

Accessibility for Manitobans: Everyone Benefits

Accessible Customer Service Training

Facilitator's Guide

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Introduction

The [Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#) requires all organizations with at least one employee to provide training that includes:

- an overview of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service and related organizational policies and practices
- how to interact and communicate with people disabled by barriers, including persons who use an assistive device, are accompanied by a support person or are assisted by a service animal
- how to use any equipment or assistive devices available on-site (for example, a public computer)

Employers are required to train employees, volunteers and management soon after hiring and when there are changes to policies, practices and measures that affect access to goods and services. Employers with 20 or more employees must document their training plan. Please see the [Employers' Handbook on Accessible Customer Service](#) for further explanations.

Accessibility for Manitobans: Everyone Benefits is an online training video that outlines the basic elements of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. A number of Manitoba organizations will customize training in person and online, to meet an organization's needs. Some are able to track completion of training and provide certificates. [MB211](#) provides a list of Manitoba non-profit organizations that offer training. Select **People with Disabilities**, followed by **Accessibility Awareness**.

Along with training about the accessibility policies, practices and measures at your organization, this training is designed to support organizations and businesses in meeting the training requirements of the [Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#). If you have one or more employees, you must have an accessibility policy for customer service. The Employers' Handbook on Accessible Customer Service,

noted above, explains what must be included in your policy. The [Sample Accessible Customer Service Policy](#) offers a template to follow.

Note to the Facilitator:

Employees can take this training on an individual basis in approximately 40 minutes. However, group discussion is necessary to relate the content to your workplace and to your own organizational policies and practices. Selecting a facilitator can help guide this process.

The role of the facilitator is to help interpret a law that applies to all organizations with at least one employee to your organization, whether you work in a franchise with hundreds of employees or are a member of a community organization with only one employee and many volunteers.

Step 1. Ensure your organization has an accessible customer service policy to share with trainees.

Step 2. Call a meeting to discuss the purpose of the training and its application to your organization.

Step 3. Consider using the following questions to guide discussion related to each of the four modules of the training. These are:

1. Understanding barriers to accessibility
2. Manitoba's accessibility law
3. How to offer accessible service, as required by law
4. Tips to create accessibility for the people you serve

This guide also provides links to additional tools that relate to each area. To view the tools mentioned here, and many more resources in PDF and Word formats, visit AccessibilityMB.ca.

Please contact Manitoba's Disabilities Issues Office for more information or alternate formats: DIO@gov.mb.ca or 204-945-7613.

Module 1: Understanding Barriers to Accessibility

There are many types of barriers faced by people with disabilities. Most of these are invisible. For more information, including solutions to barriers, see the list of [Barriers and Solutions](#).

Discussion:

1. Who among us knows someone with a disability, a senior or other people who have faced barriers to accessibility at some time in their lives?
2. Discuss these experiences; What kinds of barriers did they face? Identify the barrier(s) and what steps were taken by the individual or by others to help eliminate the barrier(s).
3. What types of barriers could affect customers accessing our goods or services? (Probe for specific examples.)

Module 2: Manitoba's Accessibility Law

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) provides a framework for creating regulations called standards. An Accessibility Advisory Council helped develop the standards for the Manitoba government. It has representation from businesses, municipalities and organizations that represent people with disabilities. Each standard was developed in consultation with the public. For more information, visit accessibilitymb.ca/law.html.

This training focuses on The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. The Manitoba government has a number of tools available for businesses and non-profit organizations to meet the requirements. Visit the website AccessibilityMB.ca for the following information:

- To learn about the responsibilities of employers under the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, and for help on how to develop accessibility policies, practices and measures, please see the [Employers' Handbook](#).
- The [Sample Accessible Customer Service Policy](#) can assist you in developing or reviewing your policies to promote accessibility of your goods and services. If your organization has fewer than 20 employees, you are not required to keep a written record of accessibility and training policies. However, we encourage you to do this as a promising practice.

