?

If the Manitoba government dispersed the \$20 million this year, or even over ten years, the source of funds would soon disappear. The Winnipeg Foundation employs investment experts who will ensure that the endowment fund keeps on growing. In effect, the MAF is our generation’s legacy to future generations, who will continue to benefit from our commitment to making Manitoba accessible for everyone.

For More Information

23. Where can I find more information about the MAF?

For more information, please visit AccessibilityMB.ca.

24. Who do I contact if I require accommodations or require clarification to complete the application?

For assistance completing your organization's application, please contact the Manitoba Accessibility Office at 204-945-7613 or email MAF@gov.mb.ca.