

Accessibility Plan Guide and Template

For Small Municipalities

This document is available in alternate formats, on request.

Please contact the Disabilities Issues Office by email at DIO@gov.mb.ca or by phone at 204-945-7613 (in Winnipeg) or toll free at 1-800-282-8069, ext. 7613 (outside Winnipeg). Feedback is welcome.

Introduction

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act requires municipalities to create and update an accessibility plan every two years. Manitoba's small municipalities need to update their accessibility plans by December 31, 2019 for the years 2020 and 2021. The aim of this guide and template is to help you create, or review and update your existing accessibility plan using the template and examples provided (see pages 6 – 11).

Two or more municipalities may work together and agree to share a Combined Accessibility Plan.

If your municipality has an accessibility coordinator and/or working group, you may want to involve them to create a team approach to accessibility planning and awareness.

Read and select from the examples provided. While all of the examples can be edited so that they apply to your organization, [anything written in brackets] can be changed to meet your specific needs.

Add, edit or remove practices and measures to fit your municipality/ies. Use this template, or copy the options below and paste them into a format that works for you.

We hope this guide and template help your municipality/ies celebrate achievements over the last two years and to plan an accessible way forward!

Tips: Keep accessibility in mind when discussing corporate and strategic planning. Consider integrating your accessibility plan into quarterly or annual reporting periods, and/or Council meetings.

Include people affected by accessibility barriers wherever possible in accessibility planning.

For additional resources, please visit [AccessibilityMB.ca/public-sector.html](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca/public-sector.html).

5 Steps to Update Your Accessibility Plan

Step 1. If you have an existing accessibility plan, consider using it as a starting point

Begin by reading your previous accessibility plan, if applicable. You may consider:

- Is the Organizational overview still accurate or have there been changes?
- Are the Statement of commitment and signing authority still valid?

Tip: Is it easy for someone outside of your administration to understand what you do? Avoid acronyms. Use plain language.

Step 2. Review progress

Review the municipality/ies progress on any policies, actions or measures to create accessibility over the past two years. Consider using this review of progress to decide what to add to the Achievements section of the template (page 8).

As this new plan is prepared, remember that The Accessibility for Manitobans Act requires your organization to consult with people with disabilities or with representatives from organizations that serve people with disabilities.

Tip: Consultation may include a request for feedback online, on paper or in person at meetings. You may wish to use a survey.

To help you review your progress, you may consider the following:

- Have you removed any barriers in the past two years? Are there new barriers?
- Have there been changes to your policies or by-laws in the past two years? Have new ones been introduced? Would changes to existing policies or by-laws help enhance accessibility?
- If you have an existing plan, review the list of actions and expected outcomes. Did the actions take place? Did they achieve the expected outcomes? If not, why not? Could you change the actions to improve results? Consider adding to your list of achievements any actions that you have completed.

Step 3 Set future priorities

You can use analysis and feedback gathered in Step 2 to help set future accessibility priorities for your municipality/ies.

Consider municipal priorities, as well as human and financial resources. Consider prioritizing the most important public functions and the barriers that have the greatest impact on the most people.

The Manitoba government continues to introduce new standards under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. You may wish to consider future standards as you set priorities. For an update on policy and other requirements that affect municipalities, visit [AccessibilityMB.ca/public-sector.html](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca/public-sector.html).

Tip: Before you finalize accessibility priorities, seek feedback from your stakeholders.

Step 4 Update your policies, by-laws and actions

You can use the results of your review in Step 2 and the identified priorities in Step 3 to help you update the Policies and by-laws and Actions sections of the accessibility plan (pages 8 and 9 in the template).

In the Policies and by-laws section, add any new or modified policies or by-laws that help make your municipality/ies accessible. The full policies or by-laws can be included in appendices or with hyperlinks if they are available online.

Tip: Policies act as rules to guide an organization and its interactions with employees, clients and the public.

In the Actions section (page 9), set out the actions that you will take in the next two years to identify, prevent and remove barriers. Consider creating a work plan for internal use for each action item. The work plan could add details about who is responsible for the action, the budget and timeline.

Tip: As you decide on your actions, you can learn more about providing **reasonable accommodations**. Reasonable accommodation means adjusting a rule, a policy or a physical space to allow changes to the ways we usually do things. In most cases, there are many simple and inexpensive ways to make your organization more accessible.

Reasonable accommodation requires an organization to take responsibility for an accommodation – including bearing the costs – up to the point of “undue hardship.” The threshold of undue hardship is met when there are extreme costs or significant health and safety risks to an accommodation.

Inconvenience, preferences or some costs do not usually qualify as undue hardship.

If an accommodation request creates undue hardship for you, you can still explore other ways to provide accommodations. Work with the person who is making the request to find another way to meet needs.

With flexibility, openness and good communication, accommodation solutions are usually possible, easy and inexpensive.

More information can be found at the Manitoba Human Rights Commission’s website, including their [policy on reasonable accommodation related to disabilities](#).

Step 5 Make your accessibility plan public

Making your accessibility plan available to the public is required under the law. If you have a website, post your updated accessibility plan on it to publicize your progress. If you do not have one, let the public know the plan is available on request (e.g., by putting up a sign or placing a copy of it in reception areas for public review).

Sample Accessibility Plan

[Name of municipality / Names of municipalities in combined plan]

Date of approval:

[Insert date]

Years Applicable:

[January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021]

Rural Municipality / Municipality of [add name]

[Add contact information for each municipality if a combined plan]

Key contacts:

[Staff name, title, and contact info (phone and email)]

[If you have an Accessibility Coordinator, add contact info]

CAO signature: _____

Reeve/Mayor signature: _____

Date: _____

Statement of commitment

[Optional. In this section: Add a statement of commitment to advancing accessibility.]

