

MINISTER'S ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 & 2024/25

THE ACCESSIBILITY FOR MANITOBANS ACT





This document is available in alternative formats on request.

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A Message from the Minister

As Minister responsible for Accessibility, I am pleased to share the government's plan to implement The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) during the next two years.

It has been ten years since Manitoba passed the AMA, which focuses on eliminating barriers to accessibility. Today, nearly every Manitoban either has a disability, knows someone with a disability, or will have a disability in the coming years. Now more than ever, it is important that all Manitoba businesses, non-profit organizations, public sector organizations, municipalities and citizens make accessibility a priority.

There are three main goals for this two-year plan. The first objective is to enhance the accessibility legislation in Manitoba by implementing two new standards under the AMA and conducting an independent review of the act.

Over the next two years, the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard will be enacted.

The second objective is to raise awareness of the AMA and celebrate achievements. Manitoba will continue to proclaim and celebrate important dates such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities and Manitoba Access Awareness Week. The Manitoba Accessibility Fund will provide grants to organizations that promote and improve accessibility.

The third main objective of the plan is to ensure all Manitoba businesses, non-profit organizations, public sector organizations and municipalities comply with the legislation. The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will conduct compliance audits, issue pre-compliance notices to organizations, and provide tools, resources and training materials to support organizations in becoming compliant. In the next two years, Manitoba will enact a Regulation allowing for monetary penalties for non-compliance with the AMA, if warranted.

Our province is proud to be an accessibility leader among our Canadian counterparts. We will continue to work with other jurisdictions and look for opportunities to harmonize accessibility legislation to remove barriers faced by Manitobans at home and throughout Canada. To this end, I invite you to read this plan, which highlights the Government of Manitoba's activities in the next two years to advance accessibility for all.

Sincerely,

Honourable Rochelle Squires Minister of Families, Minister responsible for Accessibility,
Minister responsible for Status of Women, and Minister of Francophone Affairs





Manitoba Accessibility Office

Since December 2020, the Manitoba Accessibility Office (MAO), formerly the Disability Issues Office, has supported the Minister responsible for Accessibility and the Accessibility Advisory Council to enact accessibility standards under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA). The MAO is part of the Department of Families and is responsible for the implementation of the AMA.

The MAO Vision and Mission statements are:

Vision

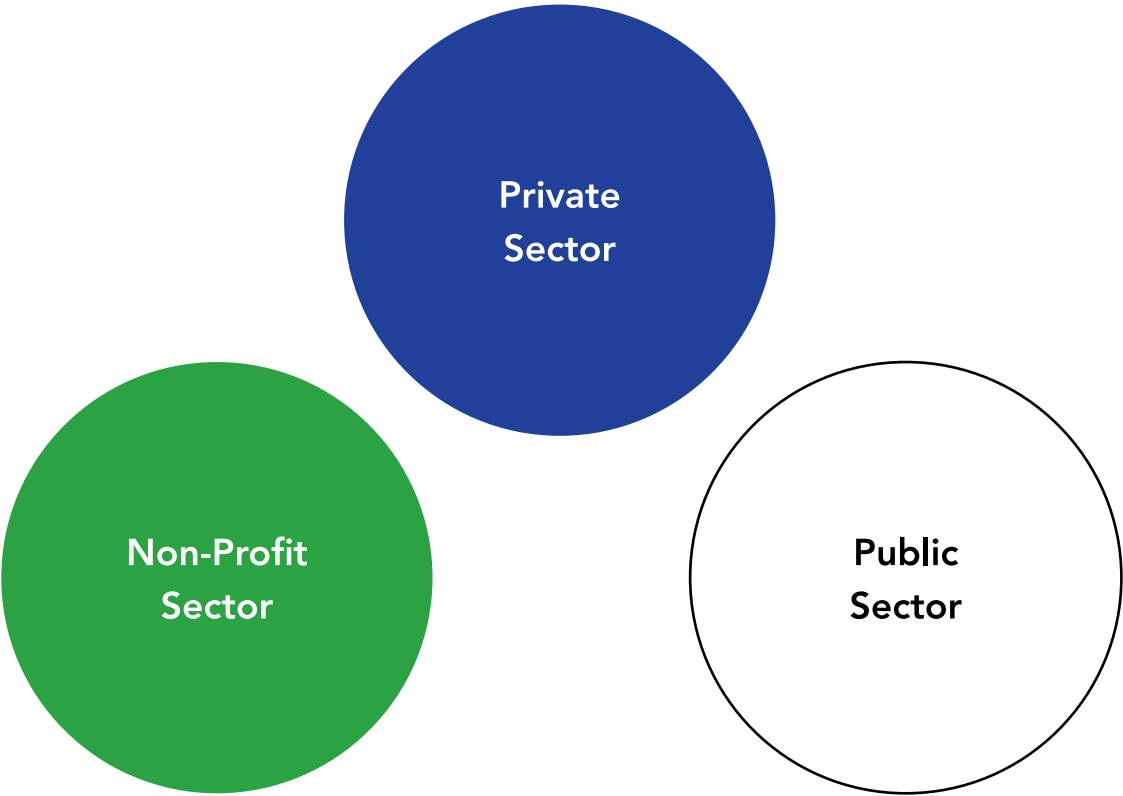
A fully accessible and inclusive Manitoba where all abilities are valued, diversity and independence are celebrated, barriers are removed, and human rights are protected.

