



# Manitoba Accessibility Fund



## Manitoba Accessibility Fund Webinar 2022

For more information, please visit [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca)

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### Speakers:

Jess Turner, Senior Policy Analyst, Manitoba Accessibility Office

Yutta Fricke, Executive Director, Manitoba Accessibility Office

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### [Webinar Starts]

**Jess Turner:** Okay welcome everyone, my name is Jess Turner, and I am the manager of the Manitoba Accessibility Fund. On behalf of the Manitoba Accessibility Office (MAO), I thank you for joining our overview presentation regarding the new Manitoba Accessibility Fund.

I would like to share our land acknowledgement with you. We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk. We acknowledge part of Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We remain committed to working in partnership with the Indigenous peoples in the spirit of truth, reconciliation, and collaboration in accordance with their constitutional rights and human rights.

**Jess Turner:** Before we start, the MAO would like to announce that this webinar is being recorded for future viewing. The ASL interpretation being provided is live and is not pre recorded. The presentation will include information about The Fund, how to prepare your application, and how to complete the online application form. There will be time for questions at the end of my presentation.

**Jess Turner:** In April 2021, the Manitoba government announced the creation of a \$20 million endowment fund held by the Winnipeg foundation to enhance Manitoba accessibility and to support compliance with the accessibility for Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards.

As of 2022-2023, the Manitoba government will use the annual growth of this endowment fund to distribute grants to organizations and businesses via the Manitoba Accessibility Fund, which I'll refer to as MAF. 2022/23 is the MAF pilot year. In addition, the objectives and target recipients may change from year to year. In the pilot year, The MAF will focus on the first three accessibility Standards.

First being customer service, which was enacted in 2015, which aims to prevent and remove barriers to accessing goods and services.

Number 2 employment enacted in 2019 requires barrier free practices related to employee recruitment hiring and retention.

Number 3 Information and communications, which is anticipated later this year. Such as requirements for removing barriers to information, communications, and even print and in person information.

**Jess Turner:** The objectives include, that project must support Manitoba's accessibility law by raising awareness about the prevention and removal of barriers, developing more resources and training to support compliance with the AMA standards and or removing barriers to Information and communication.

Next, we will go over some examples of eligible activities. For objective number one raising awareness about the prevention and removal of barriers, an example might be a construction company plans to hire employees with disabilities, including people who are deaf and hard of hearing. The company consults with employment agencies and disability organizations about accommodations in the sector and does research about best practices. It will expand the projects in part by sharing best practices with the Manitoba construction sector.

Another example might include a Manitoba employment agency wishes to promote the accessibility standards for employment by participating in Disability Employment Awareness Month, which is celebrated annually in Manitoba. 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, such as retail.

Another example might be a summer day camp. It includes children with disabilities and wants to exceed requirements of the accessibility standards for customer service. And they'll start by consulting other inclusive camps to enhance their policies and programs then they will apply the model to their summer camp. After, they can evaluate the model and funding, and the findings will be shared with other Manitoba camps.

Another example of eligible activities might be projects that celebrate events, including Manitoba Access Awareness Week, Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, or International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Eligible activities that are related to objective 2 the developing tools resources and training to support compliance with AMA Standards. This might include a community club that 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 context impact by collaborating with similar community organizations.

Another example might include providing staff training on how to create accessible documents, for example, using Microsoft word. Training could be offered to staff on how to provide accessible in person communication, including communication for people who are agitated or have difficulty understanding.

Eligible activities that are related to active number three removing barriers to information and communications. A small municipality wishes to review its information and communication to determine best practices to be inclusive of their diverse community members and plans to consult with community disability organizations and experts on web accessibility before updating its website. It will produce a project report to share with other small municipalities.

Another example might be producing key information using video tape American Sign Language. Some more examples of removing barriers to information and communications might include creating a best practice guide for educators meeting students online, including speaking tips for diverse audiences using technology of various platforms applying closed captioning to videos and other accommodations.

Another example might include hiring a consultant to improve the accessibility of your website, digital enhancements must be consistent with WCAG 2.1 level double a.

Another example might be adding a large screen monitor to help clients access services, for example, for an employment seeker for employment seekers with low vision to access online employment, training.

**Jess Turner:** Ineligible activities include projects that are outside of Manitoba, retrofits and renovations affecting buildings, as specified in the Manitoba building code. Ongoing

operational costs or programs. Core or central services that are the responsibility of the municipal, provincial or federal body. Projects linked to the delivery of core education, health and social services programs delivered through provincial or federal funding. Private residential wage subsidies placement programs or employee assistance programs.

**Jess Turner:** Next, we're going to talk about organizational eligibility. Eligible organizations include businesses, non-profit organizations, including unions, charitable organizations municipalities, local authorities, planning districts, northern affairs community councils, school divisions, universities and colleges.

Ineligible organizations include individuals, organizations not located in Manitoba. Or organization organizations not open to the public, such as private clubs.

With regards to funding, the maximum grant amount in money in 2022/23 is \$50,000 there is no minimum amount that can be requested. And MAF will fund up to 100% of the costs. Applications may include up to 10% for administration costs. An organization is limited to one application per year, but may collaborate with multiple applicants.

**Jess Turner:** Now we're going to talk about eligible and in eligible costs eligible costs includes salaries for projects staff and consultants, project and resource promotion, translation into French, American Sign Language, and Indigenous languages.

Some ineligible costs include general operating costs building renovation, such as ramps and automatic doors furniture, including furniture to accommodate employees and you'll be able to refer to the MAF guidelines for the complete list of eligible and in eligible costs.

