

Ministerial 2022/23 Annual Report

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act



A person and a child sitting in a playground communicating with their hands

This report is available in alternate formats, upon request. Please contact the Manitoba Accessibility Office:

Email: MAO@gov.mb.ca

Phone: (204) 945-7613

Toll-Free: 1-800-282-8069, Ext. 7613

Land Acknowledgement

We recognize that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk peoples.

We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

We wish to further acknowledge that Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis.

We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation, collaboration and to make Manitoba more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

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Minister's Message

As the Minister responsible for Accessibility, I am pleased to present the 2022/23 Annual Report summarizing the accessibility initiatives undertaken in Manitoba between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023.

Nearly every Manitoban knows someone with a disability or who will develop a disability in the coming years. Now more than ever it is important for Manitoba to remain committed to becoming a more accessible province for all.

I am excited to report that the Manitoba Accessibility Fund celebrated a successful pilot year in 2022/23 and recently closed the second intake in March 2023, with a record number of applicants.

Another notable achievement was the enactment of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard on May 1, 2022, which focuses on removing and preventing barriers that exist digitally, in-print or through interaction with technology or people.

This report also outlines the progress made in enacting the next two standards. I am pleased to report that the drafting of the Accessible Transportation Standard is nearing completion, and continuous progress is being made to develop the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard.

During 2022/23, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat continued to promote, educate and track compliance with accessibility legislation across the province.

Throughout the year, the Manitoba Accessibility Office proactively ran various awareness initiatives to support educating Manitoba businesses, organizations, non-profits and the public on The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards.

As this report reflects on the past year and our achievements, our government continues to strive to become more accessible for all Manitobans. I invite you to read this report and join in recognizing the successes of the year.

Sincerely,

Honourable Rochelle Squires Minister of Families, Minister responsible for Accessibility,
Minister responsible for Gender Equity and Minister of Francophone Affairs



Honourable
Rochelle Squires

Summary of Commitments in the 2021/22 & 2022/23 Minister's Annual Plan

The Minister responsible for Accessibility presents the Manitoba government's plan to implement activities to support The Accessibility for Manitobans Act every two years. 2022/23 completed the final year of the 2021/22 & 2022/23 Minister's Annual Plan. Commitments presented in this plan included:

- ✓ Consultation on the remaining three standards and enactment of these standards in 2023.
- ✓ Review of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, in spring 2021.
- ✓ Implementation of strategic compliance projects, such as dedicated reviews and audits of accessibility plans and policies.
- ✓ Continued focus on maintaining accessibility in the government and private sector's responses to the pandemic.
- ✓ Proactive awareness raising and support of compliance measures under the AMA.
- ✓ Introduction of an online learning portal in 2021, to support Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) learning and training opportunities for Manitobans, anytime from anywhere.
- ✓ Continued production of an electronic newsletter to serve as a key public awareness and education resource for Manitoba organizations and people.
- ✓ Updates to [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca), to improve accessibility, enhance user experience, improve efficiency, and increase understanding of the AMA and its benefits.
- ✓ Ongoing webinar training opportunities until in-person workshops and presentations resume.
- ✓ A new communications strategy that promotes accessibility in a variety of ways, including accessible online methods.
- ✓ The establishment of the Manitoba Accessibility Fund to support community and business initiatives beginning in 2022/23, with targeted stakeholder consultation in 2021/22 to ensure the maximum impact of the new fund.
- ✓ Offering the second Manitoba Accessibility Awards in 2023.

Accessibility Advisory Council



Logo for the Accessibility Advisory Council

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) calls for the creation of accessibility standards that set out policies and practices to identify prevent and remove barriers. The Accessibility Advisory Council (Council) is responsible for standard development under the AMA and recommends standards to the minister. The Manitoba Accessibility Office acts as secretary to Council and assists Council as directed.

Between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, Council held eight meetings. During this period, Council managed the development and consultations of the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard. Council members also assisted the minister with the selection of the reviewer to complete the independent review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

Status on the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Five-Year Review

Accessible customer service is at the heart of ensuring all Manitobans, regardless of their abilities, can receive the goods and services they require. In 2021, the Accessibility Advisory Council conducted a review of the Customer Service Standard per section 11 of the AMA. The review's final report was made public in November 2021.



Two people looking at a can of food, in a store

Twenty-two recommendations from the report were summarized into the following categories: Government

Accountability and Leadership, Monitoring Compliance and Enforcement, Documenting Policies, Procedures and Measures, Education, Outreach and Awareness Raising, Resources and Funding, Physical Barriers, and the Accessibility Advisory Council.