Mission

To achieve greater access and inclusion in Manitoba by promoting accessibility law and practices through education, awareness and collaboration with communities, organizations and businesses.

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat

Over 41,000 organizations in Manitoba are required to comply with the AMA and its regulated standards. Manitoba’s Accessibility Compliance Secretariat monitors compliance of accessibility legislation among organizations in the private, non-profit, and public sectors. The Secretariat also works with organizations of all sizes to raise awareness about and enforce compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.





1. Accessibility Standard, Development and Implementation

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) is framework legislation that outlines the principles, structures and processes for removing barriers across Manitoba. The five accessibility standards are the building blocks of the AMA. These standards outline organizations and businesses responsibilities and obligations.

The Manitoba government has established Accessibility Standards that focus on five key areas of daily living:

1. **Customer Service Standard** (enacted November 1, 2015) establishes requirements for organizations to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.
2. **Accessible Employment Standard** (enacted May 1, 2019) introduces accessibility requirements related to employee recruitment, hiring and retention.
3. **Accessible Information and Communications Standard** (enacted May 1, 2022) addresses barriers to accessing one way static information, as well as two-way interactive communication, with an emphasis on electronic information.
4. **Accessible Transportation Standard** (to be enacted in 2023) applies to barriers Manitobans encounter while getting to work or school, shopping, socializing and other aspects of daily life that rely on accessible public transportation.

5. **Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard** (to be enacted in 2023/24) deals with accessibility to the design and construction of the environment that falls outside the jurisdiction of the Manitoba Building Code. This would include sidewalks, pathways and parks.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The AMA commits the government to significant progress by 2023, with the anticipated establishment of all five standards by the end of 2023/24. This would include the enactment of the remaining two standards, the Accessible Transportation Standard and Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard.



Customer Service



Transportation



Employment



Information and Communication



Design of Outdoor Public Spaces

Five Year Review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

The AMA requires an independent review to occur four years after enactment and every five years after the last review was tabled in the legislature. As the last review occurred in 2018/19, a second five-year review is required to take place during 2023/24.

Section 39 of the AMA requires the Minister responsible for Accessibility to appoint a person to complete a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the AMA and report on findings with recommendations. Under the AMA, the reviewer must consult with the public, especially people with disabilities and representatives from disability organizations.

Sarah Lugtig has been selected to perform the comprehensive and mandatory review of the AMA.

Ms. Lugtig is a Winnipeg lawyer with a degree in social work. Prior to 2020, Ms. Lugtig worked as in-house counsel for the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Legislative Counsel in the Manitoba government's public service. She also worked for the Manitoba government's Legal Services Branch for three years and functioned as the director of experiential learning with the faculty of law at the University of Manitoba. Ms. Lugtig presently works part-time with Legislative Counsel for ongoing special projects.

Ms. Lugtig will conduct the review, report on the findings and make recommendations to the Minister responsible for Accessibility to improve the effectiveness of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its regulations. The review will also include consultation with the public, particularly those with lived experiences.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The government will share the Five-Year Review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, which is currently underway, with the public and will consider all recommendations to strengthen this act.

Five-Year Review of the Accessible Employment Standard

The AMA calls on the Accessibility Advisory Council to undertake a review of each standard every five years after being established. In 2024, Council will begin its review of the Accessible Employment Standard, which government established as a regulation in 2019. The expected outcome is an understanding of whether and how organizations are meeting the objectives of the standard and what further government efforts are necessary to support progress.

In 2024, the Council will host a survey on EngageMB, hold online focus groups targeting key stakeholders, and host a public consultation webinar. In addition, Council will invite organizations and individuals to make submissions in writing or by telephone. Council will submit its review and recommendations to government three-months after the public feedback has ended.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The government will conduct the first Five-Year Review of the Accessibility Standard for Employment, will share the review with the public, and will consider all recommendations to strengthen the standard going forward.