In terms of selection, applicants will need to explain the following criteria, the first being eligibility.

So, the applicants and project meet all eligibility criteria and have completed the application requirements by the deadline, the project supports the 2022/23 objectives.

Capacity: does the applicant have the ability to administer manage and oversee the project with available human and financial resources?

Does the applicant show a commitment to accessibility?

Work plan budget and results, does the project set out clear steps within a reasonable time frame and budget.

Does a project identify reasonable results and then means of evaluating these results?

Selection will also include the criteria of inclusion has the applicant integrated the expertise of Manitobans disabled by barriers in the development delivery and or evaluation of the project.

Will, the project engage a significant number of people and or organizations.

Impact will the proposed project enhance accessibility awareness and compliance with the AMA

Will, the project benefit a significant number of people or serve as a model for other organizations? Does the project target and underserved population or reaching.

Other considerations might include depending upon demand priority will be given to projects that demonstrate, innovation, respond to identify needs and promote accessibility, beyond the funding period.

**Jess Turner:** Now we'll go on to talk about applications. Application intake began on March 1 and the application deadline is March 15. Organizations can submit only one application but may collaborate on multiple projects.

Information about MAF, including the application guidelines, the reporting guidelines, a glossary of terms.

Frequently Asked Questions and a link to the online application form can be found at [accessibilitymb.ca /fund.html](http://accessibilitymb.ca/fund.html)

This slide shows three screenshots from the MAO, a website, the first shows the drop-down menu, you can use to find more information about the MAF.

The second screenshot shows the link to the online application.

And the other MAF resources.

The third screenshot shows the online application form.

As a word of caution, the online form states “this online forum cannot be saved”, we recommend that you prepare your submissions and budget, in a word document and then copy the information into this form. When filling out the online application, you'll need to provide us with general applicant's information, this includes the full legal organization or business name, a contact name, a telephone number, email address, and website, if applicable. You also have to let us know if your organization has been operating in Manitoba on or before March 1 of 2021.

The categories of applicants include non-profits, so this includes charities unions and professional or other organizations that are registered with the company's office or

smaller non-profits with a registered bank account and had been in operation for at least one year.

The MAF funds non-profit organizations on reserve. Applicants can also be from municipalities and local authorities, including planning districts and northern affairs community councils. Businesses, including franchises that are registered with the company's office may find some businesses on reserves.

Public Sector organizations, including universities, colleges school divisions. Crown corporations are ineligible. You will also need to provide us with your registered charity number, your business or incorporation number.

If you are an unincorporated non-profit, you will need to tell us about your unincorporated non-profit, the year you were formed examples of main programs, and if the non-profit has a bank account.

**Jess Turner:** Next you will need to provide us with a project summary, this includes the project name. You'll need to select one or more of the three MAF objectives that the content will address. You'll need to provide a summary of your project.

Around 300 words maximum, you'll need to describe how the project will address the objectives to activities, tools, resources, and training, and or enhanced information and communications. You will also need to provide a timeline provide the context start date and end dates and all contracts must be completed before March 31 of 2023.

Next, you need to provide an organizational description. What is the mandate and purpose of your organization, and its meaning? For large organizations, you may wish to focus on the division or department initiating the project.

Describe your previous experience addressing accessibility, for example staff training to meet the AMA's customer service and employment standards.

See also [accessibilitymb.ca](http://accessibilitymb.ca)

You will also need to describe the skills of your project team, and this information will be used during the selection process to determine passing.

Next you'll need to provide a project description.

You will provide a detailed project work plan, including key activities and timelines.

What are the expected results?

How would you evaluate and measure whether you ever achieved the project objectives, for example, the number of participants or distribution of new tools, this information will be used during the selection criteria to determine the work plan and the results.

Next, in the application process you'll need to explain project inclusion see you'll be asked to describe how you will work with or engagement with disabilities and or their organizations, noting the stage of the project development, including this application planning delivery and or as participants of an activity or an event.

You'll you can also describe the collaboration with other individuals organizations or networks and this information will be used during the selection process to determine inclusion.

You'll need to include a description of the projects impact, how will the project enhance awareness of accessibility and or compliance with the accessibility for Manitobans act and its standards.

Who will benefit from this project and how?

Who else could benefit indirectly, for instance, to share knowledge, tools or innovations?

And does the project affect that particular demographic that faces additional barriers? For example, based on indigenous, newcomer status, race, age or region of Manitoba.

This information will be used to determine impact during the selection process.

**Jess Turner:** You'll also need to provide a project budget, the content, and grant requests. Use the budget template to list costs. Matching funds are not required, but maybe added. The information provided in this section is to determine the budget during the selection criteria.

Now we're going to go over some timelines. The MAF pilot year is aligned as much as possible with the Manitoba covenants fiscal year so April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. The application deadline is April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Applicants will be notified of approval or rejection within six weeks of the deadline.

Projects must be completed by March 31, 2023.

And project reports must be submitted within 60 days of the project end.

Next, we are going to talk about the payment process.

90% of the funding will be provided upon signing of the project contribution agreement.

The final payment at 10% will be made upon receipt and the acceptance of the final reports and supporting documents by the Manitoba Accessibility Office.

Projects may be subject to audit by the Manitoba government.

Now we're going to talk about terms and conditions. Following approval, a project contribution agreement must be signed between the applicant and the Manitoba government.