The Manitoba government has developed an implementation plan and an internal working group to act on all recommendations provided by Council to better prevent and eliminate barriers in the delivery of accessible customer service. The Department of Families coordinates this work with the goal to implement all of the recommendations made by Council, as part of the review. In addition, the minister has provided a formal update on the implementation of the recommendations at the annual meeting with the Council.

As of March 31, 2023, of the 22 recommendations made by Council, almost half, or 10 of the recommendations had been implemented, and another 10 recommendations were in progress. Status updates are publicly available on the Manitoba Accessibility Office's website, delivering on a request from the disability community. [View Status Updates](#).

Status of Accessible Information & Communication Standard

The Accessible Information and Communication Standard was passed on May 1, 2022. Under this standard, organizations need to consider how Manitobans interact with or access information, including on websites, to develop measures, policies and practices providing barrier-free information and communication.



Two people working at a desk smiling

The Accessible Information and Communication Standard came into force for the Manitoba government on May 1, 2023. Public sector organizations, including large municipalities will need to comply by May 1, 2024, and private and non-profit organizations and small municipalities will have until May 1, 2025, to comply with the standard.

The Manitoba government has developed resources to assist

organizations with the implementation of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard. These resources are available on [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca).

Status of the Accessible Transportation Standard and Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard

Three of the five accessibility standards have been enacted in Manitoba. This includes the Customer Service Standard, Accessible Employment Standard and the Accessible Information and Communication Standard. The two remaining standards under development are the Accessible Transportation Standard and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard.



A person getting off a bus using a probing cane

The Accessible Transportation Standard aims to build on current advancements in making both public transit and paratransit accessible and available. This standard also includes requirements for vehicles for hire and school transportation.

The draft of the Accessible Transportation Standard is in the final stage of the development process. A 60-day consultation took place from February to April 2023. The Accessibility Advisory Council will review the feedback and comments received as part of this consultation process, before providing its final recommendations to the government. The Accessible Transportation Standard is then expected to be finalized and introduced to Cabinet for enactment.



A person in a wheelchair and a person standing on a boardwalk

The other standard currently under development is the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard. This standard will address barriers found in outdoor community spaces, such as accessible paths of travel, pedestrian crossings and other areas of the exterior environment.

A first draft of the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard is in development as of January 2023.

This draft will be shared with Council and the inter-governmental working group for their feedback.

It is expected that the Accessible Transportation Standard will be enacted by the end of 2023, and the Accessible Design of Outdoor Public Spaces Standard will be enacted in 2023/24.

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



Two people standing outside with a service animal (dog)

survey, consultations, forums and meetings with a range of community members affected by the legislation, particularly those with lived experiences.

The Five-Year Review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act report is expected to be made public in late 2023.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) became law in December 2013.

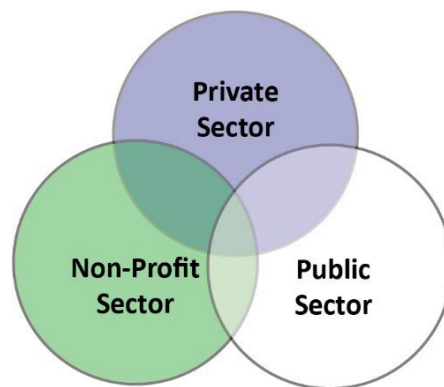
This act provides a process to remove barriers that affect people with disabilities.

A review of the AMA must take place every five years. In early 2023, Sarah Lugtig was appointed to conduct the independent five-year review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Her focus is to evaluate the effectiveness of the legislation and make recommendations for improvements, based on the results of a public online

Manitoba Accessibility Compliance Secretariat

[The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat](#) (secretariat) is an office of the Manitoba government that works with organizations in the private, public and non-profit sectors to promote and track compliance with accessibility legislation. Manitoba has passed three accessibility standards, as regulations, that require most organizations to meet the different conditions of each standard. These standards are about accessible customer service, accessible employment practices and accessible information and communication supports. As more standards are passed, more conditions will apply to organizations. Some rules differ across sectors and by the number of employees that an organization has, and some sectors have more time to follow accessibility rules than others.

