Minister's Annual Report 2025-26

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

Manitoba

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Manitoba
Accessibility
Office

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Manitoba is located on the Treaty Territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations.

We acknowledge that Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge that northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

We respect the spirit and intent of Treaties and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples as we walk the shared path of truth and reconciliation.

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Minister's Message

Building an accessible Manitoba benefits everyone. As Minister responsible for Accessibility, I am pleased to present the 2025/26 Minister's Annual Report, highlighting the achievements made toward building a more accessible and inclusive province.

In 2025/26, the Manitoba Accessibility Office continued to lead efforts to remove barriers by helping to move the recommendations from the second review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act forward. By year end, 63 per cent of the recommendations had been completed, with an additional 25 per cent of the recommendations marked as underway. Some of the recommendations were addressed in the development and introduction of amendments to The Accessibility for Manitobans Act in Bill 5, including measures to streamline accessibility planning and reporting for public sector organizations, while strengthening public accountability. This progress reinforces our government's commitment to improving accessibility throughout Manitoba.

Another highlight of the Manitoba Accessibility Office includes strengthening support for organizations by launching a series of educational webinars designed to build knowledge, increase awareness of accessibility obligations and support organizations in achieving compliance. In 2025/26, three sessions were offered, with over 350 individuals attending one or more of these sessions.

Through the work of The Manitoba Accessibility Office, the Manitoba Accessibility Fund also continued to support many Manitoba organizations through its accessibility project funding. Through the program's fourth intake $825,000 was awarded to 34 organizations to support projects improving accessibility throughout the province. Interest in the Manitoba Accessibility Fund also continued to grow, with a record 185 eligible applications received during the fifth program intake.

Compliance with accessibility legislation is essential to creating services and workplaces that are inclusive, equitable and accessible for everyone. As accessibility requirements continue to evolve, effective compliance oversite plays a critical role in raising awareness and providing support to organizations. I am proud to celebrate the doubling of our team at the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat, an important step that strengthens our ability to engage with stakeholders and promote compliance with accessibility legislation.

While we have advanced numerous initiatives and activities, we must also recognize that there is still important work ahead. I would like to thank the Accessibility Advisory Council, the teams at the Manitoba Accessibility Office, the Manitoba Accessibility Fund, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat as well as our many partners and stakeholders, for their contributions to these efforts. I encourage you to read this report and reflect on the continued progress being made towards creating a barrier-free Manitoba.

Miigwech,
Honourable Nahanni Fontaine

Minister of Families
Minister responsible for Accessibility
Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity

2025/26 and 2026/27 Minister's Annual Plan Commitments

The Minister responsible for Accessibility sets out an Annual Plan every two years. The most recent, 2025/26 and 2026/27 Minister's Annual Plan outlines key commitments aimed at advancing the implementation of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its regulated accessibility standards. The following highlights and summarizes the achievements and progress made in year one of the two-year plan.

The Manitoba Accessibility Office's Achievements

Accessibility Standard Development and Implementation

- launched Manitoba's Accessibility Action Plan to address the recommendations presented in the last five-year review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act
- implemented 18 of 22 of the recommendations from the Five-Year Review of the Accessible Customer Service Standard (September 2021). The final four recommendations are in progress, with government's response to be tracked through Manitoba's Accessibility Action Plan or the Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan.

Training and Tools

- reviewed and updated all current training modules and started work on a new information module on the Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation
- continued to offer webinar training sessions bi-monthly targeted toward educating businesses and organizations on the act and accessibility standards

Public Awareness

- continued to promote awareness of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and accessibility standards using all communication tactics available
- promoted the celebrations of Manitoba Access Awareness Week, Disability Employment Awareness Month, Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- sent out Accessibility News monthly and continued to use it as a tool to communicate important information on accessibility topics with the public
- used the results from the accessibility audit of AccessibilityMB.ca to improve and advance the accessibility of the Manitoba Accessibility Office website, ensuring it continues to meet the WCAG 2.1 level AA requirements of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard
- reviewed and updated numerous resources and tools on AccessibilityMB.ca. New resources were also created to help further assist Manitoba businesses and organizations to implement The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and accessibility standards
- attended association tradeshows and community events

Building Community

- continued to support community, business and non-profit initiatives through ongoing engagement and outreach
- presented the 2025 Manitoba Accessibility Fund Awards by awarding $825,000 to 34 organizations across the province

Procurement

- created accessible procurement training for Manitoba government employees responsible for procurement. Tools and resource materials were also created to support training for procurement professionals within the Procurement and Supply Chain Division

Inter-Provincial Jurisdiction

- continued to participate on the Pan-Canadian Forum on Accessibility Standards and collaborated with senior leaders from federal, provincial and territorial governments to discuss the harmonization of accessibility standards

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat's Achievements

Policy Audits

- conducted a targeted audit of the accessible customer service policies, practices and measures of 69 large public sector bodies

Pre-Compliance Notices: Accessible Transportation

- sent notices to organizations, associations and stakeholders to inform them about upcoming compliance deadlines in relation to the new Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation

Complaints and Questions Regarding Accessibility

- continued to receive and respond to complaints and questions from members of the public regarding compliance with accessibility legislation and provided organizations guidance related to specific accessibility provisions in Manitoba
- met with the Human Rights Commission on a regular basis to discuss trends arising from accessibility complaints and potential areas for enhanced collaboration and coordination

Accessibility Plans

- continued collaborating with public sector organizations to support their efforts in identifying, preventing and removing barriers that affect students, families, clients and service recipients

New Enforcement Measures

- completed public consultation on the proposed Orders and Administrative Penalties Regulation. A copy of the proposed regulation and a plain language summary were posted on the EngageMB for 60 days for public comment. The regulation, which will allow government to issue orders to remedy contraventions and administrative penalties in cases where an organization demonstrates willful non-compliance, is in the final stages of review and approval.