The agreement will lay out the acceptable use of funds, the project start and end date, the payment schedule and reporting requirements.

Next, we're going to talk about the final reports a final report is required within 60 days of the project completion or by the deadline identified in the project contribution agreement.

The final report will include a narrative record and a final statement of revenue and expenses, as related to the projects approved budget.

You'll need to provide a final statement of revenue and expenses as related to the projects approved budget.

The Manitoba government again will issue a final 10% payment upon approval of this final report.

And you can find out more about the reporting guidelines on the MAF website online.

To apply, you'll need to submit a completed application form online.

If you require an alternate format, please notify the Manitoba Accessibility Office by email, you can send an email to [MAF@gov.mb.ca](mailto:MAF@gov.mb.ca) or by phone at 204-945-7613 in Winnipeg, toll free by calling 1800-282-8069 using extension 7613 outside of Winnipeg. You can fax the office at 204-948-2896 or you can contact this by post the address is a room 630 - 240 Graham Avenue Winnipeg Manitoba R3C 0J7.

If you haven't done so already, please download Adobe Reader, and you'll be able to read through all MAF guidelines.

And the application preview and to access the application online form.

You'll also want to consult with stakeholders in developing your project.

And make sure to collaborate to access expertise and expand the project's impact.

Help us create a more accessible Manitoba with your application for MAF in 2022/23 and again just a reminder, the deadline is April 15, 2022.

**Jess Turner:** Okay, so now we are going to open the floor to questions that you might have. I would like to introduce you to Yutta Fricke, the Executive Director of the Manitoba Accessibility Office who will answer any questions or concerns you might have from the presentation regarding the Fund.

You're welcome to raise your hand, and I will unmute you and you can ask your question that way, or you're welcome to use the chat function if that is more accessible to you and I can see that we've had quite a few questions come up already.

So Yutta I will hand it over to you.

**Yutta Fricke:** I'm reading some of the questions and may not keep up, so hi everyone, and thanks Jess for that great presentation. I should tell people that that we've only recently hired Jess as our manager of MAF. Everything's been moving very quickly and was very rushed to follow the calendar year as much as possible. This is a new to many of you, and the fund is totally new. We're thinking there might be people who are interested in our funding who aren't familiar with Manitoba's accessibility legislation, so we also wanted to give people enough time to go to our website, which Jess mentioned, and to learn more about the accessibility legislation.

**Yutta Fricke:** So I'm going to speak to a couple of comments that are already on the chat.

One of the questions that came up was about web content accessibility guidelines abbreviated as WCAG. Those worldwide web guidelines are used by Microsoft Word, by the platforms that you're using as well, as well as the websites that are using those platforms. You'll probably find that increasingly that how we use our website has become more accessible, captioning is automatic to YouTube for instance. Captioning is available on Zoom or on Teams and are used by people with disabilities, initially, but all of us benefit, so what we are hoping to do with this Fund is to use our legislation and remove the barriers that affect especially people with disabilities experience. We want to make Manitoba more accessible for everyone, and certainly information and communications is something that has become super important during COVID-19, we all know that, and we know that many people don't even know what is available to them right now that.

On the top of any document, you have headings and those headings, for instance, allow a person who is using a screen reader or doesn't have good use of mouse to jump from one subtitle to another subtitle whereas if you had only put those subtitles in bold that wouldn't work. So header formatting is a part of web accessibility guidelines but, but our information communication, you know faces many different barriers and we're pretty open.

In the Manitoba of accessibility fund to look at the kinds of solutions that that you propose to improve access to communications. So that's an example of what we mean by web content accessibility guidelines and there was also a question or want to point out about collaboration. So the only organizations can only submit one application, this

year the funding that we have available this year is about 750,000 so dollars, so we want that to be spread around.

But we also know that there's a wealth of information and expertise on disability organizations, so we've made it possible for those organizations to be collaborators with any number of other partner organizations and application submissions. So only one project per organization, but you can be a partner, and you could be may be mentioned in a budget of many other organizations.

There's also clarification though, while Jess was speaking, that the deadline is April 15 so you have over a month still to work on this so we're hoping for some really good applications.

There was also a question about health care, hospitals; you are eligible to apply for these funds.

There was a question about word count, we were actually discussing putting a limit on word count I'm not sure if that's in the smart sheets application form just now, so hold on but, but we will have to restrict how long people's responses are.

Just to interject, a few people asked if will be sharing the PowerPoint presentation after, and so we will be sharing the recording of this presentation, with everyone who registered for the webinar, but the majority of the information was pulled from the MAF guidelines on the MAF website so you can always refer to those documents for more clarity.

Thanks Jess That was one I was thinking about as well.

**Janelle (webinar attendee):** Yeah, I just wanted to ask a quick question, it was mentioned that previous projects could be applicable and we have a project to create an accessibility database about information of art galleries in the art centers or odd venue so in the city. But we realized that we need to expand the scope, so we have some funding for it but need to get more to be able to evaluate more places would that be considered a past project or is that something we could also apply?

**Yutta Fricke:** We ask is when you apply, if you could note that in the budget, including where the funding came from, what source it came from, just so that the accounting is all clear, but if the project has started, we would just consider that that matching funding and we would want to know what MAF would fund.

**Teslim (webinar attendee):** Yes, hi there, so I work at Red River College in the Faculty of Management. In one of the examples during the presentation, I'm trying to see if there's any part of this that could go towards capital funding that I see as an expense. I'll

give you an example, we have a wheelchair lift here at the College that I'm trying to replace at the moment. So, for prospective people who are going to apply for jobs, it's going to make their movements around the College easier.