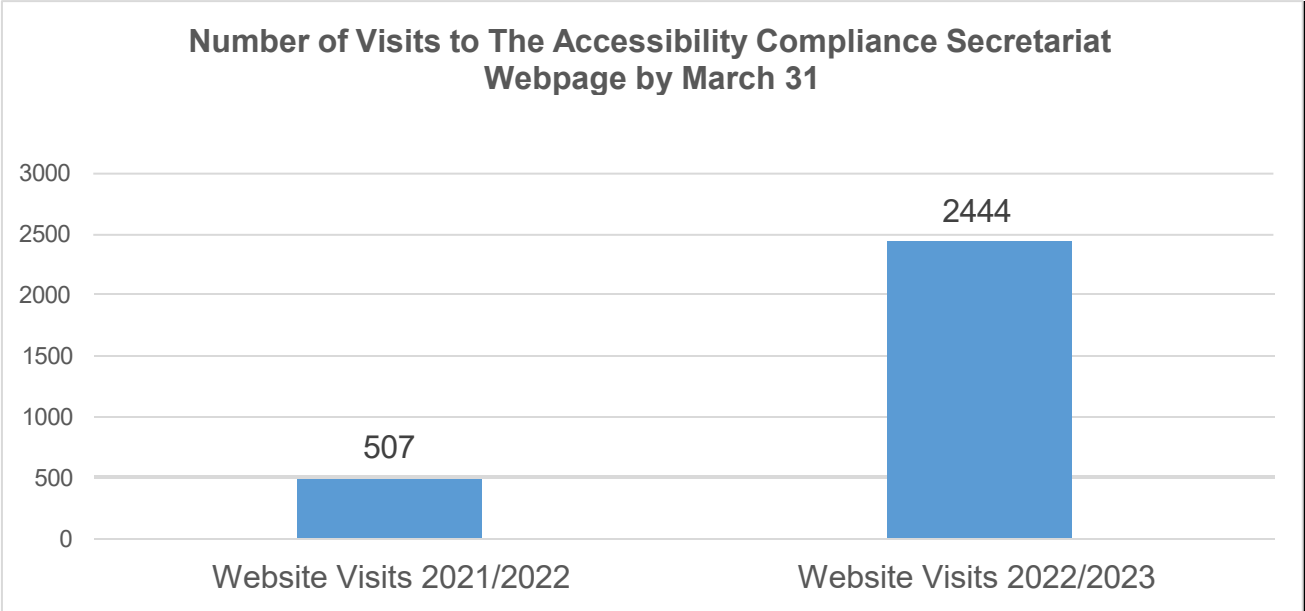
Before a new accessibility standard (i.e., regulation) comes into effect, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat sends notices, delivers presentations, and responds to questions to make organizations aware of their compliance date and what actions they must take to follow the law. After an accessibility standard is in place, the secretariat conducts special audits to assess organizations' level of compliance. The office communicates with organizations when they are not in compliance with the requirements of the standards, and staff works to educate organizations about the regulations and help them to meet the law.



A diagram of the three sectors of compliance:
Private, Non-Profit and Public sectors

Online Activity

In 2022/23 The secretariat’s homepage received 2,444 visits, an increase of 1,937 visits (or 382%) from the previous year.



A bar graph containing two bars comparing the number of visits to the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat homepage in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

Achieving Compliance Plans

The activities of Manitoba's Accessibility Compliance Secretariat are guided by the [provincial accessibility compliance framework](#), which includes different actions, ranging from the practice of awareness raising to more traditional monitoring and enforcement activities, such as conducting audits and issuing orders to comply and monetary penalties. One tool that is part of the compliance program in Manitoba is called an Achieving Compliance Plan.

What is an Achieving Compliance Plan?

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

The letter in the package 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 law and checklists that have been developed to help organizations understand the rules that exist.

In 2022/23, the secretariat worked with large organizations in the private sector to ensure compliance related to accessible customer service. Forty-five (n = 45) formal Achieving Compliance Plans were issued by the secretariat to individual companies that, when audited, demonstrated a lack of compliance with the requirement to have a written accessible customer service policy.¹

Some companies sent their draft policies for the secretariat to review before finalizing the documents and uploading them on their website. The secretariat provided detailed feedback on draft policies. Companies were appreciative of the feedback provided,

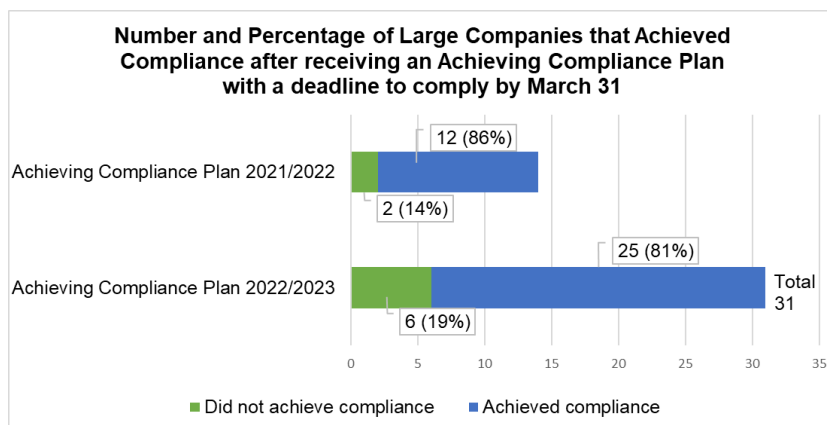
¹ Of the 45 Achieving Compliance Plans that were issued from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, 33 were applicable as 12 companies informed the secretariat that they were federally regulated or had fewer than 50 employees. In addition, two Achieving Compliance Plans were issued with a compliance date beyond March 31, 2023. Therefore, 31 Achieving Compliance Plans are relevant for reporting in 2022/23.