Accessibility Advisory Council

The Accessibility Advisory Council (council) was created under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The council provides advice and recommendations to the Minister responsible for Accessibility on matters related to accessibility in Manitoba, including the development of accessibility standards and their reviews. The Manitoba Accessibility Office supports the council's work by coordinating meetings, taking minutes, providing research and advise, planning consultations and related activities.

Between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026, the council held nine meetings to provide advice on accessibility priorities and emerging issues affecting Manitobans with disabilities. The council also met with government officials, accessibility experts and community partners to inform their work.

A key focus for the council during the year was accessibility and the built environment. The council reviewed recommendations related to accessible indoor environments and had conversations with Accessibility Standards Canada and Manitoba Inspection and Technical Services regarding accessibility in the National Building Code. The council discussed opportunities to strengthen accessibility requirements, increased participation by people with lived experience of disability in accessibility-related decision-making and promoted accessible housing and inclusive design.

As required under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, the council met virtually with the Minister responsible for Accessibility on January 21, 2026. Council members were joined by Manitoba Labour and Immigration Minister Marcelino, to specifically discuss the recommendations on the indoor built environment.

The council also began a project on accessibility planning for certain public sector organizations in winter 2025. A recommendation from the 2023 Five-Year Review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act emphasized the need to strengthen accessibility planning as a tool for achieving meaningful accessibility outcomes. Recommendation 27 of the review, supported by the Department of Families, the Executive Council of Manitoba and the Accessibility Advisory Council, proposed commissioning research on the impact of accessibility planning and the features that contribute most to its success.

The council continued to monitor progress on implementing recommendations from the 2023 Five-Year Review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the Accessible Employment Standard Regulation. Council members received updates from the Manitoba Accessibility Office on actions underway to address review recommendations and support the implementation of accessibility initiatives across government.

Throughout the year, the council received updates on a range of accessibility initiatives, including the Manitoba Accessibility Fund, Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan, government accessible procurement practices and compliance activities under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The council provided feedback and advice on opportunities to improve accessibility awareness, strengthen compliance and support organizations in meeting their accessibility obligations.

The council continues to build relationships with accessibility partners and rights holders. For example, in November 2025 the council welcomed representatives from the Manitoba Human Rights Commission to discuss shared priorities and opportunities to advance accessibility and inclusion in Manitoba, reinforcing the importance of continued partnership.

Accessibility Legislation

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) became law in 2013. The act provides a framework for identifying, removing and preventing barriers that affect people with disabilities. Barriers can be physical, technological, communication-related, attitudinal, or systemic and can limit full participation in everyday life.

The AMA enables the development of accessibility standards, in the form of regulations. A regulation is a set of rules made under a law. The law sets out the overall purpose and powers, while the regulation explains the specific requirements organizations must follow. The AMA standards establish requirements for organizations in areas such as customer service, employment, information and communication, transportation and outdoor spaces. The act also requires designated public sector organizations to develop and update accessibility plans that identify barriers and outline actions to improve accessibility throughout their operations.

In 2023, the second five-year review of the AMA identified opportunities to strengthen implementation, awareness, compliance, accountability and accessibility outcomes. In response to the second review, Manitoba's Accessibility Action Plan was launched in 2025. The action plan outlines the government's ongoing work to implement the review recommendations and advance accessibility across the province through a coordinated approach involving government, public sector organizations, businesses, non-profit organizations, municipalities and people with disabilities. Work is ongoing, with 63 per cent of recommendations completed and 25 per cent of recommendations underway. Together, these efforts support the goal of creating a more accessible and barrier-free Manitoba for everyone.

Bill 5, The Accessibility for Manitobans Amendment Act and The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Amendment Act (Access Awareness Week), was introduced in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on March 1, 2026. The bill advanced government's response to recommendations arising from the independent review, while also proposing additional legislative amendments. Bill 5 represented the first substantial package of amendments to the AMA since the legislation was enacted in 2013. The proposed amendments were intended to update and modernize the legislative framework and support Manitoba's continued leadership in accessibility.

Bill 5 included measures to streamline accessibility planning and reporting for public sector organizations while strengthening public accountability. Proposed amendments affected the frequency of accessibility plans development and updates, introduced new progress reporting requirements, and clarified consultation and submission obligations. Additional amendments updated the composition of the Accessibility Advisory Council and established provisions respecting the use of funds collected through administrative penalties.

Bill 5 received second reading on March 16, 2026. Public input on the proposed amendments was subsequently received during presentations to the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development on March 18, 2026, where members of the public shared their perspectives and observations regarding the proposed legislative amendments.

The Accessible Customer Service Standard

Enacted in 2015, the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation was the first regulated accessibility standard developed under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The regulation helps ensure that people with disabilities can access goods and services by requiring organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers to customer service. Requirements include communicating in accessible ways, welcoming service animals, support persons and assistive devices, providing accessibility training, maintaining accessibility features and establishing processes for receiving and responding to accessibility feedback.

The Accessibility Advisory Council completed its first review of this standard in 2021 and made 22 recommendations to strengthen awareness, implementation, accountability and accessibility outcomes. As reported in the Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan (MGAP): 2025 and 2026, 18 of the 22 recommendations had been completed by March 31, 2026. The remaining recommendations are in progress and were integrated into broader accessibility initiatives and government's response to the 2023 Five-Year Review of the AMA.

The Accessible Employment Standard

The Accessible Employment Standard Regulation was enacted under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act in 2019. The regulated standard helps make workplaces more inclusive for people with disabilities by requiring employers to identify, remove and prevent barriers in hiring, training and supporting employees. It applies to all paid employees, including full-time, part-time, seasonal employees and apprentices. Employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations during the hiring process, support employees with disabilities in the workplace and establish accessible workplace policies. The goal is to ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to participate and succeed in Manitoba's workforce.