**Yutta Fricke:** That was something I was going to just talk about generally because we've had a few phone calls about renovations and power doors and capital expenses like that, I mean you could say that that some of the information communications possibly that would fall under your Capital management. But no renovations, such as power doors that are physical infrastructure fall under the building code. They are not a part of the funding this year, and I'll just explain why.

I know that the public often thinks of accessibility as physical access. Certainly in a winter city, we see the barriers all the time, but the Accessibility for Manitobans Act focuses on the future design of public spaces, but it does not overlap with the building code, so that people who are in construction or renovation are not getting two sets of requirements. At least this year during the pilot year, even though we know that physical access is so important to people with mobility needs, the focus is on the three objectives that that Jess mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, and your lift example does not fall under those objectives.

**Question from chat box:** Can you clarify, we are a not for profit business organization, which is classified as eligible, however, we are also a private club for the majority of business. There are sections open to the public, but the private club is classified as ineligible.

**Yutta Fricke:** This is a detailed question, and I think I might need to know a little bit more about the kind of club, so you can always follow up with us. I think you will know that our intention was that we, the Manitoba government is the public. The impact of this fund should benefit, as many people as possible that's how the selection criteria are evaluated, so if it becomes significant for a membership, and there is limited impact in terms of beneficiaries, then that is how the project will probably be weighed.

That's why in Jess's examples she said, an example of a project that would look at how to make a summer camp more accessible? To meet the extra criteria, I would also talk to all other summer camps, about how these criteria can be used to make, or the model and their experience can help make other camps accessible. So in terms of submitting a project that will be evaluated with a high score, you're going to want to have the impact be broad so maybe that'll help you understand how you how your project that is both public and private club would be evaluated.

**Question from chat box:** This ties into a capital expenditure question. What about bathtubs? We are a women's shelter in northern Manitoba. Does that go beyond or is that improving service?

**Yutta Fricke:** It is improving service, and I can see that, like that making an accessible bathroom whether it is for a shelter, or for a college. It is considered a renovation and so we'd have to see how that fits into a broader project, perhaps, but I would consider that a renovation and then I want to tell you that there are other funds.

The Building Sustainable Communities Program is applicable, but the funding deadline might have passed. It is one fund that helps with renovations, that is provided by the Federal Government.

So again, you know it's a limitation of our fund this year that that those kind of physical infrastructures, in your case. However, I know that program wise, it makes a difference to who is able to participate in your program but, but basically that changing a bathroom, this is a renovation.

**Question from chat box:** Is there a specific a specific age group that this grant is targeting?

**Yutta Fricke:** No, but our intention is to focus on impact, and in the selection criteria we ask you which demographic you target, such as rural or urban, other sectors of the population, such as newcomers. We would like to have projects that that reach a broader population. So one thing, for instance I have worked at The Manitoba Accessibility Office for while we launched the legislation in 2013 and we're like five to six person office. So we've had to roll out legislation and standards in a way that addresses everyone as if the population of Manitoba is all the same, that we're all living the same conditions, the same age, as such we're hoping that this fund helps us improve.

The messaging and the awareness of the regulations, as well public awareness of the standards among different population groups we know that we've done nearly nothing in terms of reaching curriculum and school aged children about what accessibility means and growing up with accessibility is really important to change attitudes.

So, in fact, a project that would address younger people would be really important, of course, seniors also are affected by accessibility and very distinct ways and we've done no specific project for instance on understanding, way finding and how these things affect senior's memory. We know that that there is a broad range of projects that could affect different age groups, and we just want to make our legislation more understandable.

**Jess Turner:** So another question is can any expenses be claimed retroactively? For example, in the last few months we engaged an accessibility consultant and their fee has already been paid.

**Yutta Fricke:** No, it has to be funds going forward and we are obliged to follow the 2022/23 fiscal year, so it would be all funds related to costs during that year. That is from April to March, that's the government's fiscal year.

**Question from chat box:** We primarily work with mobility accessibility. However, I know that accessibility grants often refer to all impairments, and are penalized for not having a multi impairment approach. Are we going to be penalized? Is this grant only focusing on mobility, or visual impairments or any other impairments?

**Yutta Fricke:** In fact, just as I mentioned about different demographics, yes, I think it would be helpful to have the regulations that Manitoba has under accessibility hone in on different populations and to clarify what accessibility means. Because so far, what we've done is tried to generalise or offer examples that target different groups.

We're often creating our resources as sort of a one size fits all and we know that this isn't the case. So no, you would not be penalized, but just remember what I raised earlier when I was going over what the selection criteria are and to consider each of those before you fill your application form.

How you address those criteria is important because the score will be based on the selection criteria. So not only that that you have a great capacity as an organization, or that you have an excellent work plan, but also how you have included people with disabilities. Did you consult them at the get go or only at the tail end, and, how will they be involved, and how will you collaborate? We know that a lot of expertise lies in lived experience, so we want to see that be part of these projects.

**Question from chat box:** Will MAF funds be available for building renovations next year?

**Yutta Fricke:** We're going to review this pilot year. We will see what kind of projects we get and whether it meets the needs out there.

We know that there are other opportunities that fund renovations; we also know that they don't go far enough. We've got two more standards coming out so right now the

agenda objectives include three standards, design of public spaces as a future. One that addresses trails, parking, and many physical aspects.