Discussion:

1. List examples of how we have already removed barriers to customer service, and provide reasonable accommodations. Consider physical barriers, communication barriers, or other ways we provide service to meet customers' needs.
2. The AMA does *not* require organizations to make renovations to increase accessibility. If our building is not accessible, what are other ways we could provide access to our goods or services?

Module 3: How to Offer Accessible Customer Service, as Required by Law

Share your organization's Accessible Customer Service Policy as part of the requirement of staff training. You may also wish to share other resources from the website, like the [Tips for Employees on Accessible Customer Service](#).

Discussion:

1. What does accessible customer service mean for us? Discuss the various aspects of our policy and expectations on staff.
2. Does someone among us know people who use a service animal? What did they learn about the service animal, in comparison to a pet or other animal that comforts its owner?
3. How should staff interact with customers with service animals? What questions should we ask? When should customers be warned about maintaining control of their animals?

(For more information about service animals, please see the [Fact Sheet](#) prepared by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.)

4. What must our staff know about requesting and responding to feedback about accessibility?
5. Staff are invited to ask other questions about providing accessible services. How should we provide anonymous questions or feedback, as staff may hesitate to share issues that affect them as well.

See the list of [FAQ's](#) on [AccessibilityMB.ca](#) to help respond to questions. You may wish to contact the Disabilities Issues Office for other issues raised by staff. See the DIO contact information listed above.

Quick Tip: If someone requires consultation, consider meeting at another location. If someone is purchasing a product, consider delivering it to them.

Module 4: Tips to Create Accessibility for the People You Serve

One of the most important messages in this training is that staff should not make assumptions about other people's needs. Instead, simply ask: How can I help?

Language is another important way to make customers feel respected. A few examples are included in the training. Other examples are found in the resource section of AccessibilityMB.ca, including a card and poster called [Words with Dignity](#).

One of the last slides shows an image of the [Manitoba Government's Access Offer sign](#). This invitation for accessible services is also available among the website's resources or in hard copy from the Disabilities Issues Office. The accompanying [explanation](#) offers tips on ways to welcome customers by removing barriers to goods and services.

Scenarios for Final Discussion:

The following scenarios provide an opportunity for collaborative problem solving:
(Note: there may be multiple answers depending on rationale)

1. Ren has multiple disabilities. The person providing service assumes that Ren cannot communicate or make decisions herself and talks directly to the support person. What is the barrier? What better service could Ren expect?

The barrier is attitudinal. Ren should expect the service provider to communicate with her directly.

2. Fred uses a wheelchair and is hard of hearing. The counter is high and the room is noisy. He indicates he does not understand your answer. What is the barrier? How can you offer Fred better customer service?

The barrier is related to information and communication. May also be structural. You can offer Fred a quiet space. Another option may be writing the information down.

3. Your organization has a staircase to the front door. What is the barrier? Consider ways of equitable customer service.

The barrier is structural. Depending on your organization, you can offer to take the good or service directly to the customer. You can offer to meet at an accessible location. There may be another accessible entrance.

4. You have a coupon for a price reduction on your goods or services. You inform your customers that it is only available online. What is a possible barrier(s)? What can you do to make sure the coupon is available to everyone?

This may be a technological barrier. It may also be a barrier related to information and communications. You could read the coupon to your customer if they are unable to access it, or offer alternate formats if they would like it printed, for example. You can also accept printed copies.

For more information contact:

Disabilities Issues Office (DIO)

630 - 240 Graham Avenue

Winnipeg MB R3C 0J7

Phone: 204-945-7613 (in Winnipeg)

Toll-Free: 1-800-282-8069, Ext. 7613 (outside Winnipeg).

Fax: 204-948-2896

Email: dio@gov.mb.ca

Visit AccessibilityMB.ca to learn more

Subscribe to our newsletter [Accessibility News](#)

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For more information, please see the [Employers' Handbook](#) on the [Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#).

Legal disclaimer: This training resource is not legal advice. It aims to assist organizations to meet the basic training requirements under Manitoba's Customer Service Standard Regulation. The training does not replace the content of the Customer Service Standard Regulation or The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. If there is any conflict between this training resource and the regulation or the act, the latter two shall prevail.