As mandated under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, the Accessibility Advisory Council began the first review of the Accessible Employment Standard in 2024. The report summarized findings from the review and included 27 recommendations across five key areas:

- role of government: accountability and leadership
- supports for employers
- regulation amendments
- awareness building
- alignment with The Human Rights Code

The full report can be viewed on AccessibilityMB.ca. An implementation plan is currently in development with plans to report progress on AccessibilityMB.ca in 2026/27.

The Accessible Information and Communications Standard

The Accessible Information and Communications Standard Regulation was passed in 2022 and came into force for all sectors in 2025. The regulated standard focuses on removing and preventing barriers that exist digitally, in print or through interactions with technology or people. Organizations need to consider how Manitobans interact with or access information, ensure training about the regulation is completed and develop measures, policies and practices to provide barrier-free information and communication.

In 2025/26, the Manitoba Accessibility Office continued to support organizations in meeting the requirements of the Accessible Information and Communications Standard Regulation. Efforts focused on improving awareness and educating organizations on how to provide information and communication in accessible ways. In 2025/26, to help guide organizations, the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation Handbook was revised to better reflect the requirements of the standard. A new resource titled, Accessible Web Development and Maintenance: Regulatory Requirements and Helpful Tips When Working with a Web Developer was also added to AccessibilityMB.ca to help organizations understand how to work with web developers and ensure new or revised websites meet the requirements of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation. Both these resources are available on AccessibilityMB.ca. The Manitoba Accessibility Office also used webinars, presentations, engagement activities and direct support to increase understanding of the standard and encourage compliance.

The Accessible Transportation Standard

The Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation will come into force on January 1, 2027. Once in force, this regulated standard will help to remove barriers to accessing transportation required for attending work or school, visiting family and friends, going shopping and participating in other aspects of daily life. The standard will help conventional and paratransit service providers, schools, vehicles-for-hire and municipalities create a system of transportation that is more inclusive for all Manitobans. The standard includes requirements related to policy development, equipment, vehicle design and operating matters such as fares, hours of service and routes.

In 2025/26, work focused on preparing affected organizations for the upcoming requirements of the standard. A new resource, Frequently Asked Questions: The Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation was added to AccessibilityMB.ca. This resource addresses some of the common questions organizations may have with the standard and helps them better prepare for when it comes into force. Work also began on the development of a handbook and a knowledge-based learning module on the standard. Once completed, the handbook will be available on AccessibilityMB.ca and the learning module will be available for the public to take on the AMA Learning Portal. These efforts emphasize early awareness and practical steps to support organizations compliance readiness of the standard.

The Accessible Outdoor Spaces Standard

The Accessible Outdoor Spaces Standard will be the fifth regulated standard enacted under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and is currently in development. The vision of this standard is to address barriers that exist within the outdoor built-environment including sidewalks, playgrounds and pedestrian crossings.

Development work on the Accessible Outdoor Spaces Standard is ongoing. In 2025/26, the Manitoba Accessibility Office advanced work on the proposed Accessible Outdoor Spaces Standard. A key focus was public engagement. A survey was conducted from March 9 to April 23, 2026, to gather feedback on the proposed requirements. 169 individuals responded to the survey, and results showed strong support for improving accessibility in outdoor spaces, while also identifying ongoing barriers such as winter conditions, maintenance and surface quality. Feedback from Manitobans, municipalities, organizations and community leaders is being used to refine the proposed standard and inform next steps.

Manitoba government Accessible Procurement Practices

Accessible procurement remains a priority for the Accessibility Advisory Council. By considering accessibility requirements during purchasing and contracting processes, organizations can help ensure that goods, services and technologies are accessible and usable for all Manitobans.

During 2025/26, the council met with the Procurement Centre of Excellence to discuss progress on advancing accessible procurement across government. The Manitoba Accessibility Office and the Procurement Centre of Excellence continued to work collaboratively to strengthen accessibility considerations in procurement practices. Key activities in 2025/26 included advancing foundational work to integrate accessible procurement into government practices and delivering targeted training to procurement professionals within the Procurement and Supply Chain Division. The training focused on accessibility considerations in procurement as a legal requirement, while also raising awareness of how staff can comply in practice and where they can access supports.

These efforts support one of the recommendations listed under the Leadership and Investment pillar of Manitoba's Accessibility Action Plan and align with Manitoba government's commitment to embedding accessibility into planning, decision-making and service delivery. Considering accessibility from the start helps organizations create more inclusive programs, services and environments and can reduce the need for retrofits, modifications, redesign and ultimately saving costs for other changes in the future.

Public Awareness

The Manitoba Accessibility Office's public awareness focuses on a communication strategy playing a critical role in advancing understanding and compliance with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its regulated accessibility standards. The office uses a mix of general awareness campaigns, public educational training sessions and webinars, digital communication and community engagement to foster increased awareness of the act.

General Awareness

The Manitoba Accessibility Office uses the Manitoba government's established social media channels, including Facebook, X and LinkedIn to promote accessibility key messages. In 2025/26, the office used the platforms to draw attention to provincially recognized accessibility awareness events including, Manitoba Access Awareness Week, Disability Employment Awareness Month, Indigenous Disability Awareness Month and International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Posts promoted each awareness date and invited Manitobans to attend various webinars hosted by the Manitoba Accessibility Office to promote key messages of the awareness events. A year-round awareness campaign was delivered on the Manitoba government's social media channels to help increase awareness and an understanding of the work of the Manitoba Accessibility Office.

The office also supports Manitobans by providing resources and tools on accessibility legislation. In late 2024/25, a comprehensive review of all resources posted on the website started. This project, which continued into 2025/26, resulted in several key resources being updated to ensure the information provided remained correct, accurate and aligned with the act and regulated standards.

In the final months of 2024/25, the Manitoba Accessibility Office created a poster series campaign to promote the regulated accessibility standards. This campaign consisted of the development of five accessibility posters, each dedicated to promoting the five enacted accessibility standards. Throughout 2025/26, the office focused its efforts on distributing these posters to internal and public facing government offices. 115 large posters and 125 copies of the smaller bilingual posters have been distributed to various Manitoba government offices.