So even that will maybe added in a future year maybe next year, maybe a year later, but right now we're only focusing on the pilot year. With your help, people who apply and general public will evaluate whether or not we were meeting needs and how to improve next year.

But this is where we're starting and we think with the number of people interested today and \$750,000 to distribute that we're probably going to reach the goals of our objectives, this year, but you know time will tell.

**Question from chat box:** We are undergoing some accessibility upgrades within our municipality. I realized that that the renovations would not be covered, but could we claim the project leader's wages?

**Yutta Fricke:** So I think it would be necessary to see the whole project, so if you're a municipality, then you should have an accessibility plan and you may want to have the leader. You know that your consultant looks at the accessibility plan and consults with the Community, but what should future priorities be and how can we improve information communication wayfinding you know.

So the part that the project leader does that is associated with our three objectives. We could potentially fund that project leader. If the project leader were a technical design specialist on renovations then we would not fund that part because we do not fund renovations, hope that makes sense.

**Question from chat box:** Does this dovetail with the Federal government's accessibility grants and are there are restrictions? I guess if people applied for both grants.

**Yutta Fricke:** And in fact I, I was pleased to see that we wrote our accessibility grant without consulting with them.

And they've changed how they've written a grant now to support federal accessibility legislation and you may have looked at it and you think it dovetails. But that's just because our counterparts are thinking about accessibility in the same way we are, and are thinking about collaboration in the same way, we are.

In fact, the same response as we mentioned earlier about matching grants applies here. So I think that their deadline is coming up, you may not know if you receive funds from

them. But we would have to know like if you apply and you receive funds from the Federal Government.

Of course, you can't get two sources of funds for the same thing. So I would suggest that you apply to us for one part of the project and to the federal government for the other part. If you don't know or if you've already received funds name that in the budget, and you identify what you'll be asking from us and what's paid from another source. So it's all you know matter of clear accountability.

**Question from chat box:** Ok the next question. We are a non-profit handi van service, we are looking at getting a newer van badly that needs replacing. Is this eligible?

**Yutta Fricke:** I know the other standard that I did not mention that is coming up in the next year or two is the transportation standard. This year, the grant will not apply to a replacement vehicle.

**Question from chat box:** Is there any estimation of when the new standard for information and communication will be coming out?

**Yutta Fricke:** As civil servants, we can never say for sure, until a political decision has been made. However, we believe that it will be coming up fairly soon, as soon as spring 2022.

If you want hints about what we're looking at in terms of information, communication, you will find it under the law. The council's submission to the government of shows what has been proposed. We have an Accessibility Advisory Council, however the government always changes, you know, or can modify, or change the recommendations made by the Council. But there's some information we mention, such as web accessibility guidelines and there are other forms of information, and communication.

Like clear print guidelines, guidelines for holding an accessible meeting, things like that. But that would fall under what we see as accessible information communication. I can't tell you for sure when the government will publicize its standard. Or when it will enact it. In the past, the Manitoba government has had one year to comply, public sector organizations have two years to comply, and the private sector has three years to comply.

So that's just what happened previously. I'll remind all employers in Manitoba and the private sector that must comply with the accessibility standard for employment that the compliance deadline is May 1.

**Jess Turner:** Would an accessibility awareness week for a community fall under the objectives for MAF?

**Yutta Fricke:** Yes, it would. Again, I don't know how large the community is, but we will consider that as well. If you could create a model for other communities, so that you can describe the impact of how your information will be shared and used, and outline the impact, that would be most helpful.

**Question from chat box:** The federal enabling accessibility fund is not open for applications, at present, and for the past few years. Are there other funds we can apply for in order to get an elevator?

**Yutta Fricke:** The building sustainable communities program, I don't think it's open right now. It funds communities and not for profit organizations. It might share funding, and there are a number of other funders. There are other funds out there.

**Question from chat box:** So, to clarify putting automatic door openers on doors that we currently have in place would not be something that would qualify.

**Yutta Fricke:** No, you have the door and you want to add a power element to the door? Or you have one that is not working?

We are not funding renovations this year. The power door would not be eligible this year. The other thing is that Jess explained at the beginning that this is a \$20 million investment that the Manitoba government made last year. So in the first year, it grew by \$750,000 between March and September.

The Winnipeg Foundation has its fiscal year end on September 30<sup>th</sup>, so we expect that the fund will grow next year, and maybe that'll have implications for what we can fund.

We know that some of these capital expenditures use quite a bit of funding at once, and that it would really limit how far we could stretch our \$750,000 this year. So I really cannot say what we will fund next year but, but this year we are focusing on those three objectives.

**Question from chat box:** Would the funding cover payroll costs associated with the training of employees?

**Yutta Fricke:** No. Payroll costs associated with training employees is a non-eligible cost mentioned under ongoing operations. But it would fund, for instance, a consultant. Or you know, like a disability organization to train your staff on accessibility training, or to create a tool that could be shared by other organizations like yours and the sector to grow the impact of it. The trainer would be covered for a training project that is being funded in your application. But ongoing expenses are not.

**Question from chat box:** There are several sidewalks in our small municipality that are crumbling and causing accessibility issues to public buildings such as churches. Would the cost of repairing the sidewalks be eligible for funding?

**Yutta Fricke:** No, it would not be eligible. In the future, when we have a standard in the design of public spaces, and if the Manitoba Accessibility Fund is focusing on the introduction of that standard, then I can imagine that that maybe something like that would be, but this is only speculative. That is not an eligible cost this year.