demonstrating a commitment to developing meaningful documents to guide the removal of barriers for their customers:

Responses from companies to the secretariat’s feedback on draft policies

- “Thank you for this information as it relates to achieving compliance within our organization. I appreciate the checklist that you have provided.” A company from the financial sector.
- “Thank you again for the time and feedback, very appreciated.” A company from the entertainment industry.
- “Thank you very much for meeting with us on Friday and for providing suggestions and advice on this topic. Please find attached our Accessible Customer Service Policy as requested. We look forward to any further advice/recommendations your team might have.” A company from the grocery retail sector.

Of the 31 companies that received a relevant Achieving Compliance Plan in 2022/23, 25 (or 81%) achieved compliance by the specified deadline in the plan. This figure is slightly lower than the one reported in 2021/22 where 12 out of the 14 (or 86%) of the companies that received an Achieving Compliance Plan reached compliance.



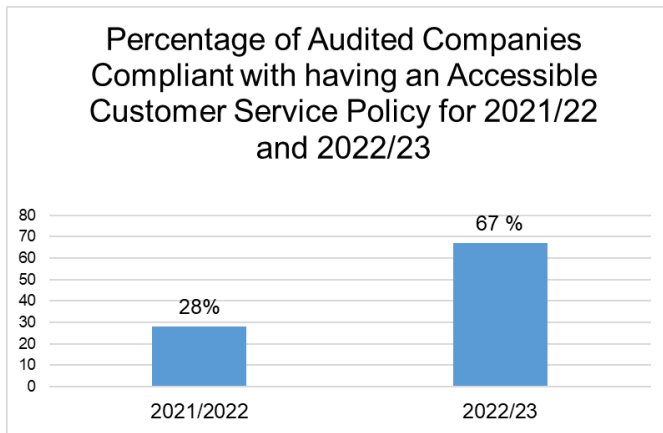
A bar graph comparing compliance rates of large companies with an Achieving Compliance Plan by March 31 for the years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

Improved Compliance – Large Private Sector

As previously reported in the [2021/22 Annual Report on Accessibility](#), the secretariat conducted an audit that assessed whether companies with 50 or more employees operating in Manitoba were compliant with the requirement to have a written and publically available policy on accessible customer service. Two hundred and fifty-two (n = 252) large businesses were reviewed as a part of the audit, representing 19 industries

in Manitoba, such as department stores, home goods retailers, grocery stores, restaurants and hotels.

In 2021/22, the compliance rate with the requirement to have a written policy among the 252 companies reviewed was 28% (or 70 of 252 companies). A year later, on March 31, 2023, the compliance rate of companies that were in scope increased significantly to 67% (or 146 of 217² companies). The enhanced compliance rate can be largely attributed to the personalized and ongoing contact secretariat staff had with many of these companies.



A bar graph containing two bars comparing the percentage of companies compliant with having an accessible customer service policy.

Accessibility Planning

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) requires public sector organizations to develop written accessibility plans. These documents, which must be updated every two years, describe the activities that organizations have taken and will take to identify, remove, and reduce barriers to accessibility in the following two years.

² The number of companies that were in scope in 2022/23 decreased from 252 to 217 as the secretariat learned that some companies had fewer than 50 employees or were federally regulated.

Large public sector organizations include the provincial government, post-secondary institutions, crown corporations, health authorities, school divisions and the ten largest municipalities in Manitoba. As of March 31, 2023:

- **67 (or 100%) had original accessibility plans, and**
- **46 (or 69%) had updated these documents for 2023 and 2024.** This is an increase in compliance from 35 (or 52%) reported in 2021/22.

To promote compliance among large public sector organizations, the secretariat had one-on-one meetings with officials from 37 school divisions across the province to discuss the requirement to update accessibility plans. During these meetings, officials were also informed about existing requirements under [The Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation](#) and [The Accessible Employment Standard Regulation](#). In addition, school divisions were made aware of accessible information and communication supports requirements that will come into force for them on May 1, 2024. Secretariat staff also communicated with officials from all other large public sector organizations. These email communications included links to numerous tools and resources to promote compliance, as well as personalized feedback on draft 2023 and 2024 accessibility plans.