The Development of the Remaining Two Standards

Over the next year, the Government of Manitoba plans to make significant progress in developing the last two remaining standards, the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard.

In September 2020, the Accessibility Advisory Council submitted recommendations on the creation of the Accessible Transportation Standard. The Department of Families has been leading work to draft the regulation, which is nearing completion. The government launched a 60-day period of public consultation in February 2023. This public consultation closes April 9, 2023.

The department is also leading work to analyze Council's recommendations for the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard. Upon completion of this work, the government will conduct an additional round of public consultations. Following the public

review, Council will assist with the analysis of the public feedback and recommend possible changes to the draft standard. The government anticipates having a final draft standard and launching a 60-day period of public consultation in 2024.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The government is holding a public consultation on its proposed standard for the Accessible Transportation Standard in spring 2023, in order to establish it as a regulation by fall 2023. The government will hold a third public consultation on its proposed standards for the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard, in anticipation of establishing it as a standard in 2023/24.

Implementation of the Customer Service Five-Year Review and Recommendations

In 2021, the Accessibility Advisory Council conducted a formal review of the Customer Service Standard and submitted the Five-Year Review of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service: Report for the Minister of Families, to the Minister responsible for Accessibility (September 2021).

The Council's formal report identified 22 recommendations to be implemented by 2024/25. These recommendations identify actions to be taken in the following categories:

- government accountability and leadership
- monitoring compliance and enforcement
- documenting policies, procedures and measures
- education, outreach and awareness raising
- resources and funding
- the Accessibility Advisory Council

During 2022, quarterly updates on the implementation status of the recommendations stemming from the review of the Customer Service Standard were provided online to the public. This information was provided as a chart outlining activities undertaken across the government to advance or complete each recommendation.

In October 2022, the Minister responsible for Accessibility provided a formal status update on the work to implement recommendations during the annual minister's meeting with the Accessibility Advisory Council, where it was noted that almost half (nine) of the recommendations had been completed in 2021 and 2022. The recommendations addressed areas such as:

- transparency of compliance activities, reporting complaints, annual reporting and collaboration with the Council
- outreach and awareness of the Customer Service Standard to obligated business and organizations and in communities outside Winnipeg
- inclusive language in government Agencies, Boards and Commissions appointment process, and addition of another member to the Accessibility Advisory Council
- monitoring financial implications of standards and funding support to organizations to implement the Customer Service Standard

During 2023/24, concrete activities will be taken to advance eleven recommendations where work is already underway. These recommendations address:

- progress reporting
- accessible information and communications
- accessible project and program development, including procurement
- French language and online resources
- financial resources to ensure Manitoba's commitment to accessibility is adequately administered

In 2024/25, the Manitoba government plans to advance work for two recommendations:

- changing the formal name of the regulation to add the word “accessible” to match the other standards, the Accessible Customer Service Standard
- re-evaluating returning to the lower threshold of 20 employees or more that must document policies and make these available to the public

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The government is committed to taking concrete steps in 2023/24 to implement the twenty-two recommendations identified in the Accessibility Advisory Council’s Five-Year Review of Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. Quarterly progress reports and annual ministerial updates on this work will continue to be made available to the public.



2. Compliance

Partnerships with Associations and Unions

Associations and unions are in a unique position to promote accessibility, and collaborating with them can be a highly effective way to raise awareness and promote compliance with regulated accessibility standards. In 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will establish partnerships and collaborate with professional and other types of associations and unions to raise awareness and promote compliance among many member organizations.

Through these partnerships, the Secretariat will:

- present material related to requirements under the AMA and regulated accessibility standards at events, such as annual conferences and conventions
- share free tools and resources to be distributed to all members
- write compliance-related articles in newsletters and bulletins administered by associations

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

In 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will establish partnerships and collaborate with professional and other types of associations and unions to raise awareness and promote compliance among many member organizations.

Compliance Audits

Since 2021, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat has been identifying companies in Manitoba with 50 or more employees and auditing their accessible customer service policies. In 2023/24 and 2024/25 the Secretariat will continue to conduct targeted reviews and audits of policies, practices, and measures, as required under accessibility standards. In particular, the Secretariat plans to perform the following compliance audits:

- Accessible employment policies, practices, and measures of large companies (2023/2024)
- Accessible customer service and accessible employment policies, practices, and measures of large non-profit organizations (2024/2025)

Organizations identified as non-compliant through audits will receive tailored Achieving Compliance Plans, with tools and resources to comply, and a deadline by which the Secretariat will follow up with the organization to assess compliance. Failure among these organizations to follow through with the plan may lead to the Secretariat issuing orders to comply and monetary penalties, in line with sections 27 and 29 of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

What is an Achieving Compliance Plan?