**Question from chat box:** I'm with the Gimli international film festival and our non-profits goal would be to make the screenings more accessible to patrons by the captioning of films that are not produced with captioning. Is that technology available?

**Yutta Fricke:** Regarding technology being available is a different question but funding, yes. So that is the kind of thing that that could be funded now. Again you have to remember that the selection criteria includes impact and you know how many people will benefit from it. That if it is a single screening, or maybe you have, I've gone to the film festival, and maybe there are three screenings during the festival. So you'd have to think about, but you know how to use that.

But the film festival for example, there might be a number of ways it could fall into this project. Also in other provinces there's something called a REEL accessibility as in reel film. And so you know, focusing on like having some sort of public awareness about accessibility be a part of your film festival, having screenings that have captioning, having film that features disability, having a talk back about that.

Having in your brochure an accessible version and accessible content online and telling people what you're doing to become more accessible. Having the screening on the beach have an area that is wheelchair accessible. I think Emily's going to have a movie on how to do that, so you know there's lots of ways, if you started thinking about any one festival.

So I would suggest to you to not narrow it down to the one thing that comes to mind right away, but to consult with people with disabilities, like the testers and see about things that maybe you haven't thought about.

**Question from chat box:** Would creating a designated parking area for seniors accessing services at an office be eligible?

**Yutta Fricke:** Again, you know falls a little bit with this. The sidewalks in terms of design of public spaces. However, if you thought of this project as something larger like wayfinding and access so then you're kind of communicating. And you may be reviewing the whole program, and how the program can be made accessible in different ways.

So then signage is part of the cost of where cars parked and consulting with people with disabilities, you know I can imagine that it could be part of a of a bigger project. But simply painting the sidewalk and reorganizing that which it might not be such a significant cost anyways. Or you know new concrete I don't think new concrete could be a part of this project, because that's really like a renovation of the outdoor space. But as part of an overall becoming more accessible plan, you'd have to play with that idea a little bit and maybe make this part of a bigger project.

But wayfinding is and signage that is a part of communicating, information communications and its customer service.

**Question from chat box:** In regards to a website would it cover hiring a consultant to make a Community clubs website, WCAG compliant and then hold a workshop to teach other clubs in the arms what changes need to be done?

**Yutta Fricke:** I like that someone's already thinking about that broader impact and, yes, that is exactly the kind of project so just to learn how your website can be improved.

I'm going to forget the name of the IT company that serves 80% of Manitoba Rural municipalities with website updates and such. I met him once at a at a municipality event and because he also serves Ontario. He told me that the company actually offers accessibility improvements to municipal websites, and that usually has not asked for these because there is an overall cost that you know, increases municipal website activity for him over two to three year period. But that is the kind of thing that that that could be covered and the fact that it could be an example for up for others strengthens the proposal.

**Question from chat box:** Would a project to retroactively make websites, E-learning courses and any kind of digital materials for employees and or customers qualify.

**Yutta Fricke:** Yes, accessible communications through websites and many cases it would require someone with expertise and accessibility to review your website. It is not all technical that's not all platform, it's making sure that your script is clear that the content that you add on is accessible. That your images have captions through or have descriptions through properties. So some of the things we're going to have at the Manitoba Accessibility Office is going to be training on tips for electronic accessibility during Manitoba Access Awareness Week. Well also be offering some training then, but yes that is the kind of thing that we will fund.

And remember, always that that you have to have a strong impact. So If only you can only say that a few people are looking at your website. Then that project in comparison to another project, that says that many more people are using this and they need it in this way and that there are a lot of people with disabilities and such that'll be weighted so just keep that in mind.

Lots of questions I'm on the hot seat.

**Question from chat box:** Would physical or architectural accessibility auditing and consultation be eligible, as it relates to identifying barriers and offering solutions to improve accessible customer service and accessible employment?

**Yutta Fricke:** I would say you know if that were in the context of a broader project. For example, physical access is also about wayfinding that's information communications. Finding solutions for you know when something like our customer service standard says that: A business or organization does not have to be physically accessible in order for that business to comply with the standard; however, the business should have messaging and policies on how it meets the needs of people who face mobility impairments and cannot access services. So what is Plan B, move the meeting a coffee shop, is there another space where the same services can be offered to people, so in that regard, in terms of a plan.

Yes, but in terms of the first steps to renovations no because we're not funding renovations.

**Question from chat box:** In terms of staff education, would a submission for employees to take a course on how to produce accessible web content qualify?

**Yutta Fricke:** Yes, so staff training with regards to web accessibility. Yeah that would definitely qualify, that hiring of someone. Again, you know if the training were like for a particular sector so what that looks like for schools, for instance what might be different from a college or maybe Manitoba daycare association or a REC Center.

So looking at that training for the stuff, along with what are basic improvements to make to your website and sharing that recording with others would increase the impact.

Again, you know that it is helpful to have a sector in mind, but to share with that sector.

**Question from chat box:** Can you clarify about non-eligibility for organizations not open to the public, does it mean any project that is for internal projects are not eligible. Does it mean any project that is for internal projects that are not for public?

**Yutta Fricke:** Okay, so yeah so maybe what the question is driving down at if you had training for employees of an organization and if you are focusing on the employment aspect. That does not affect it, and I think there is training for employees, so that's okay. But if you are looking at providing services to a private club it doesn't apply in terms of those two objectives.

**Question from chat box:** Ok next question, we have a project that doesn't fit neatly into the three accessibility standards, is there a process where we can find out if the project would be eligible before applying, can we submit questions on eligibility before submitting an application?