Small public sector organizations in Manitoba include 127 small municipalities across the province. As of March 31, 2023:

- **104 (or 82%) of small municipalities had original accessibility plans, and**
- **41 (or 32%) had updated these documents for 2022 and 2023,** an increase from the figure reported in the 2021/22 annual report of 25 (or 20%).

To promote compliance among small municipalities, in 2022/23, the secretariat collaborated with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) to issue a notice to municipal officials across the province about the need to update their accessibility plans. An AMM member advisory communication was sent with tips, free resources and links to sample accessibility plans of specific municipalities. Partnerships with associations, such as the one with the AMM, help to promote awareness of compliance requirements in every region of the province.

In 2022/23, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat also developed a short document to provide guidance to public sector organizations on the requirement to conduct consultations when updating accessibility plans. View the [Consultation process when developing and updating your organization's accessibility plan](#) document.

Broad Outreach & Compliance Presentations

In 2022/23, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat had one-on-one contact with over 500 organizations, providing them with resources, advice, guidance and education.

During this same period, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat also met with the Accessibility Advisory Council on different occasions, to discuss progress and gain input from the council on future compliance projects and activities. In addition, several virtual and in-person presentations focusing on accessibility requirements were delivered during the fiscal year to a range of associations and their many members. These included:

- The Manitoba Hotel Association
- The Manitoba Massage Therapy Association
- The Association of Manitoba Municipalities
- The Manitoba School Boards Association
- The Family Violence Consortium of Manitoba

The presentations were well received and elicited important questions from individuals in attendance who were made aware of the functions and supports provided by the office.

Accessibility Concerns & Questions

A function of the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat is to answer calls and emails from individuals who have concerns regarding an organization's level of accessibility. The information shared with the office is recorded and used to inform compliance activities, such as the practice of contacting organizations directly with information about the law and the issuing of Achieving Compliance Plans. In addition to specific concerns, the office also receives questions from organizations that need guidance to understand the law and its specific provisions.

The secretariat received 85 concerns and questions in the 2022/23 year. The number of calls and emails the secretariat responded to on matters related to compliance continues to increase as the public and obligated organizations become more aware of the functions of the office and their rights or responsibilities under accessibility legislation.

Total number of concerns and questions by fiscal year:

- 33 inquiries in 2020/21

- 65 inquiries in 2021/22
- 85 inquiries in 2022/23

Of the 85 contacts made with the office:

- 43 (51%) contacts were specific concerns related to compliance
- 42 (49%) contacts were questions related to accessibility legislation and compliance

Of the 85 people who contacted the office with a question or concern:

- 36 (42%) were members of the public, or a third party on behalf of a member of the public
- 28 (or 33%) were representatives from public sector organizations, including municipalities, crown corporations, school divisions and the Manitoba government
- 11 (13%) were representatives from the private sector, including businesses and fee-for-service providers
- Seven (8%) were representatives from non-profit organizations
- Two (2%) were from other provincial governments
- One (1%) was from an unidentified sector

Of the 85 questions and concerns that were received in 2022/23:

- 64 (75%) were deemed to be within the scope of accessibility legislation

Of the 64 questions and concerns deemed to be within the scope of accessibility legislation:

- 39 (60%) were in relation to accessible customer service
- 12 (19%) related to accessible employment
- Eight (13%) contacts, including two from other provinces, related to provisions of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act or were general inquiries about compliance with accessibility legislation in Manitoba
- Five (8%) questions and concerns were received about provisions of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation, which was passed on May 1, 2022

Related to the 39 concerns and questions that dealt with accessible customer service, the secretariat most often provided guidance about accessible communications, such as American Sign Language interpretation, and the section in the regulation related to the built environment.³ Most concerns and questions related to accessible employment dealt with the requirement among employers to provide reasonable accommodations in the workplace, including the development of individualized accommodation plans.