Educational Webinars

The Manitoba Accessibility Office offers a variety of educational webinars focused on educating Manitoba businesses, non-profits and organizations on accessibility legislation.

In 2025/26, over 350 individuals attended one or more of the Manitoba Accessibility Office's webinar sessions. Three educational sessions were offered and included topics on:

- Navigating Accessible Employment: Responsibilities, Strategies and Tools
- Accessibility Compliance: Understand the Role and Responsibilities of the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat
- Serving All Customers: Understanding Your Role as a Frontline Employee to Provide Accessible Customer Service

All educational webinars are recorded on Zoom and are available to watch at any time on AccessibilityMB.ca.

AMA Online Learning Portal

The Manitoba Accessibility Office offers accessibility training through the AMA Learning Portal on AccessibilityMB.ca. Training modules are currently available on the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation, Accessible Employment Standard Regulation and the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation.

In 2025/26, a comprehensive review of all the modules took place. During this review, each module's content was reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and aligned with the regulated standards. The new modules are expected t o be available in the summer of 2026. During 2025/26, work also began on the development of a new Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation knowledge-based module. Once this module is completed, it will be available for the public to take on the AMA Learning Portal.

Manitoba organizations can also download any of the available module files to integrate the training into their own internal learning management systems. The Sharable Content Object Reference Module (SCORM) files are available for download on the AMA Learning Portal. As of March 31, 2026, the Accessible Customer Service, Accessible Employment and the Accessible Information and Communication modules have been downloaded by organizations 1,666 times in English and 157 times in French.

Accessibility News

Accessibility News is a monthly newsletter sent out to over 2,100 subscribers. This newsletter is a valuable tool for the Manitoba Accessibility Office. It is used to deliver updates on accessibility legislation, provide information on important compliance deadlines, promote webinars and keep subscribers up to date on anything related to accessibility legislation in the province. The newsletter also features articles on the Manitoba Accessibility Fund program and includes articles featuring content from the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat. Between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026, ten editions of Accessibility news were published.

Past editions of Accessibility News can be viewed on AccessibilityMB.ca.

Community Outreach

The Manitoba Accessibility Office continues to look for opportunities to attend tradeshows and community events to connect with key decision makers within the community. In 2025/26, the office attended various Manitoba conferences, speaking engagements and tradeshows, including the Manitoba Association of School of Business Officials, Policy Community of Practice, EconX Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, Manitoba Libraries Conference and the Beyond Limits Conference.

These events provide an opportunity to connect directly with key decision-makers, community leaders and influencers. Through the distribution of promotional items, resources and tools, the events provide a direct channel to increase awareness and understanding of the work of the office.

AccessibilityMB.ca

The Manitoba Accessibility Office uses the website AccessibilityMB.ca as a hub for communicating relevant information about accessibility and the legislation. Between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026, there were 54,700 unique visits to the site.

In March 2025, the Manitoba Accessibility Office worked with Access Changes Everything to complete a digital accessibility audit of the website. Access Changes Everything works with testers who use a variety of assistive devices and have a broad range of lived experiences. The findings from this audit were used to identify areas of the website in need of improvement. In 2025/26, these improvements were implemented to ensure the site's accessibility and continued commitment to meeting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, Level AA standards.

In 2025/26, the Manitoba Accessibility Office also started a project to have key information provided on the website in American Signed Language (ASL) video format. The office worked with a local translation company to produce five videos in ASL. Videos were produced for The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation, Accessible Employment Standard Regulation, Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation, Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation and the Compliance webpages. These videos are expected to be added to the website in 2026/27.

Disability Awareness Celebrations

The Manitoba government recognizes Manitoba Access Awareness Week, Disability Employment Awareness Month, Indigenous Disability Awareness Month and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities annually. Celebrating these events promotes disability inclusion and accessibility awareness and initiatives.

In recognition of these events, the Manitoba Accessibility Office hosts webinars focused on the key themes and messages of each of the accessibility awareness events. In 2025/26, these four webinars attracted more than 700 participants combined. Webinars included:

- **Manitoba Access Awareness Week**: Accessibility History, A Manitoba Perspective – Past, Present and Future
- **Disability Employment Awareness Month**: Accessibility at Work: Removing Barriers to Benefit All Employees
- **Indigenous Disability Awareness Month**: Sharing Our Stories: A Conversation on Accessibility, Indigenous Identity and Community
- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Funding Accessibility:** Celebrating Successful Manitoba Accessibility Fund Grant Projects in Action

All past awareness webinars are available to watch at any time on AccessibilityMB.ca.

To further promote these events, the Manitoba government also delivered social media campaigns that increased awareness of accessibility issues, promoted disability inclusion and encouraged participation in the webinars. The Manitoba Legislative Building was also illuminated in purple to recognize both Disability Employment Awareness Month's "Light It Up!" campaign and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, demonstrating Manitoba's support for accessible and inclusive communities and workplaces.

Together, these activities advanced public awareness and supported Manitoba's ongoing commitment to building a more accessible and inclusive province for everyone.

Manitoba Accessibility Fund

The Manitoba Accessibility Fund helps Manitoba organizations remove barriers, raise awareness and meet requirements under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its standards. The fund provides one-time, project-based grants to eligible Manitoba organizations. The Winnipeg Foundation manages the fund, and the Department of Families administers it through the Manitoba Accessibility Office.

In 2025/26, the Manitoba Accessibility Office completed the fourth intake, supported the fifth intake and continued to strengthen program oversight. This work included applicant support, selection committee coordination, funding recommendations, contribution agreements, reporting follow-up and portfolio monitoring.

Demand for the fund remained high. Intake results show an ongoing need for accessible customer service, accessible employment practices and accessible information and communication across Manitoba. The fund supported non-profit organizations, municipalities, businesses, educational institutions, libraries, Indigenous organizations and community partners.