An Achieving Compliance Plan is a formal notice from the Secretariat that identifies an organization's area(s) of non-compliance with the AMA. The notification package includes a formal letter explaining the functions of the Secretariat and the non-compliance issue identified, as well as a form that specifies the date by which the Secretariat will follow up to assess compliance.

The letter notes that support and guidance is available by Secretariat staff to help the organization meet compliance. In addition, the Secretariat includes in the package a copy of the relevant legislation, practical tools and resources that have been developed to help organizations understand and comply with the legislation.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

In 2023/24 and 2024/25 the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to conduct targeted reviews and audits of policies, practices, and measures, as required under accessibility standards. Organizations identified as non-compliant through audits will receive tailored Achieving Compliance Plans, with tools and resources to comply, and a deadline by which the Secretariat will follow up with the organization to assess compliance.

Complaints and Concerns Regarding Accessibility

Part of the Secretariat's function is to receive complaints, concerns, and questions from members of the public regarding an organization's compliance with accessibility standards, and provide organizations guidance related to specific accessibility provisions in Manitoba. The Secretariat tracks the received complaints, concerns, and questions to identify trends that guide future compliance activities.

The Secretariat will continue to:

- inform all complainants of their rights under the AMA and its associated regulations
- If deemed relevant, contact organizations directly to raise awareness about requirements and ensure compliance

- redirect individuals and organizations to the applicable governing body if a complaint or question received by the Secretariat does not fall under the purview of the AMA or related standards
- maintain records and statistics related to accessibility compliance for public reporting

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to receive complaints, concerns, and questions from members of the public regarding an organization's compliance with accessibility standards, and provide organizations guidance related to specific accessibility provisions in Manitoba.

Pre-Compliance Notices

To ensure organizations begin to prepare to comply with newly passed accessibility standards, such as the Accessible Information and Communication Standard, the Secretariat will continue to send notices to over 3,000 organizations, associations and stakeholders, to inform them about the upcoming compliance deadlines. These formal notices will be sent 12 months, 6 months, and one month before the coming into force dates for different sectors.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to send notices to organizations, associations and stakeholders to inform them about upcoming compliance deadlines.

Developing a New Regulation to Outline Monetary Penalties for Non-Compliance

In 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Secretariat will consult with Manitobans experiencing barriers and organizations that serve them, the Accessibility Advisory Council, and affected organizations, to gather input on the development of a new stand alone regulation under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, which will provide a framework on monetary penalties for non-compliant organizations. The new regulation will help determine how and why an individual or organization might face a penalty for non-compliance. The amount of the penalty will vary depending on different factors, such as the severity and history of the organization's compliance status.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

In 2023/24 and 2024/25, a new regulation under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, will be developed, to provide a framework on monetary penalties for non-compliant organizations will begin.

Development of Tools and Resources

Key to the implementation of the AMA and related regulations is the creation of tools and resources to support compliance. In 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Secretariat will continue to collaborate with the Manitoba Accessibility Office to develop and refine tools and resources to assist organizations to be compliant with the legislation.

In addition, and based on information gathered through the complaints process, the Secretariat will develop plain language tools to inform Manitobans experiencing barriers of their rights under the Customer Service Standard and the Accessible Employment Standard. These resources, which will be created with input from Manitobans with disabilities, will assist in the assertion of rights under the AMA as citizens of all abilities seek barrier-free customer service and an accessible work environment.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to collaborate with The Manitoba Accessibility Office to develop and refine tools and resources to assist organizations to be compliant with the legislation. Plain language tools to assist Manitobans to assert their rights under accessibility standards will also be developed.

Accessibility Plans

Accessibility Plans are written documents that promote the ongoing identification and removal of barriers among public sector organizations. The plans help ensure that all Manitobans have full access to public programs and services designed to meet their needs. In 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Secretariat will continue to work with public sector organizations across the province to ensure their accessibility plans are updated, in accordance with the legislation. Public sector organizations include municipalities of all sizes, the provincial government, post-secondary institutions, crown corporations, regional health authorities, and school divisions.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to work with public sector organizations across the province to ensure their accessibility plans are updated, in accordance with the legislation.



3. Tools and Training

Accessibility Resources

The MAO is committed to continuing to help Manitoba businesses and organizations understand The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards. The MAO continues to develop new tools and resources for existing standards and the remaining standards coming into force in 2023/24.