Lastly, of the 43 concerns alleging non-compliance of a specific organization, 32 (74%) were within the scope of accessibility legislation. Of these 32 cases:

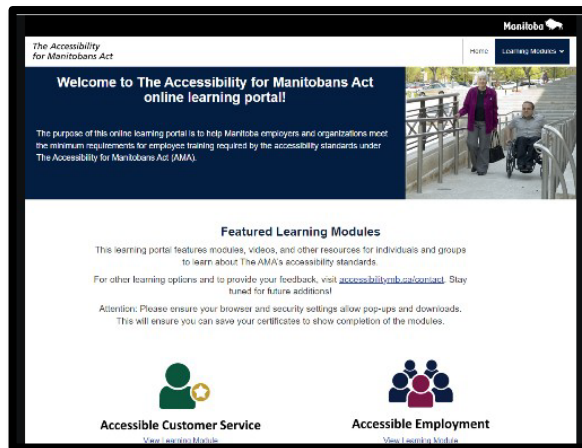
- 14 (43.75%) were concerned with the private sector organizations
- 12 (37.50%) were concerned with public sector organizations
- 6 (18.75%) were concerned with organizations in the non-profit sector

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to provide guidance and monitor accessibility concerns and questions received from members of the public and organizations. It is expected that the number of questions and concerns will continue to rise in the coming years as more Manitobans learn about the role and support offered by the secretariat.

³ This section requires organizations to maintain the use of any features of the built environment that exist to facilitate barrier-free access to goods and services and to notify the public if these features are unavailable.

Public Awareness

Enhancements to the AMA Online Learning Portal



AMA Online Learning Portal website home screen

In December 2023, improvements were made to the AMA Online Learning Portal. These enhancements allowed organizations to download and feature the Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) training content within their own organization's training systems. Once an organization agrees to the Terms of Use Agreement, they are granted access to download the SCORM files. These files allow the organization to integrate the content from the Accessible Customer Service or Accessible Employment training modules directly into their pre-existing training system. SCORM files are available in two formats and can be downloaded in either English or French.

Work has also begun on the development of a new training module on the Accessible Information and Communication Standard. This new module will provide an overview of the standard, compliance objectives, and will include knowledge checks, a facilitator guide and a certificate of completion. The module will be available in an accessible format and be offered in English and French. The Accessible Information and Communication training module is expected to be available by the end of 2023.

Accessibility News



The Accessibility News header

Accessibility News continues to be a valuable tool used by the Manitoba Accessibility Office to increase awareness of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the standards. The newsletter features disability and accessibility-related community content, events, funding opportunities, resources and tools, and provides regular updates on the standards while providing updates on accessibility-related issues. In October 2022, the newsletter switched from a quarterly to monthly publication in an effort to increase awareness efforts. Currently, over 1,800 subscribers receive the monthly newsletter.

The government also communicated important accessibility standard updates and related information directly to over 3,800 Manitoba businesses and organizations.

Training, Outreach and Public Engagement Opportunities

The Manitoba government offered training and outreach opportunities during the various recognized disability and accessibility weeks celebrated throughout 2022/23. This included online engagement sessions during Manitoba Access Awareness Week, Disability Employment Awareness Month and International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Details about these engagements are outlined in the Events section of this report.

In 2020, the Accessibility Advisory Council made its recommendations on an Accessible Transportation Standard to the Minister of Families. In developing their recommendations, Council members sought advice from a standard development committee, as well as comments from the public and community disability organizations. In March 2023, the Manitoba government hosted mandatory public engagements on the

Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation. This included hosting a webinar with the public, and soliciting feedback from the public on [EngageMB.ca](https://engage.mb.ca). The public was also invited to share their stories with the Accessibility Advisory Council by emailing MAO@gov.mb.ca.

Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) held its first Pan-Canadian Forum on Accessibility Standards on October 18 and 19, 2022. The objective of this first meeting was to find ways to work together to deliver accessibility mandates across Canada. Darren Macdonald, Executive Director of the Manitoba Accessibility Office attended the forum representing Manitoba 'on the guide for accessibility in northern, rural and remote communities' task group. Darren continues to meet regularly with this group and has ongoing discussions with Accessibility Standards Canada.

The Manitoba Accessibility Office took part in further outreach opportunities by speaking with community members, hosting tradeshow booths and presenting on The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the standards. Some of these opportunities that took place between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023, included the Commitment to Opportunity, Diversity & Equity (CODE) – The Chamber of Winnipeg Commerce tradeshow, the University of Manitoba – Faculty of Medicine, the Manitoba School Boards Association Convention and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities Spring Convention.

Communication Strategy

In 2021, the Manitoba Accessibility Office outlined a three-year Communication Strategy. Moving into the second year of this communication strategy, several awareness campaigns, initiatives, tools and resources were launched.

In mid-2022, the Manitoba Accessibility Office started to work to redesign [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://accessibilitymb.ca). The office worked in collaboration with a local web development company, an accessibility consultant with technical expertise in completing functional accessibility audits and consulted with community members. The new site, which was launched in early in 2023/24, features improved flow and navigation, is accessible and meets the requirements outlined in The Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation.