**Yutta Fricke:** Yes, I imagine that there will be questions that don't, you know that are particular to your organization. And we have [MAF@gov.mb.ca](mailto:MAF@gov.mb.ca) is the address that Jess provided and that you will find also on the website. So just pose your question there, and you know some of these things. I knew there would be detailed question like that previous one, where it's not always straightforward. So it may help to know what you're after in your project and how it fits in.

**Question from chat box:** What if we have a building that does not have a power door for ease of access. Will businesses and organizations be penalized for not being accessible? This would be a retrofit what would you suggest? We want to have one but it is expensive.

**Yutta Fricke:** And there are there was a church last year in Transcona that won an award for accessibility. It faced not having accessible doors and it's brainstorm has resulted in volunteers from the congregation being at those doors to help people come in that day. So again, you know like what about a doorbell. So that If someone comes to your door and the door is too heavy that there is someone around that can open it. So we don't fund renovations. But we certainly understand that those are physical barriers and that you may want to work and consult with people with disabilities to talk about how can you move around that. But because as I said earlier, the Accessibility for Manitoban's Act does not cover the building code so the fund at least this year is not being used to fund renovations, including power doors.

**Question from chat box:** Regarding physical access, renovating washrooms, or making a countertop accessible – do these qualify?

**Yutta Fricke:** Physical renovations do not qualify for this fund, including countertops.

**Question from chat box:** When is Manitoba Accessibility Week?

**Yutta Fricke:** It is aligned with the Canadian government's National AccessAbility Week. This year it is May 29 to June 4. We are planning an event for the Thursday. If you haven't already subscribed to Accessibility News, you'll find it on the landing page of [accessibilitymb.ca](http://accessibilitymb.ca) and the newsletter will alert you to all our events, including that one in June, when we finalize our plans.

**Question from chat box:** We are a non-profit organization; we host different industry sectors in our facility, would a street billboard with our facility name being eligible project?

**Yutta Fricke:** I would off the top you know my thought, and you know, I'm just answering this off the cuff. I've tried to think about things people would ask me. I have not thought about this question, but wayfinding helps people with disabilities and others sort of find their way to an entrance. And signage that promotes and well or tells the public who you are does not really fall into that category, so I would say no, unless I'm misunderstanding, the questions.

**Question from chat box:** With the hiring of interpretation services for non-English or French speaking clients, would these qualify?

**Yutta Fricke:** So that's an interesting question so you might have seen that we said that eligible is English, French and Manitoba's indigenous languages, but we did not include newcomer languages.

That said, we did say that we want to reach out to marginalized populations, so I would say that that. Maybe write us a note, I wouldn't rule it out because even though the eligible is that other translation, it may well be part of your project that you're trying to create awareness about accessibility among the population that speaks to Tagalog or another language. So in that case, having it translated makes sense.

We didn't put it in the you know what is automatically approved, but because it falls under the category of reaching marginalized populations. I would say that that it would be considered. Again, it would be determined by impact, and how many people will be affected by receiving this information in a different language.

**Question from chat box:** We provide school programming for a small number of people, but for the entirety of students with ASL in our division, would the sustainability portion of the application makeup for the relatively small impact zone of only six students?

**Yutta Fricke:** So we don't fund ongoing operations so I don't know if that's what would be happening with your project, so I would say again, this question it's not ruled out, but it needs further consideration, because there are six people, but that would be weighed just so you know.

However, if it's ongoing operations to provide this service to six people, then that is already a concern, because ongoing operations are not funded.

**Rhonda (webinar attendee) :** Thanks. Yeah, I was just wondering many technological solutions or subscription based such as real time captioning or even larger screen platforms for the ASL interpretation and things like that. And so I'm wondering, is it an eligible expense, I understood I assume that subscriptions are part of ongoing operating costs, but would say a trial period for a new platform not currently used would that be an eligible expenses so we can experiment so we can see it doesn't fit our needs.

**Yutta Fricke:** Yeah again, I'm you know speaking off the cuff, but I would say yes, and I think you know even in our office like some subscriptions are year long so as long as that those subscriptions coincide with the 22/23. You know more or less that it's for this project and that you can make a case for it for the impact and the sharing, I think that makes sense.

Stacey maybe your question, then, just to go back to the chat, thanks Jess for the chat thanks for reading it for me.

**Stacey (webinar attendee):** I'm a speech language pathologist in a school division and so what I'm looking for, and I think this qualifies. But the process is a long process, so I would just like to clarify. We are looking at putting core communication boards in our in our playgrounds to support those children that are non-verbal, minimally verbal, language disordered, and new English language learners. Would that kind of fit this type of application?

**Yutta Fricke:** Yeah theoretically yes. And if you can show the impact by also being a model and sharing this with other school divisions that will strengthen your project.

**Stacey (webinar attendee):** Okay perfect Thank you!

**Jess Turner:** Okay, so moving on to the chat questions. My organization, would like to add a mobi-mat to our public pool to make it more accessible. Would this be considered design of public spaces? Would it be eligible this year?

**Yutta Fricke:** It would be design of public spaces and it's great to see so many more places have mobi-mats. Including on beaches and for people who don't know that it is like literally a plastic kind of mat that birds hill park as well, so that people with issues of balance or wheelchair users can easily make it to the water.

In the design of public spaces, like, I can imagine again, you know it's me thinking as one person I'm not a selection committee. But I can imagine it would fit in there, but that it probably wouldn't fit this year, because it is about a physical space. Kind of a renovation, but now renovating the beach.