2025 Intake Summary

The fourth intake of the Manitoba Accessibility Fund ran from January 6 to February 14, 2025. The Manitoba Accessibility Office received 180 applications. Some applications were ineligible because the proposed activities were outside the scope of the fund.

A 10-member cross-departmental selection committee assessed and ranked eligible projects using program criteria. Members were recruited from departmental accessibility coordinators and the Manitoba government's ASPIRE employee network.

The committee recommended 34 projects for ministerial approval, with total funding of $825,000. Most recommended organizations were first-time recipients. Recommended projects came from many sectors, including 24 non-profit organizations, one business, five municipalities, one government organization and two school divisions or educational institutions.

Recommended projects supported accessible customer service training, accessible communication resources, website improvements, public awareness activities and tools to help organizations identify and remove barriers.

Visit AccessibilityMB.ca to view the full list of grant recipients and project descriptions.

2026 Intake Summary

The fifth intake of the Manitoba Accessibility Fund ran from January 12 to February 20, 2026. The Manitoba Accessibility Office received 210 applications. After review, 185 applications were eligible.

An 18-member cross-departmental selection committee with accessibility expertise assessed eligible applications. This included members with lived or professional experience with disabilities. Based on assessment results and available funding, 38 projects were recommended for support.

The recommended investment totalled $825,000, within the approved grant budget. Recommended projects included non-profit organizations, municipalities, businesses, educational institutions, libraries and a First Nation government. Projects were located in Winnipeg, regional Manitoba and provincewide service areas.

The intake showed continued demand for accessibility funding. Demand exceeded available funding. The fund was able to support about 15 per cent of applicants.

Manitoba Accessibility Awards

Manitoba Accessibility Awards

The Manitoba Accessibility Awards recognize Manitoba community leaders who help advance accessibility and inclusion. The awards raise awareness of work being done to remove barriers and create more inclusive communities, especially for people who experience accessibility barriers.

In 2025, Arts AccessAbility Network of Manitoba received the Manitoba Accessibility Award for helping remove barriers in arts spaces and theatres. The organization completed venue audits and made accessibility information publicly available. This gave people more information to help them participate in the arts.

The awards complement the Manitoba Accessibility Fund by celebrating completed work and highlighting practical examples of barrier removal. Together, the fund and the awards support a culture of accessibility by helping organizations act and by recognizing results that can inspire others.

Collaborating with Accessibility Partners

Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network

The Manitoba Accessibility Office continues to work with community partners to liaise with a variety of community organizations. One such partnership entity is the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network, which was formally established in 2021/22. Its purpose is to exchange information about accessibility, accessibility plans and policies, training and upcoming events including providing feedback on plans for Manitoba Access Awareness Week, Disability Employment Awareness Month, Indigenous Disability Awareness Month and International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The Manitoba Accessibility Office meets quarterly with network members including representatives from various disability community organizations, as well as representatives from the United Way Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries, the Manitoba government's Public Service Commission, the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba. Many of the representatives on the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network are responsible for implementing accessibility standards within their own organizations, and public sector members are also responsible for developing their organizations' accessibility plans.

Over the past year, this group has continued to provide feedback on resources to support accessibility standard implementation and offered input on relevant themes and topics of discussion for the Manitoba Accessibility Office's awareness celebration events and educational webinars.

Pan-Canadian Approach to Accessibility

The Manitoba Accessibility Office continues to demonstrate a commitment to a Canada-wide approach to Accessibility by actively participating in the Pan-Canadian Forum and Open Forum on Accessibility Standards. Co-hosted by the province of British Columbia and Accessibility Standards Canada, these meetings provide opportunities for senior leaders across federal, provincial and territorial governments to collaborate, learn from best practices and harmonize accessibility standards across Canada.

In addition, the Manitoba Accessibility Office attended technical briefings on Accessible Standards Canada's standards including Accessible Ready Housing, Plain Language and Wayfinding and Signage.

Manitoba Accessibility Compliance Secretariat

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat is a provincial body within the Manitoba government responsible for promoting and monitoring compliance with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) and its regulated accessibility standards.

The secretariat's main purpose is to ensure that organizations across Manitoba meet their legal obligations under the AMA. This applies to organizations in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Work at the secretariat supports the broader goal of accessibility legislation: to identify, prevent and remove barriers so that people with disabilities can freely and actively participate in society.

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat carries out several interconnected functions:

- **Compliance Promotion and Education:** The secretariat works proactively with organizations to build awareness of accessibility requirements. This includes sharing guidance, practical tools and training resources to help organizations understand how to meet obligations.
- **Monitoring Compliance:** Compliance with accessibility regulations is monitored by the secretariat. A provincial accessibility compliance framework follows a progressive approach, starting with education and collaboration and escalating, only if needed, to corrective orders or administrative penalties in cases of wilful non-compliance.
- **Concern Intake and Investigation**: The secretariat receives and reviews concerns from the public about potential violations of the AMA. Each concern is assessed on its own basis, and the appropriate response is determined based on the established compliance framework.
- **Data and Trend Analysis**: Information gathered through concerns and compliance activities is tracked to identify trends. These insights inform future enforcement strategies and public awareness initiatives.

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat plays a central role under the AMA by providing education, monitoring compliance, investigating concerns and carrying out compliance activities to advance accessibility across the province.

Outreach, Presentations and Consultations

In 2025/26, the secretariat recorded a total of 1,201 contacts, some of which were repeat interactions, with individuals and/or organizations. Contacts included in person and video meetings as well as phone calls and emails. The majority of contacts involved providing accessibility related advice, sharing free tools and resources and clarifying compliance requirements.

The secretariat continued outreach in 2025/26 by sharing monthly articles in Accessibility News, which is published by the Manitoba Accessibility Office. The secretariat's contributions to this electronic newsletter informs organizations and members of the public across Manitoba on accessibility compliance work in the province. Each issue includes a Compliance Corner article that outlines regulatory requirements and offers practical guidance on meeting compliance.