In 2023/24, there will be a focus on further developing tools and plain language resources to support the Accessible Information and Communication Standard and the two remaining standards, the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard. New tools and resources will be available on the website as accessible PDFs. Some of these resources will also be converted into printed materials that can be distributed to Manitoba businesses and organizations.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

New resources will be developed to support The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards. Resources will be available on [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca) as accessible PDF resources. Some of these resources will be converted into print materials for distribution to Manitoba organizations.

Access to Downloadable Training Modules

The MAO's Online Training Portal allows organizations to meet their training requirements at any time from anywhere by accessing the portal on AccessibilityMB.ca. Manitoba businesses and organizations asked for greater access to these training modules. Many organizations have internal learning management systems (LMS) and want to be able to integrate the MAO's training modules into their internal systems. In late 2022, the MAO upgraded the training portal to allow organizations to download the training SCORM files directly from the website. These files could then be integrated into most organizations' internal LMS, allowing organizations to offer MAO's training modules within their learning platforms. However, there were some limitations to this process, and not all organization's systems are compatible with the SCORM files. In 2023/24, the MAO will improve this process to ensure that even more organizations can integrate the training modules into their internal learning systems.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Work will continue to improve the integration and optimization of the MAO's training modules into external organization's Learning Management Systems (LMS).

Accessible Information and Communication Standard Training Module

In 2023, the MAO will begin working on an Accessible Information and Communication Standard training module. This training module will briefly review the AMA and include an overview of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard in a plain language format. It will consist of a short video clip introducing the standard, periodic knowledge checks, summarized information on the standard and a generated certification of course completion. This training module will be available on MAO's website in English and French by the end of 2023.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

A new Accessible Information and Communication Standard training module will be introduced and will be available in training portal on AccessibilityMB.ca.

Development of Additional Training Resources

The remaining two standards, the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard, will be enacted in 2023/24. The MAO will develop training modules to help support Manitoba businesses and organizations understand their roles, responsibilities and requirements under these new standards. Each module will be presented in plain language and follow a similar format to the other training modules available in the MAO's Online Training Portal. Training modules for each standard will be available before the standards come into force for businesses and non-profits in Manitoba.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

New training modules to support the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard will be developed and will be available in training portal on [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca).



Manitoba Accessibility Fund

4. Manitoba Accessibility Fund

In 2021, the Manitoba government established a new grant program, the Manitoba Accessibility Fund (MAF). This grant program is a unique funding opportunity for businesses, non-profits, municipalities, and public sector organizations. MAF is designed to promote principles of The Accessibility for Manitoba Act (AMA). The grant program is dedicated to help recipients improve accessibility awareness, reduce barriers and support compliance with accessibility standards.

The Manitoba government thanks the Winnipeg Foundation for hosting the \$20 million Endowment Fund. During the pilot year, in 2022, the fund made it possible to distribute over \$756,000 in grant awards to Manitoba organizations.

The MAO received over 100 applications during the pilot intake of the MAF grant program in spring 2022. Thirty organizations were selected as grant recipients and received funding to complete projects during 2022/23.

The MAF grant program supports accessibility standards that are enacted. In 2023/24, the program will continue to focus on activities addressing the Customer Service Standard, the Accessible Employment Standard and the Accessible Information and Communication Standard. In 2024/25, the grant program anticipates expanding its scope to include activities addressing the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard.

Eligible activities include:

- raising awareness of how people are impacted by barriers
- promoting and encouraging the prevention and removal of barriers
- integrating accessibility standards into the activities of Manitoba organizations
- creating campaigns and events to promote public awareness about accessibility and The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and standards
- developing tools, resources, training to support compliance, including website upgrades and accessible technology to remove barriers

In 2022 and during the second MAF grant program intake in early 2023, there has been a focus on outreach and helping organizations to become aware of the grant opportunity. During both intake periods, the MAO delivered a series of public webinars as information sessions for organizations to learn about the MAF grant program and review the practical steps to apply.

The MAF webinars are part of a communications strategy, which includes monthly articles in Accessibility News about the grant program, print, online and social media campaigns, presentations to various sectors and additional information about the grant program on AccessibilityMB.ca. In 2023/24 and 2024/25, MAF outreach and communications strategy will prioritize ongoing stakeholder engagement and focus on underrepresented areas.

A package of materials, including guidelines, frequently asked questions, a glossary of terms, and selection and assessment criteria has been developed to outline the program parameters, and help prospective applicants understand the application and selection process. In 2024/25, these materials will be updated to reflect the addition of the two new accessibility standards.

