

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act
Minister's 2018/19 Annual Plan

“Accessibility for all”

Approved June 2018

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Message from the Minister of Families

As the new Minister responsible for [The Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#) (AMA), I am pleased to present the 2018/19 Annual Plan.

Latest figures from Statistics Canada suggest that one in six Manitobans encounter barriers in their daily life, and this number is expected to rise as the provincial population ages and increases. Promoting accessibility is the right thing to do. As a government, we are committed to ensuring that all Manitobans can be full and active participants in their communities and the economy.

Our province is proud to be an accessibility leader among its Canadian counterparts as the second province to establish standards-based accessibility legislation. While barriers continue to exist, we are confident that Manitoba is moving in the right direction and is on-track to meeting our commitments by 2020. I want to thank all the accessibility supporters and champions for all the work they have done and continue to do to ensure accessibility for all Manitobans.

Together, we still have important work to do to make Manitoba a more accessible province, and I am optimistic that noteworthy progress will be made. To this end, I invite you to read this plan, which highlights the activities the Government of Manitoba will undertake in 2018/19 to advance accessibility for all.

Thank you,

Heather Stefanson

Minister of Families

Accessibility Standards:

The Building Blocks of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act

Raising Awareness of the Customer Service Standard

November 1, 2018 marks the first deadline for Manitoba businesses and non-profit organizations to comply with the [Customer Service Standard \(Regulation\)](#). Government will continue to work with public, non-profit and private sector organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, the Retail Council of Canada and the Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations to inform affected stakeholders about the Customer Service Standard. Communication tools to support awareness and compliance of the Customer Service Standard will continue to be developed and widely disseminated to non-profit and private sector (business) organizations.

November 2018

Customer Service Standard comes into effect for...

Businesses: includes shops, restaurants, hotels, legal, healthcare, and other professional services.

Non-profit organizations includes charities, unions, places of worship, community organizations, and member associations.

In 2018/19, the [Disabilities Issues Office](#) will work with marketing specialists to develop an on-line awareness campaign with new tools and resources.

Tools and resources:

- ✓ Plain Language Fact Sheet
- ✓ Frequently Asked Questions
- ✓ Compliance checklist
- ✓ Active Offer signs
- ✓ Online training video

Ensuring the Accessible Employment Standard Comes into Effect

Manitobans with disabilities have significant spending power and represent a large, talented and dedicated pool of untapped employment potential. Unfortunately, individuals with disabilities can encounter barriers that prevent them from participating in the workplace, be it in the public, non-profit or private sector.

Benefits of accessible employment practices:

- ✓ Enhanced job performance and work quality
- ✓ Better job retention
- ✓ Higher attendance
- ✓ Lower turnover
- ✓ Better safety records
- ✓ A more innovative, inclusive and diverse workforce

Manitoba's Accessible Employment Standard, which will come into force as a Regulation in 2018/19, will assist in the identification, removal and prevention of employment related barriers, such as job application procedures that are difficult to participate in, and inaccessible work environments.

This important Standard will remove hurdles associated with recruiting, hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. Employers will gain from increased access to skilled and dedicated workers, and we will all benefit from the successful participation of jobseekers with disabilities in our economy.

Making Important Progress on the Development of Remaining Standards

Noteworthy progress on the development of accessibility standards will be made by 2020. The ability to get from one place to another is tremendously important. Accessible transportation gives everyone a chance to experience independence, whether they are going from home to a workplace, from a workplace to a doctor's appointment or to a movie with friends and back home again.

Ensuring that public spaces are accessible is also a priority of this government. The future accessibility standard for the Built Environment will focus on public spaces, such as sidewalks, roadways and parks. The standard will complement Manitoba's existing building code.

As the Minister responsible for the AMA, I will ensure that the Terms of Reference for the Transportation and Built Environment Standards are finalized. The Terms of Reference will specify which sectors and organizations the future Standards will apply to. They will also be made available to the public.

I am pleased that the Terms of Reference for the Information and Communications Standard has been finalized. In 2018/19, I anticipate receiving an initial draft of this Standard from the Accessibility Advisory Council, which will be shared with the public for its input.

Education and Training

As public awareness about accessibility legislation grows, so does the demand for training. In 2017/18, the Disabilities Issues Office (DIO) delivered training and presentations to 2,906 people. The DIO will continue to target its awareness raising and training efforts to a wide range of stakeholders. In-person training sessions will continue to be offered in English and French.

In 2018/19, training will be made available throughout Manitoba, with assistance of train-the-trainer programs initiated by local disability organizations or made available on-line. In addition, the Departments of Families and Municipal Relations will continue to collaborate to provide training to municipalities that are affected by the AMA and its Standards.

Please contact the [Manitoba's Disabilities Issues Office](#) for more information about training workshops, or to request a presentation for 20 or more participants. You can also request free copies of the sign below, along with related tips and explanations.

For more information, please visit the [Accessibility Manitoba website](#):



Fig 1. Bilingual sign with disability icons, which asks: How can we help? We can offer service in different ways.

Compliance Framework

The current emphasis is on raising awareness about compliance. To this end, considerable efforts were made in 2017/18 to reach out to affected stakeholders, inform them about the act and the Customer Service Standard, and assist with the development of accessibility plans and customer service policies.