In May 2025, secretariat staff attended a meeting with Manitoba Municipal Administrators, organized by the Department of Municipal Relations, to deliver a brief presentation on the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation, which came into force in May 2025, for small municipalities.

On December 2, 2025, a copy of the proposed Orders and Administrative Penalties Regulation was made available for public feedback on Engage MB, for 60 days. This regulation is designed to enforce penalties for organizations that wilfully ignore their obligations under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its regulations. Twenty-two unique responses were received through the proposed regulation portal and five organizations submitted documents with feedback directly to the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat. As of March 31, 2026, the administrative penalties regulation was amid the government's approval process.

In January 2026, compliance notices were sent to municipalities with a vehicle-for-hire by-law, independent schools and school divisions. The notices provided information about the Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation, one-year ahead of the regulation coming into force on January 1, 2027. This upcoming regulation will require conventional and paratransit providers, public and independent schools, vehicles for hire and municipalities to create a system of transportation that is more inclusive for all Manitobans, regardless of abilities.

On January 20, 2026, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat presented to community members and other external parties about the role and responsibilities of the secretariat. This presentation took place during a webinar hosted by the Manitoba Accessibility Office.

As a part of outreach in February 2026, the secretariat partnered with Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning to provide updated guidance on supporting students, staff and volunteers with service animals to chairs of school boards and superintendents of school divisions.

In response to a recommendation from the second review of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, which called for increased resources, two new accessibility compliance officers were onboarded over the course of 2025/26.

Achieving Compliance Plans

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat operates within the provincial accessibility compliance framework, which spans both awareness-building initiatives and formal compliance activities, such as conducting audits and issuing compliance notices. Within this framework, the Achieving Compliance Plan serves as a key tool in helping organizations build and enhance their accessibility practices.

What is an Achieving Compliance Plan?

An Achieving Compliance Plan (ACP) is a written notification package issued by the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat to inform organizations of specific areas where they are not meeting accessibility requirements.

In addition to explaining the role of the secretariat, the achieving compliance package also highlights that secretariat staff are available to provide guidance and support to help organizations achieve compliance. Correspondence may also include copies of relevant legislation, along with checklists and other free tools, designed to help organizations better understand and meet their obligations under Manitoba's accessibility legislation.

Achieving Compliance Plans function as a means of:

- raising awareness about accessibility requirements
- connecting organizations with resources and cultivating positive, collaborative relationships with the secretariat
- establishing deadlines for compliance with specific requirements under the act or its regulations

This fiscal year the majority of Achieving Compliance Plans were sent to large public sector bodies regarding accessible customer service policy documentation requirements.

Most of the audits stemming from an Achieving Compliance Plan included reviewing a documented accessibility policy or plan against the relevant regulation or specified provision under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. If the review identified a gap or missing requirement, compliance officers issued written feedback outlining the necessary changes and required a revised document by a specified deadline. Other Achieving Compliance Plans arose from concerns posed by members of the public involving an actionable provision under the act or its regulations such as training requirements or the maintenance of existing accessibility features. In such instances, the secretariat sent Achieving Compliance Plans with a set deadline for the regulated actionable item.

A total of 105 Achieving Compliance Plans were issued between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026, with 96 considered to be in scope for reporting purposes. This is because nine Achieving Compliance Plans were issued with a compliance deadline beyond March 31, 2026. Therefore, compliance with Achieving Compliance Plans as of March 31, 2026, was assessed based on 96 of 105 plans that were sent in 2025/26. Ninety-two out of 96 (or 96 per cent) of these organizations achieved compliance by the required deadline.

Of the 96 applicable Achieving Compliance Plans that were sent in 2025/26, 82 related to accessible customer service requirements, nine were based on accessible employment requirements, and five were about requirements for updating accessibility plans.

Fiscal Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Percentage of organizations that achieved compliance after receiving an applicable Achieving Compliance Plan with a deadline to comply by March 31 of the relevant fiscal year.	86%	81%	87%	87%	96%

Accessibility Planning

Designated public sector organizations are required to develop, and update written accessibility plans every two years under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Accessibility plans are living documents where organizations summarize the actions they have taken, and will take in the future, to identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers.

Accessibility Plans are distinct from accessibility policies, which outline in writing how an organization is going to meet specific requirements to address barriers under a particular regulation, such as the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation. Accessibility Plans provide organizations the opportunity to highlight their unique accessibility achievements, as well as actions for improvement, some of which may fall beyond the scope of existing accessibility regulations, such as making renovations to facilities as specified under Manitoba's Building Code.

Near the end of the 2025/26 fiscal year, the secretariat reviewed the websites of 127 small municipalities and found that most had not published an updated accessibility plan for the recent cycle. These accessibility plans were to be developed and made publicly available by December 31, 2025, in order to take effect in 2026 and 2027. Based on the review of websites, 12 municipalities (or 9 per cent) had current accessibility plans and were considered compliant. Two municipalities (or 2 per cent) were in progress, as they had contacted the secretariat about updating their accessibility plans. The remaining 113 municipalities (or 89 per cent) do not appear to have updated their accessibility plans for 2026 and 2027.

Formal Audit on Public Sector Accessible Customer Service Policies

Under the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation, organizations that provide goods and services to the public must implement policies and practices to provide accessible, barrier-free service. In October 2025, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat notified 69 large public sector bodies of the upcoming audit for documented accessible customer service policies, scheduled in February 2026. Large public sector organizations in Manitoba include the provincial government, post-secondary institutions, crown corporations, provincial health authorities, school divisions and the ten cities in the province.

As organizations submitted their policies, compliance officers reviewed the documents, responded to inquiries and provided feedback. The secretariat worked with organizations to address policy documentation gaps and achieve compliance. Once an organization met all policy requirements, it was notified of the document's compliance and secretariat records were updated.