In 2024/25, as the two new accessibility standards, the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard, are finalized, the MAF will review and explore options to expand the objectives and the scope of the program.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Manitoba Accessibility Fund grant program continues to support community, business and non-profit sector initiatives with ongoing stakeholder engagement and outreach in 2023/24 and 2024/25, and supports a robust program review in 2024/25 to ensure maximum impact of this fund.



5. Public Awareness

Events: Awareness Weeks & Webinars

The Manitoba government celebrates and recognizes several accessibility awareness events. The MAO plans to continue to build on these celebrations by offering targeted training webinars and presentations around these events. In 2023/24, the MAO will call on the Government of Manitoba to proclaim each awareness celebration within the province. It will also explore collaborating with community and non-profit accessibility organizations to draw attention to issues and topics relating to each awareness week.



Recognized awareness days, weeks, and months include:

- Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW) - May 28 – June 3, 2023



- Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) - October 2023
- Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM) - November 2023
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) - December 3, 2023

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

In 2023/24 and 2024/25 the MAO will call on the government of Manitoba to proclaim celebrations for Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW), Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM), Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM), and International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

Accessibility Awards

In 2020, the Manitoba government launched the Manitoba Accessibility Awards (MBAA) program to promote compliance with existing accessibility standards and to raise accessibility awareness among businesses, non-profit



Manitoba Accessibility Awards

organizations and municipalities. Six awards were presented at a webinar on December 3, 2020 to celebrate International Day of Persons with disabilities.

The Manitoba government initially planned to hold the second MBAA in 2022 but delayed these plans due to the launch of the MAF that year. This would enable the promotion of the MBAA to MAF recipients and encourage greater accessibility awareness to these organizations and their contacts.

Going forward, the Manitoba government will continue to promote participation of the awards to businesses, non-profit organizations and municipalities. The awards will recognize the contributions of nominees and winners in print, on social media and on [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca). The province is actively exploring partnership possibilities among existing award programs for the 2023/24 MBAA.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The second Manitoba Accessibility Awards will be presented in 2023/24.

Communication Strategy

The MAO is in the last year of a three-year communication strategy, which will wrap up at the end of 2023/24. This communication strategy focuses on guiding the MAO's public awareness efforts. In 2024/25, the MAO will draft a new communication strategy, which will continue to focus on increased public awareness of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

The MAO will employ traditional and newer methods for delivering information to all Manitobans. Print and electronic communications would be used to target all regions of the province, including remote northern and Indigenous communities, where possible. Social media is an effective way to reach Manitobans. In early 2023, the MAO will launch a social media campaign focused on the Accessible Employment Standard and compliance obligations. This campaign will be targeted at business owners and non-profit directors. Throughout 2023/24 and 2024/25, the MAO will use social media to promote awareness of the other standards. Campaigns will also be developed to complement national accessibility initiatives, such as National Access Awareness Week. Each campaign will encourage members of the public to engage in raising accessibility awareness via their social media networks.

The MAO has a playlist on the Manitoba government official YouTube channel. The MAO uses the playlist to post videos relating to important information available for public viewing and distribution. The MAO's YouTube playlist includes a comprehensive collection of AMA educational and training videos. As the MAO continues to host webinars and events, it will make recordings and related resources available on YouTube and AccessibilityMB.ca.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Government will continue to promote public awareness of accessibility to Manitobans using traditional, digital and social media campaigns to raise awareness of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards.

Accessibility News

The Accessibility News is MAO's electronic newsletter. It helps to keep Manitobans informed on accessibility across the province by providing updates on The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, accessibility deadlines, resources, workshops, training opportunities and accessibility tips for businesses and organizations. Since launching the newsletter in December 2017, the subscriber list has grown to 1,875 (as of February 27, 2023). The newsletter usually goes out to subscribers six times per year. Moving into 2023/24, the Accessibility News will become a monthly newsletter. It will continue to deliver valuable information about the AMA while also celebrating accessibility by sharing good news stories.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Accessibility News will be sent out monthly and provide readers with key public awareness and educational information on accessibility, the AMA and the five standards.

Website Launch and Maintenance

AccessibilityMB.ca was launched in 2014. Since then, the site has become a hub for information about accessibility, the AMA and the standards. In 2021, it was determined that the site required a refresh. In early 2023, the newly updated site will launch. This new site will feature improved flow, navigation, and intuitive access to information. The site will comply with the newly in force Accessible Information and Communication Standard. Most PDFs will be accessible, and the site will meet WCAG 2.1 level AA requirements.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

A new AccessibilityMB.ca website will be launched in 2023. This refreshed website will focus on accessibility, easy access to information and an enhanced user experience.