This work will continue and in 2018/19 we will follow Ontario's lead and finalize a framework for monitoring compliance. The AMA calls for enforcement measures when an organization does not meet the requirements of Manitoba's accessibility legislation. I am pleased that Jay Rodgers, the Deputy Minister of Families, is continuing in his role as Director of the AMA to lead this important work.

Government Leadership

In 2018/19, we will explore models of accessible procurement practices, and champion ways in which organizations can make accessibility a criterion for awarding contracts. In addition, we will update the existing [Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan](#) (MGAP). The government-wide plan addresses activities that affect all provincial government departments, such as mandatory training of civil servants in accessible customer service. The plan allows each department to identify accessibility priorities. For example, Manitoba Sustainable Development may prioritize access to park facilities and lakes, whereas another department, such as Families may place high importance on access to information and navigation of social services.

Achieving full accessibility requires a collaborative whole-of-government approach. Each provincial government department has identified an accessibility coordinator who plays a significant role by promoting barrier-free policies, programs and services across government, including in rural and northern communities. In 2018/19 Manitoba's Disabilities Issues Office will meet regularly with departmental accessibility coordinators to guide them in their work as champions in this field.

Four-year review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

As mandated by section 39 of the AMA, Ms. Theresa Harvey Pruden has been appointed to conduct a four-year review of the implementation and effectiveness of the legislation. Ms. Harvey Pruden will continue to meet with various stakeholders affected by accessibility legislation and present me with a final report, which will be made public after being tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Ms. Harvey Pruden's findings and recommendations will help the Manitoba Government plan its way forward in an active, inclusive and informed way.

Summary of Planned Activities: 2018/19

- Continue to make progress on the development and implementation of accessibility standards
- Develop and widely distribute tools and resources on the existing Customer Service Standard
- Ensure Manitoba's Accessible Employment Standard comes into force
- Finalize the Terms of Reference for two new standards related to Transportation and the Built Environment
- Develop a draft Information and Communications Standard, for public input
- Continue to provide ongoing training sessions on accessibility and the Customer Service Standard
- Implement a framework for monitoring compliance with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act
- Explore accessible procurement practices in the public sector
- Update the existing Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan
- Receive and review the findings and recommendations from the four-year review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

Beyond 2018/19

Development of all five accessibility standards specified in the legislation:

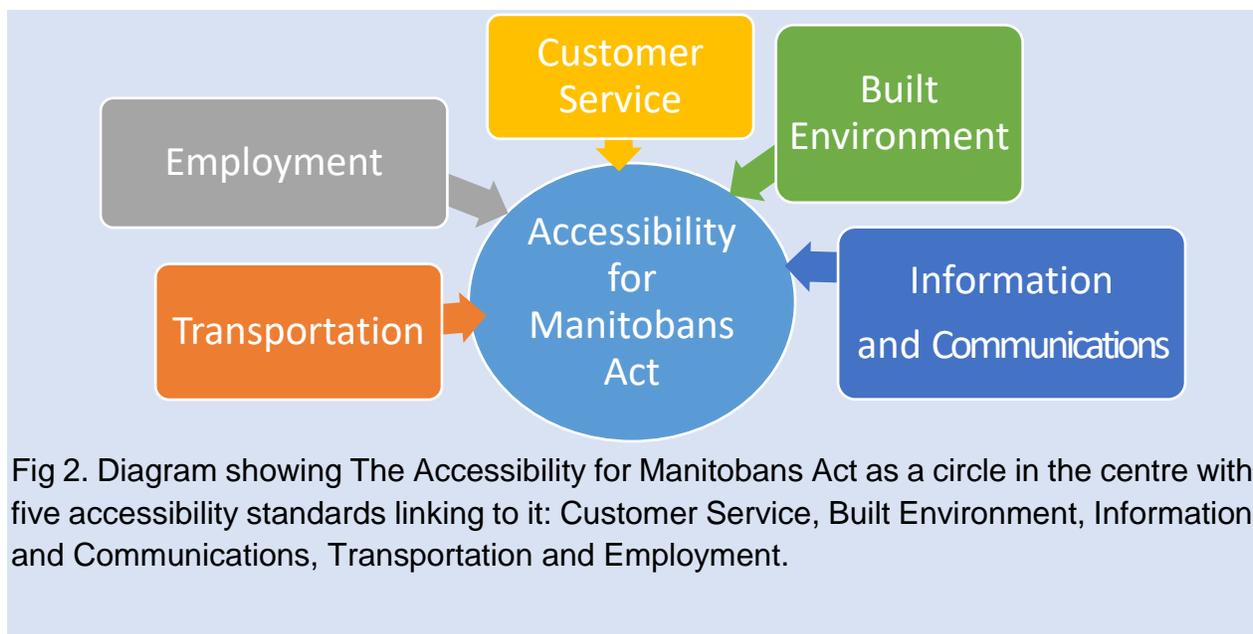


Fig 2. Diagram showing The Accessibility for Manitobans Act as a circle in the centre with five accessibility standards linking to it: Customer Service, Built Environment, Information and Communications, Transportation and Employment.