Sample:

The [Municipality/ies of name/s] is/are committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion.

We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers by identifying, removing and preventing these barriers and by meeting requirements of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

Organizational overview

[Optional. In this section: You may describe your municipality/ies, including public facilities, services and programs. You may want to highlight the public facilities, services and programs that are most significant to the public, especially those that may create barriers to accessibility. Barriers may be related to attitudes, communication, information, technology and physical space/architecture.]

Sample:

Overview of Programs and Services:

Formed through the authority of the Province of Manitoba, the [Municipality/ies of name/s] is/are responsible for the delivery of local services, facilities, safety and infrastructure for residents within its boundaries including:

- Water and sewer
- Roads
- Garbage and recycling collection
- Parks and recreation
- Fire protection and emergency measures services
- Collection of municipal and school taxes
- Municipal elections
- Other government services [planning, economic development, tourism, traffic, transportation services, animal control services, etc.]

- [Add, edit or delete as needed]

Policies and by-laws

[In this section: List the names of the policies and by-laws that you have in place to improve accessibility. You may include the full policy or by-law as an appendix to your accessibility plan.]

Samples:

- Accessible Customer Service Policy
- Council, Staff and Volunteer Accessibility Training Policy
- By-law on Cleaning of Streets and Sidewalks (clearing, snowfall, dust)
- By-law on Traffic (parking)
- [Add, edit or delete as needed]

Achievements

[In this section: Provide a bulleted list of accessibility achievements over the past two years. This can include work to identify, prevent and remove barriers (attitudinal, communication, information, technological, physical / architectural), and measures to assess the accessibility of your policies, local services, public facilities, by-laws or any other aspects of your municipality you want to address. You may add dates, if available.]

Samples:

- Newly elected Council members took the free [online training](#) in the Customer Service Standard Regulation and The Accessibility for Manitobans Act
- In November 2018, we surveyed residents about existing barriers to accessing services
- Added “accessibility” as a section on feedback / complaints forms
- Formed an accessibility working group to develop a process for responding to requests for accessible supports and services
- Drafted a policy promoting accessible employment processes
- Cleared clutter from hallways and corridors in municipal facilities
- Ensured accessible communication by creating a large print application form for water and sewage services
- [Add, edit or delete as needed]

Actions

[In this section: Provide a list of actions that will be taken over the next two years to improve accessibility. You may include proposed timelines. Below are examples, you may add or remove any actions that are specific to your municipality/ies.]

Samples:

1. Make our completed 2020 and 2021 Accessibility Plan and Accessible Customer Service Policy available to the public (e.g., add online).

Timeline: By December 31, 2019

2. Invite residents to provide emergency response information to assist in the event of an emergency or disaster, e.g., in an electrical failure, alternative sources are needed to power a medical ventilator.

Timeline: _____

3. Place the [Access Offer](#) sign at reception desks to let residents know that we provide accessible services.

Timeline: _____

4. Put in place a process to respond to residents' requests for accessible supports and services and to respond to feedback and complaints.

Timeline: _____

5. Put in place a process for residents to phone the public facility, program or service in advance of attending to make accommodation requests, and to then have staff/volunteers on site to provide the requested accessibility accommodations. [Examples: opening doors, ticket taking/reception, creating appropriate seating to accommodate a person in a wheelchair or with a service animal, and other reasonable accommodations].

Timeline: _____

6. Engage the public to remind them about the importance of abiding by the rules for reserved accessible parking.

Timeline: _____

7. Offer a variety of accessible payment options for utility bills, tax bills and other fees, including meeting people in their vehicles to collect payments and/or provide information, as well as “at home” options: automatic withdrawal, telebanking, online, verbal credit card, and mail [add, edit or delete examples as needed].

Timeline: _____

8. Install temporary Stop Gap ramps at municipal facilities to address physical barriers created by steps.

Timeline: _____

9. Add accessibility information, policies and procedures to regular staff training and orientation.

Timeline: _____

10. Complete staff, volunteer and Council participation in online accessibility training.

Timeline: _____

11. Begin to assess existing employment policies for accessibility, and plan for changes that may be needed for future compliance with the Accessible Employment Standard.

Timeline: _____

12. Implement changes needed to comply with the Accessible Employment Standard.

Timeline: _____

13. Create and use an accessibility barrier checklist for our facilities, services, infrastructure and programs.

Timeline: _____

14. Provide all publications and notifications in large font and provide them in alternate formats, on request.

Timeline: _____

15. Consider accessibility when making new or changing current programs, services and public facilities.

Timeline: _____

16. Offer accessible municipal elections by:

- Using physically accessible voting locations, including designated parking.
- Allowing election officials to take a ballot outside the voting location, e.g. to a car.
- Permitting voters to bring a support person to assist with marking their ballot.
- Ensuring election material follows [CNIB Print Guidelines](#).
- Providing magnifiers at voting locations, and providing alternate formats on request, such as offering Braille or having information read aloud.
- Permitting service animals in voting locations, unless excluded by law.
- Providing accessible customer service training to all election officials.
- Offering to respond to accommodation requests related to municipal election events, such as candidate debates.
- [Add, edit or delete examples as needed]

17. Monitor progress in implementing this Accessibility Plan to help update future plans.

Timeline: Quarterly

18. [Add others specific to your municipality/ies]

Contact information

If you have questions, require this information in an alternate format, wish to receive any resources, including Access Offer signs, or are interested in attending a training workshop, please contact the Disabilities Issues Office (DIO).

Disabilities Issues Office

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