Other Outreach Activities

The MAO has had success attending community events and tradeshows. Community events and tradeshows give the MAO an opportunity to partner with the Compliance Secretariat, while engaging with influential members of the community and various associations. These types of events allow the MAO to reach new groups, increase awareness, educate the public, build trust, and obtain direct feedback or answer questions relating to The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards. Tradeshows also give the MAO a chance to distribute resources and memorable promotional items. A few tradeshows are already booked for 2023, including the Manitoba School Board Association (MSBA) Annual Convention, Advertising Association of Winnipeg's Digital Day and Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) Spring Convention. In 2023/24 and 2024/25, the MAO will investigate attending other community and association tradeshows.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The MAO will look for association tradeshows to attend throughout the year to promote The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, the standards and the work of the Compliance Secretariat.



6. Building Community

Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network (MBAAN)

The Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network (MBAAN) is an ad hoc advisory group to the MAO. The group shares expertise in creating accessibility within and across Manitoba organizations. Currently, the group meets virtually on a monthly basis. The MBAAN includes representatives from Manitoba's Crown corporations, universities, the United Way and community disability organizations. Members provide advice, feedback, promotion and participation in almost all of MAO's accessibility initiatives, including event planning, the creation of videos featuring Manitobans, the Manitoba Accessibility Awards and most recently, in providing feedback on the redesign of the website, [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca). MAO staff are grateful for the ongoing support of this significant group of colleagues.

Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Council (AAC)

The starting point for the creation of each accessibility standard is the presentation of Terms of Reference for a standard to the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Council (Council). Council members are representatives of key stakeholder groups, including the disability community. The strength of the accessibility standards lies within the value placed on discussion both at council meetings and in consultation with the community.

The Council is responsible for standard development under the AMA.

In 2023/24, Council's main activities include overseeing The Accessibility for Manitoba Act (AMA) Five-Year Review, launching the Five-Year Review of the Accessible Employment Standard and providing feedback on the comments received during the second 60-day period of public consultation for the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard.

The Manitoba government owes enormous debt to past council members, as it extends its on-going gratitude to each of the current council members:

- Chairperson John Graham, Director of Government Relations at the Retail Council of Canada
- Vice Chairperson Brad Robertson, Director of Applications for People Corporation
- Kristine Cowley, Assistant Professor in the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba
- Scott Jocelyn, former President and CEO of the Manitoba Hotel Association
- Laurel Repski, Human Resource Consultant and former Vice President of HR, Sustainability and Audit, University of Winnipeg
- Dianna Scarth, part-time Commissioner with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and former director of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission
- Josh Watt, Executive Director of the Manitoba School Boards Association
- Kelly Cook, Councillor for the City of Selkirk and representative of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities
- Shauna Joynt, National Indigenous Director of Canadian Association for the Deaf (CAD/ASC); President of the Manitoba Deaf Association (MDA); Director on the Board of the Canadian Deaf Sports Association (CDSA); and Vice-President of the Manitoba Deaf Sports Association (MDSA)



7. Procurement

The Department of Families and the Department of Consumer Protection and Government Services are exploring how best to include compliance with accessibility standards in the Manitoba Government's Procurement Administration Manual. This includes understanding how best to have accessibility as a regular practice in all government procurement policies to raise awareness and ensure compliance with the AMA and its standards.

Implementing a procurement policy would set accessibility compliance requirements for public and private organizations wishing to submit project bids or proposals. It would be a powerful tool to help drive momentum towards broader accessibility across the Province by those seeking to do business with the Manitoba government. These efforts would help ensure that the government remains committed to accessibility and it remains at the forefront of all future procurement projects.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The Government of Manitoba will work towards determining how best to incorporate accessibility requirements into all government procurement policies as standard practice. This will help ensure the government remains committed to accessibility and that it is at the forefront of all future procurement projects.



8. Pan-Canadian Approach to Accessibility

The first Pan-Canadian Forum on Accessibility Standards was held in Ottawa in October 2022. Participants included senior leaders from federal, provincial, and territorial governments. The objectives of the Forum were:

- to find ways to work together to deliver on accessibility mandates, including collective obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- to develop a shared understanding of the Pan-Canadian accessibility standards landscape and the implications for respective jurisdictions
- to begin to shape a Pan-Canadian action plan for priority initiatives
- to identify research priorities
- to continue to build working relationships that will enable the collaboration needed for collective success

Over the next two years, the Manitoba government will continue to participate on the Pan-Canadian Forum on Accessibility Standards and will be working with counterparts to develop accessibility guidelines for northern and remote communities.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

The MAO will continue to participate on the Pan-Canadian Forum on Accessibility Standards and collaborate with senior leaders from federal, provincial, and territorial governments to develop accessibility guidelines for northern and remote communities, and harmonize accessibility standards, where possible.



