

Introduction to

Manitoba's Accessible Information and Communication Standard

Enacted on May 1, 2022, Manitoba's Accessible Information and Communication Standard is the third standard under [The Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#). Its aim is to remove and prevent barriers that exist digitally, in print or through interaction with technology or people. The Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication:

- builds on existing requirements of [Manitoba's Human Rights Code](#)
- helps organizations identify, reduce and remove barriers for website users and members of the public trying to access information or contact them
- adopts globally recognized web content accessibility guidelines as a minimum requirement
- applies to all organizations in Manitoba with one or more employees

Compliance deadlines

The **Manitoba government** will demonstrate leadership, complying within one year, by **May 1, 2023**.

Public sector organizations, libraries and educational institutions have until **May 1, 2024**.

- Public sector organizations include Crown corporations, regional health authorities, municipal and regional libraries, Manitoba's 10 largest municipalities and government agencies, boards and commissions.
- Educational institutions include colleges, universities, adult learning centres, private vocational institutions, private and public schools and their libraries.

Private sector, non-profit organizations and small municipalities have until **May 1, 2025**.

- Private sector organizations include Manitoba businesses and organizations with one or more employees, such as shops, restaurants and professional services.
- Non-profit organizations include charities, places of worship, community organizations and membership associations.

This information is available in alternate formats on request.

Web requirements

The Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication requires organizations to remove barriers for people with disabilities who use their websites or web applications. Web accessibility benefits everyone. This includes people using a slow internet connection or people with limited technological knowledge.

All Manitoba websites and web content must meet or exceed globally followed [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 Level AA](#) if the following applies:

- an organization's web content is published on or after this standard comes into force for the organization, or
- the web content is required to access an organization's goods and services.

If a Manitoba organization has existing web content that users must access to obtain the organization's goods or services that web content must meet WCAG 2.1 level AA, at minimum.

If an organization is launching or significantly refreshing a web application (accessed on a browser) it must meet WCAG 2.1 level AA, at minimum.

Public sector organizations (not including small municipalities), educational institutions and libraries with intranet websites must conform to WCAG 2.1 level AA or greater.

There are exceptions included in the Standard if obligated organizations are unable to meet or exceed WCAG 2.1 Level AA because of the following reasons:

- It is not technically feasible.
- The technology required to publish is not readily available.
- It would result in undue hardship to the organization.
- The organization does not have direct control over the web content or web application.
- The web content or web application relates to product labels or other product information.

Other Requirements

The Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication calls on all organizations to have measures, policies and practices to remove barriers related to information and communication. Organizations need to consider the ways in which Manitobans interact with or access information they provide.

Requirements include the following:

Requesting accessible information

- Inform the public and employees that they can request information through a communication support or accessible format.
 - This may include information related to emergency procedures or public safety.
- Organizations must consult with the person making the request to identify a support or format that removes the barrier and provide it in a timely manner.
- Organizations cannot charge the person making a request more than what would be charged to someone who did not make a request.

Under the standard, there are also exceptions for obligated organizations in providing a requested support or format. The exemptions do not apply to library materials or educational materials. Similar to [web requirements](#), exceptions for organizations include:

- It is not technically feasible.
- The technology required is not readily available.
- It would result in undue hardship to the organization.
- The organization does not have direct control over the information.
- The information relates to product labels or other product information.

Feedback process

- Organizations must have a process to receive and respond to feedback about accessible information and communication.
- The process must be appropriate to the circumstances and suitable for people with disabilities.
- Organizations must document resulting actions and make that documentation available on request.

Training

All organizations in Manitoba are required to provide training on the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication to employees, agents or volunteers with the following duties:

- those who communicate directly with the public or another Manitoba organization on behalf of the organization
- those who maintain or develop the organization's web content
- those who purchase or procure information technology or communication tools
- people who develop or implement the organization's measures, policies and practices on accessible communication
- if the organization is an educational institution, people who work as educators

Training content must include:

- how to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessible information and communication
- how to provide accessible information and communication, including through a communication support or alternate formats
- a review of [The Human Rights Code](#), [The Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#) and this standard

An organization must provide training to a person as soon as reasonably possible after that person is assigned the applicable duties. Ongoing training needs to be provided whenever an organization updates or changes their accessible information and communication policies, measures or practices.

Accessible Educational Institutions

The standard applies to adult learning centres, universities, colleges and the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, private vocational institutions, and public and independent schools.

- Along with the [requirements above](#), educational institutions must inform employees, students, applicants, and their parents or guardians that they can request educational materials to be provided through a communication support or accessible format.
- The educational institution must consult with the person making the request to identify a support or format that removes the barrier and provide it in a timely manner.
- If the educational material cannot be provided through a communication support or accessible format, the educational institution must provide a similar resource.
- The educational institution cannot charge the person making a request more than what would be charged to someone who did not make a request.

Accessible Public Libraries

The standard applies to municipal public libraries, including libraries operated by the City of Winnipeg, regional libraries and libraries of educational institutions.

- Libraries must consider accessibility when procuring or purchasing library resources.
- Along with the [requirements above](#), libraries must inform users that resources are available through a communication support or in an accessible format, including the types of supports or formats available.
- A person can request that a library provide a library resource through a communication support or accessible format.
- The library must consult with the person making the request to identify a support or format that removes the barrier and then provide it in a timely manner.
- The library cannot charge the person making a request more than what would be charged to someone who did not make a request.

Additional requirements for large employers

Certain organizations are required to:

1. Document in writing all accessible information and communication policies and practices, including the content and timeframe for training.
2. Make these documents publicly available.

These requirements apply to:

- public sector organizations
- educational institutions
- libraries
- private organizations, including businesses and non-profits with 50 or more employees
- small municipalities with 50 or more employees

For more information or to receive this information in alternate formats, please contact:

Manitoba Accessibility Office

630 - 240 Graham Avenue

Winnipeg, MB R3C 0J7

Phone: 204-945-7613 (in Winnipeg)

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

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Fax: 204-948-2896

Visit [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca) for information, tools and templates.

Legal disclaimer: This information complements the application of the regulations under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA). It is not legal advice. For certainty, please refer to the [AMA](#) and the [Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation](#).

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