Of the 69 organizations selected for the audit, 67 (or 97 per cent) responded to the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat with existing customer service policies or worked with the secretariat to create them. As of March 31, 2026:

- 63 (or 91 per cent) had compliant accessible customer service policies following engagement with the secretariat
- 4 (or 6 per cent) were in the process of revising their policy documents based on feedback provided by compliance officers
- 2 (or 3 per cent) had not responded to communications from the secretariat throughout the duration of the audit and were deemed to be non-compliant. Both organizations subsequently achieved compliance in early 2026/27.

Accessibility Concerns and Questions

Organizations that need guidance to understand how The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and its regulations impact them can bring questions to the secretariat for response. When an organization may not be meeting requirements, members of the public who have concerns can also contact the secretariat to voice a concern. Each concern is carefully reviewed by a compliance officer, who gathers information to guide compliance actions. This may include encouraging the individual to provide feedback directly to the organization, having compliance officers engage directly with the organization to educate them about accessibility legislation or to issue an Achieving Compliance Plan.

Over the course of the fiscal year, from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat received a total of 219 concerns and questions. This marked a decrease of 50 overall interactions with the secretariat from the previous fiscal year. However, unlike previous years, concerns had a comparative 19 per cent increase in 2025/26 representing 48 per cent of overall interactions with the secretariat. Additionally, the number of members of the public who contacted the secretariat with a concern or question rose by 28 per cent.

The total number of contacts by fiscal year, are as follows:

- 33 in 2020/21
- 65 in 2021/22
- 85 in 2022/23
- 154 in 2023/24
- 269 in 2024/25
- 219 in 2025/26

Of the 219 contacts made with the secretariat in 2025/26:

- 114 (or 52 per cent) were questions related to accessibility legislation
- 105 (or 48 per cent) were concerns related to compliance

Of the 219 people who called or emailed the secretariat in 2025/26:

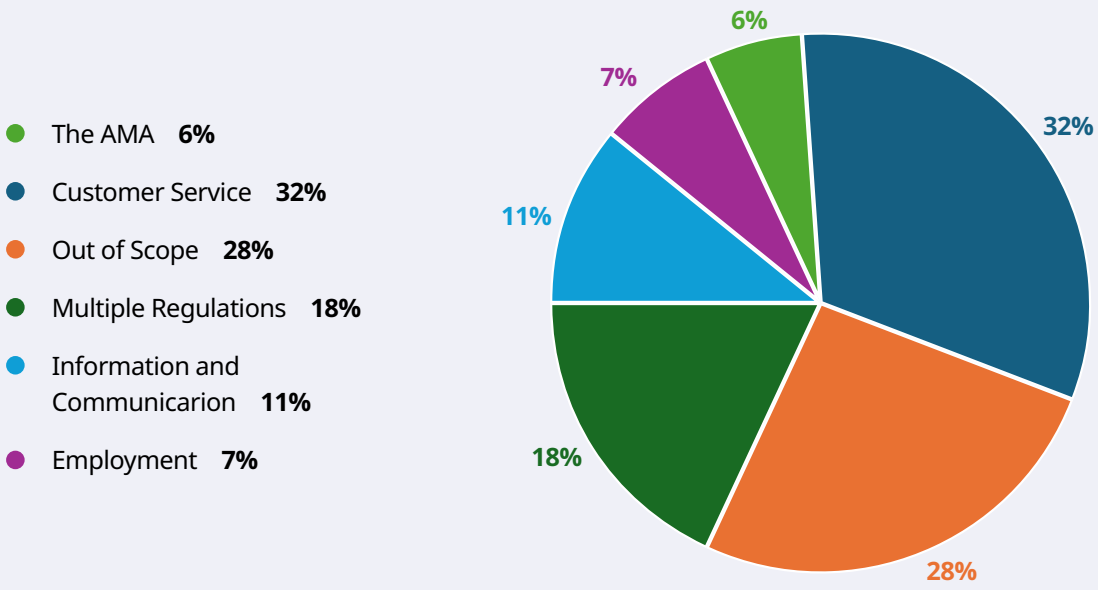
- 145 (or 66 per cent) were members of the public or a third party on behalf of a member of the public
- 40 (or 18 per cent) were representatives from public sector organizations
- 16 (or 7 per cent) were representatives from businesses
- 17 (or 8 per cent) were representatives from non-profit organizations
- 1 (or 0.4 per cent) was a representative from another government[1]

[1] Final figures add up 99.4% due to rounding.

Of the 114 questions received by the secretariat:

- 37 (or 32 per cent) questions related to provisions of the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation
- 30 (or 26 per cent) questions did not relate to legislation in scope under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act or related accessibility standard regulations (e.g., matters that fall under The Building Code or federal jurisdiction)
- 20 (or 18 per cent) questions related to multiple regulations under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act
- 12 (or 11 per cent) questions related to provisions of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation
- 8 (or 7 per cent) questions related to provisions of the Accessible Employment Standard Regulation
- 7 (or 6 per cent) questions related to provisions of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act or general inquiries about accessibility legislation in Manitoba such as requirements for accessibility planning