SUMMARY:

Our Commitments to You

The Government of Manitoba has made a commitment to achieve significant accessibility progress by 2023.

Our commitments include:

Accessibility Standard, Development and Implementation Commitments

- The AMA commits the government to significant progress by 2023, with the anticipated establishment of all five standards by the end of 2023/24. This would include the enactment of the remaining two standards, the Accessible Transportation Standard and Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard.
- The government will share the Five-Year Review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, which is currently underway, with the public and will consider all recommendations to strengthen this act.
- The government will conduct the first Five-Year Review of the Accessibility Standard for Employment, will share the review with the public, and will consider all recommendations to strengthen the standard going forward.

- The government is holding a public consultation on its proposed standard for the Accessible Transportation Standard in spring 2023, in order to establish it as a regulation by fall 2023. The government will hold a third public consultation on its proposed standards for the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard, in anticipation of establishing it as a standard in 2023/24.
- The government is committed to taking concrete steps in 2023/24 to implement the twenty-two recommendations identified in the Accessibility Advisory Council's Five-Year Review of the Customer Service Standard Regulation. Quarterly progress reports and annual ministerial updates on this work will continue to be made available to the public.

Compliance Commitments

- In 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will establish partnerships and collaborate with professional and other types of associations and unions to raise awareness and promote compliance among many member organizations.
- In 2023/24 and 2024/25 the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to conduct targeted reviews and audits of policies, practices, and measures, as required under accessibility standards. Organizations identified as non-compliant through audits will receive tailored Achieving Compliance Plans, with tools and resources to comply, and a deadline by which the Secretariat will follow up with the organization to assess compliance.
- The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to receive complaints, concerns, and questions from members of the public regarding an organization's compliance with accessibility standards, and provide organizations guidance related to specific accessibility provisions in Manitoba.
- The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to send notices to organizations, associations and stakeholders to inform them about upcoming compliance deadlines.
- In 2023/24 and 2024/25, a new regulation under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, will be developed, to provide a framework on monetary penalties for non-compliant organizations will begin.

- The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to collaborate with the Manitoba Accessibility Office to develop and refine tools and resources to assist organizations to be compliant with the legislation. Plain language tools to assist Manitobans to assert their rights under accessibility standards will also be developed.
- The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to work with public sector organizations across the province to ensure their accessibility plans are updated, in accordance with the legislation.

Tools and Training Commitments

- New resources will be developed to support The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards. Resources will be available on AccessibilityMB.ca as accessible PDF resources. Some of these resources will be converted into print materials for distribution to Manitoba organizations.
- Work will continue to improve the integration and optimization of the MAO's training modules into external organization's Learning Management Systems (LMS).
- A new Accessible Information and Communication Standard training module will be introduced and will be available in training portal on AccessibilityMB.ca.
- New training modules to support the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard will be developed and will be available in training portal on AccessibilityMB.ca.

Manitoba Accessibility Fund Commitments

- The Manitoba Accessibility Fund grant program continues to support community, business and non-profit sector initiatives with ongoing stakeholder engagement and outreach in 2023/24 and 2024/25, and supports a robust program review in 2024/25 to ensure maximum impact of this fund.

Public Awareness Commitments

- In 2023/24 and 2024/25 the MAO will call on the government of Manitoba to proclaim celebrations for Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW), Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM), Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM), and International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

- The second Manitoba Accessibility Awards will be presented in 2023/24.
- Government will continue to promote public awareness of accessibility to Manitobans using traditional, digital and social media campaigns to raise awareness of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards.
- The Accessibility News will be sent out monthly and provide readers with key public awareness and educational information on accessibility, the AMA and the five standards.
- A new AccessibilityMB.ca website will be launched in 2023. This refreshed website will focus on accessibility, easy access to information and an enhanced user experience.
- The MAO will look for association tradeshow to attend and promote The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, the standards and the work of the Compliance Secretariat.

Procurement Commitments

- The Government of Manitoba will work towards creating a procurement selection checklist to raise awareness of accessibility among existing and potential government vendors. This will help ensure the government remains committed to accessibility and that is it at the forefront of all future procurement projects.

Pan-Canadian Approach to Accessibility Commitments

- The MAO will continue to participate on the Pan-Canadian Forum on Accessibility Standards and collaborate with senior leaders from federal, provincial, and territorial governments to develop accessibility guidelines for northern and remote communities, and harmonize accessibility standards, where possible.