During Small Business Week in-mid October 2022, the Manitoba Accessibility Office published print advertisements in 18 daily, weekly and community papers across the province. The print advertisements focused on raising awareness about accessibility issues encountered in the workplace. A second campaign using social media occurred in February and March 2023. The Manitoba Accessibility Office partnered with the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat for this campaign, which targeted business owners and non-profit managers and focused on promoting compliance with the Accessible Employment Standard Regulation. The campaign generated over 800 thousand impressions and 4.5 thousand clicks on Facebook and LinkedIn.



An example of a social media post from the February/March 2023 Accessible Employment campaign

The Manitoba Accessibility Office, in collaboration with the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat, continues to expand its list of tools and resources to support compliance with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act found on [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca). The offices have also made an effort to ensure all new and existing tools and resources are available in an accessible PDF format. New resources and tools were developed in advance of the May 1, 2022 enactment of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation. These resources include an introduction to the Accessible Information and Communication Standard, a Frequently Asked Questions document and sector-specific checklists to assist with compliance.

Manitoba Accessibility Fund

Manitoba Accessibility Fund Pilot Year

The Manitoba Accessibility Fund (MAF) celebrated a successful pilot year in 2022/23, by awarding project grants to 30 organizations for a total of \$756K.



Manitoba
Accessibility
Fund

Manitoba Accessibility Fund logo featuring four accessibility icons

Each grant recipient demonstrated how their project met at least one (often more) of the following

objectives in support of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards:

- raise awareness about the prevention and removal of barriers
- develop tools, resources and training to support compliance with AMA standards
- remove barriers to information and communication, electronically, in print and in-person

During 2022/23, MAF grants supported accessibility-related activities at four local businesses, 21 non-profit organizations, three school divisions (two rural and one urban), one northern post-secondary institution and one large municipality.

Projects showcased a diversity of activities and partnerships, which included creating ASL video content, training modules, website enhancements, an accessible sports expo, accessibility features to enrich live theater, communication boards for students who require adaptive technologies, wayfinding signs, accessibility audits of organizational policies and procedures, and the development of a centralized system to notify clients about service disruptions. The Manitoba government understands that these efforts will help Manitobans of all ages to participate more fully in their communities.

Throughout the year, the Manitoba Accessibility Office conducted feedback sessions with government staff, the MAF 2022 Selection Committee, and a survey with MAF applicants to inform the future administration of the grant program.

By March 31, 2023, almost half of the pilot year MAF projects had been completed and the rest had project extension agreements (of up to 12 months) in place for

implementation. Grant recipients will continue to submit their final project reports into the 2023/24 fiscal year.

Manitoba Accessibility Fund Grant Program - Second Application Intake

Building on the success of the first intake period, the second MAF grant program intake was held from January 30 to March 10, 2023. Updated MAF materials, including the application preview and guidelines, selection criteria and rating rubric, a glossary and frequently asked questions were posted in English and French on [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca).

These materials, as well as the new MAF budget form and MAF application form, were added to the Grants Online Portal in mid-January 2023.

The Manitoba Accessibility Office provided the MAF grant materials in ASL for applicants, which was an important new feature of the grant intake process in 2023.

Further outreach to promote the grant program was completed in January and February 2023. This included published articles in The Municipal Leader and Accessibility News, other newspapers, electronic media and a social media campaign.

Four online informational webinars, three in English and one in French, were held in February and March 2023. These sessions provided organizations with an overview of the grant program and provided step-by-step directions on completing the grant application.

During the MAF intake in early 2023, over 160 applications were received and 155 were sent to the MAF selection committee for further assessment. The selection committee submitted its recommendations for proposed MAF 2023/24 grant recipients in the new fiscal year.

Events

Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW)



Manitoba Access Awareness Week is celebrated alongside National AccessAbility Week. These celebratory weeks run the last week in May each year. The week-long celebrations aim to raise awareness of the importance of increasing accessibility for all Canadians.

In celebration of Manitoba Access Awareness Week, the Province of Manitoba and the Manitoba Employment Equity Practitioners Association co-hosted a webinar on June 2, 2022. This webinar focused on removing barriers to information and communication. Over 391 people attended this virtual event entitled “Information and Communication: Good for Everyone”. The webinar featured an overview of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard and a presentation from the keynote speaker, Lisa Snider, Senior Consultant, Trainer and Owner of Access Changes Everything Inc.

In her presentation, Lisa discussed the importance and benefits of digital accessibility, the basics of accessibility legislation in Manitoba and Canada and various ways people disabled by barriers access digital materials. She also provided practical tips on removing accessibility barriers and making digital materials and media more accessible for people with different disabilities.

Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM)



Logo for Disability Employment Awareness Month

Disability Employment Awareness Month

During the month of October 2022, the Province marked Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM).

The Manitoba Accessibility Office took this opportunity to raise awareness about the Accessible

Employment Standard with a print advertisement campaign. On October 15, 2022 an advertisement ran in 18 daily, weekly and community papers across the province including the Winnipeg Free Press and Brandon Sun. A social media campaign also ran during Small Business Week focused on promoting awareness of the Accessible Employment Standard.

The Disability Inclusion Unit (Public Service Commission), the Civil Servants with Abilities Network and the New Professionals Network hosted two virtual events during DEAM. These events focused on breaking down barriers to employment and highlighting the abilities of people with disabilities.

On October 21, 2022, the Manitoba Legislature lights were changed to purple and blue as part of the national “Light it Up!” project. This project reminds Manitobans of the importance of creating a barrier-free work environment and hiring people with disabilities.

Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM)

In November 2022, the Manitoba government proclaimed the month of November as Indigenous Disability Awareness Month. This proclamation was made in perpetuity, with the commitment to celebrate Indigenous Disability Awareness Month each November to promote awareness of the barriers experienced by Indigenous people living with disabilities. In an effort to commemorate this awareness month, the Manitoba Accessibility Office promoted the proclamation in Accessibility News, on [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca) and on the Manitoba government social media channels.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)



Logo for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

International
Day of
**Persons with
Disabilities**

3 DECEMBER

In partnership with the [Manitoba Employment Equity Practitioners Association](#) (MEEPA), the Manitoba Accessibility Office celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities with a free webinar on December 1, 2022.

The webinar featured a presentation from Canadian disability rights advocate Steven Estey, who provided an overview of the United Nations [Convention on the](#)

[Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) and a panel discussion moderated by former MAO Executive Director, Yutta Fricke. This panel discussion focused on the relevance of the CRPD to Manitobans. Panelists Dr. Diane Driedger, Justine Kiwanuka, Mary Lavigne, and Carrie Pacey represented diverse experiences living with visible and invisible disabilities, alongside their unique perspectives as women of settler, immigrant, Métis and Indigenous roots.

Manitoba Accessibility Awards (MBAA)

In 2020, the Manitoba government launched the Manitoba Accessibility Awards (MBAA) during the webinar to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The Minister's Annual Plan for 2021/22 and 2022/23 indicated that the second Manitoba Accessibility Awards would take

place in 2022/23 in conjunction with existing awards celebrations sponsored by other organizations. Unfortunately, in the post-pandemic environment, the Manitoba Accessibility Office discovered that many organizations continued to postpone holding awards ceremonies in 2022/23. As a result, the Manitoba Accessibility Office was unable to host the awards that year. The Manitoba Accessibility Awards are expected to resume in 2023/24.



Manitoba Accessibility Awards

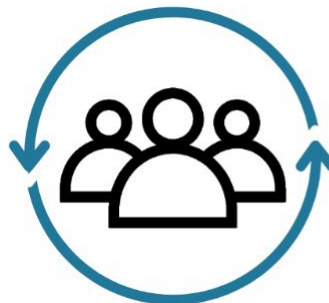
Logo for the Manitoba Accessibility Awards

Collaborating with Community Partners

The Manitoba Accessibility Office continues to rely on community partners to achieve its objectives.

The office meets regularly with partners from the disability community and public sector organizations, many of whom are responsible for implementing accessibility standards in their organizations. These include several

disability organizations, the United Way of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries. This working group was established more formally in



MBAAN Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network

Logo of the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network

2021/2022 and is now named the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network. In 2022/23, this group was particularly helpful in providing feedback on the redesign of [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca), providing guidance on the Accessible Information and Communication training content and assisting in the planning of community events, such as Manitoba Access Awareness Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities virtual webinars.

The Manitoba Accessibility Office is always seeking additional strategic alliances with organizations that have overlapping mandates.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, require this information in an alternate format, or wish to subscribe to Accessibility News, please contact the Manitoba Accessibility Office.

Manitoba Accessibility Office

630 - 240 Graham Avenue

Winnipeg MB R3C 0J7

Phone: 204-945-7613; Toll-free: 1-800-282-8069, Ext. 7613

Email: MAO@gov.mb.ca / Website: AccessibilityMB.ca

For questions or concerns associated with compliance, please contact:

Accessibility Compliance Secretariat

Second Floor – 114 Garry Street

Winnipeg, MB R3C 1G1

Phone: 204-792-0263, Email: AccessibilityCompliance@gov.mb.ca



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