**Jess Turner:** We are a non-profit organization supporting people living with intellectual disabilities.

As a part of our service expansion through the pandemic, we would like to offer online zoom classes both fun and educational to people who have been staying at home or who have not been able to access our service directly. We need a professional educator to teach people art, dance, music, etc. we also need more laptops for people to access online classes are we eligible?

**Yutta Fricke:** So this might be a little bit tricky because in some ways it sounds like it's the ongoing operations of your organization. But you're amending the operations for covid.

And I think there will continue to be people who are not ready to meet in spaces. And even though the protocols are being lifted by the government. You know what I think we'd have to see the application to make sure it's not ongoing but, but having technology that allows participants with disabilities to participate in a program. That is eligible.

Because of the selection criteria that is impact if it's one person or two people who are able to use that that equipment over you know months at a time. I think that would kind of diminish the point value. The support for the impact of the project, unless again, you were using this as a model, and there would be other organizations that would benefit from it, so you kind of have to think in that regard.

**Jess Turner:** So I think we've covered most of the questions and concerns in the chat. Was there anything we might have missed or does anyone have any questions that they would like to ask?

**Yutta Fricke:** I saw earlier today that we had as many as 225 participants and now we're down to 119. But I would ask participants to please stay on because we'd like to poll what sector you're from. So maybe if we could do that quickly with Shay's help, and I can always answer a few more questions, but the poll before people leave us would be helpful.

So if you don't mind Jess I'll just go over this. So you saw at the front end that we're interested in in what sector is interested in our fund and who were reaching. We've refined an ad campaign that's still going out to business, I see as you respond.

And that keeps climbing that that there are fewer businesses lots of not for profits and number of municipalities and some public sector and one other. So the other if you if you feel bold enough to put in chat what sector you come from or what area, other than the four listed we would certainly be curious to know that as well.

Everyone knows that is just Manitoba organizations that that could apply for these funds and that means that you have at least one employee in Manitoba and or you are a volunteer based organization so that is one of the main things.

**Yutta Fricke:** I also wanted to tell you again just from Jess's presentation that we're trying to be very careful, so that we're clear with you as applicants what our selection criteria are. The presentation showed the selection criteria, which are listed in the guidelines flow with the application form that asks you questions about the selection criteria.

Then it will flow again to the selection of projects. So we know with \$750,000 this year and, and I think we had 365 individuals register for the training today. But you know, there might be a bit of a competition for the funds, depending on how many people follow through. So just know that that we will be using that selection criteria all elements of it, to differentiate amongst projects and find what would be the strongest projects for this or our pilot year.

We are trying to be very transparent and in that regard, there won't be any sort of curveballs thrown. We want to know about you know, good project plan, capacity in the organization, strong impact collaboration and that will make it a strong project proposal.

And that actually led to a question here, in terms of measuring impact can the sharing knowledge be outside of Manitoba? For instance, film festivals across Canada. We're especially interested in Manitoba. So I would say besides, your film festival that's Gimli asking.

We know we have film groups in Manitoba and we have a film sector, so I would put the emphasis of in Manitoba. But across Canada it's also interesting and exchanging that information. If you're interested in that, I would also look at the federal grant for that kind of work, because what we won't fund is travel to the other provinces you know it's less impact.

As a Manitoba government, I mean we're always sharing information from our office with other offices across Canada and we're taking from other offices. So we feel we that that's really important, but our focus with this fund is definitely Manitoba.

**Question from chat box:** And another point here is upgrading websites for visual impaired upgrading to voice command website.

Yes, so that couples under information communication those kind of upgrades to website. So again, you know the impact, how many people will use that and that's going to be important to us as well, but it is the kind of thing that is applicable so.

**Jess Turner:** Someone also asked whether a letter of support is necessary for applications.

**Yutta Fricke:** A letter of support is not necessary for application stuff here. I'm not sure if everybody sees the results, but you might find it interesting.

You've certainly been a patient audience. It's been about an hour and a half, and I think that the questions are slowing. So for my part, thank you very much. And for people who don't know I'm retiring at the end of the month, so it's especially important that you know that Jess Turner and the rest of the group at the Manitoba accessibility offices is ready to assist you with these projects. We are excited about the difference that funding in the Community can make. For many years that we've had accessibility legislation it's been one of the number one Issues that community has raised with us, is to please introduce funding and I'm so pleased that its been done. So thank you, thank you very much and Jess any final words.

**Yutta Fricke:** Thank you to everyone for joining us, thank you to the ASL interpreters for their services, and we hope this webinar has inspired you to apply for the Manitoba Accessibility Fund, to help our collective efforts, and to make the province more accessible for everyone. Thanks very much Diane I know you have your hand up. We can answer your question and then we'll close for today.

**Diane (webinar attendee):** I have a question. I think many organizations are going to hybrid meetings and events; I am involved with an accessibility inclusion group at our church. And we have got technology in to make hybrid services for whatever is happening there possible, but we have to train people for it. Could we apply for the training of people to use that and then share with other organizations?

**Yutta Fricke:** Yes, you can, and one thing that we didn't stress today is that there's no minimum amount, but you know, for funding application so that training could easily be a part of it. And there might be a way for us to you know fund more small project grants like that.

So, thank you very much, everybody, and I think that is it thanks Jess and the team behind the scenes, including Shay and Anna, and people who've been helping us.

**Jess Turner:** Thanks everyone have a good afternoon.

**[Webinar Ends]**