Accessibility Questions of 2025/2026

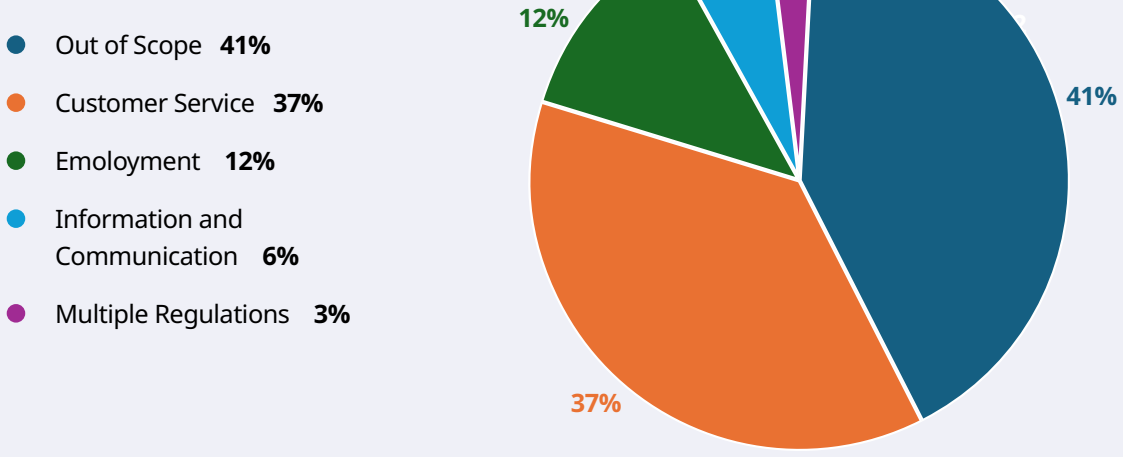


Note: Any questions or concerns relating to the upcoming Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation were considered out of scope as the regulation does not come into force for applicable organizations until January 1, 2027.

Of the 105 concerns received by the secretariat:

- 43 (or 41 per cent) concerns did not relate to matters in scope of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act or related accessibility standard regulations
- 39 (or 37 per cent) concerns related to provisions of the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation
- 13 (or 12 per cent) concerns related to provisions of the Accessible Employment Standard Regulation
- 7 (or 6 per cent) concerns related to provisions of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation
- 3 (or 3 per cent) concern related to provisions under multiple standard regulations[2]

Accessibility Concerns of 2025/2026



[2] Final figures add up to 99% due to rounding.

General Trends Regarding Concerns and Questions Received in 2025/26

In 2025/26, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat fielded 39 concerns under the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation. Of these concerns, 59 per cent were related to the concept of reasonable accommodation and barrier free access to goods and services in the public, non-profit and private sector.

The next highest number of concerns under this regulation were related to the built environment. These reports involved accessibility features such as power door buttons, elevators and accessible washrooms that were not being properly maintained for their intended use and/or appropriate notice not being provided when these features were unavailable.

As in past years, the topic of service animals came up frequently, eliciting more questions than concerns (20 and five respectively) in the 2025/26 fiscal year. Questions regarding service animals made up 54 per cent of overall questions under the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation. Inquiries ranged from how to obtain certification for, or registration of, a service animal in Manitoba, to whether handlers need to carry identification or if no pet policies can be applied in rental settings. In particular, the secretariat heard from six tenants and three landlords or property managers about service animals. The secretariat also received questions from medical professionals regarding how to demonstrate the need for a service animal in a physician's letter. Feedback received by the secretariat indicates that misconceptions about this topic remain within the broader community.

Difficulties with workplace accommodations remained a consistent theme under the Accessible Employment Standard Regulation with 12 accommodation specific concerns being brought to the attention of the secretariat. These concerns were regarding the lack of an individualized accommodation plan that documents an employee's accommodations in the workplace. Examples of requested accommodations included increased work from home days, ASL interpretation, scheduling flexibility for medical appointments, service animals in the workplace and the need for workplace emergency response information. Of the eight questions that were posed under this regulation, themes included, if organizations were obligated to make their accessible employment policies publicly available, whether the employer is responsible for costs associated with independent medical evaluations to determine workplace accommodations and what constitutes reasonable accommodation(s).

In 2025/26, the secretariat handled 18 questions regarding the Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation. Similar to the previous fiscal year, questions were posed regarding whom is to be trained under the regulation. Requests were also made for clarification on identifying which web content and web applications needed to meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards on websites. There were also seven concerns regarding accessible information, including accommodating ASL interpretation in appointments, filling out application forms and the provision of live captioning during legislative proceedings.

The fiscal year saw four questions and five concerns brought to the secretariat regarding the provision of ASL interpretation and/or accommodations for persons in the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community. The communications impacted students, customers, employees and tenants. The number of questions and concerns from the Deaf community has increased from previous years.

The secretariat received a total of 73 questions and concerns that fell beyond the scope of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Of these communications, 27 per cent were related to The Building Code, which is consistent with previously reported trends. In response to these concerns and questions, compliance officers provided referral information for Inspection and Technical Services in the Department of Labour and Immigration, which is responsible

for overseeing The Manitoba Building Code. Other questions that were beyond the scope of the AMA included inquiries about accessibility in condominiums and federally regulated organizations, as well as questions regarding the regulation of sidewalks and fences, accessible parking needs, and how to find accessibility auditing companies and student aid.

Eleven communications were regarding requirements under the upcoming Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation, which will be in force on January 1, 2027. The secretariat also received seven communications that may relate to the forthcoming Accessible Outdoor Spaces Standard. Any concerns related to accessible transportation or the outdoor spaces regulation were considered out of scope as these regulations were not enforceable in 2025 and 2026.

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to review and address concerns and questions posed by the public about accessibility. Demand for compliance supports are expected to rise in the coming years as additional regulations are implemented and more Manitobans become aware of the secretariat's services.

Making Manitoba Accessible Through The Manitoba Government's Accessibility Plan

The Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan (MGAP): 2025 and 2026 outlines the Manitoba government's ongoing commitments to fully embracing The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, while also outlining key initiatives to building a province where all Manitobans can participate fully and equally in society. This plan also reports notable actions the Manitoba government undertook in 2023/24 to advance accessibility across Manitoba's public service:

Some of the notable achievements include:

- enacted the Accessible Transportation Standard on Jan. 1, 2024, which will be in force for all obligated organizations on Jan. 1, 2027
- provided a consistent display and annual replacement of access offer signage at government's public-facing office locations and reception areas
- established a list of employees fluent in American Sign Language, who are able and willing to act as interpreters i n the public facing program area of Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care
- advanced work to develop an updated reasonable accommodation policy, procedure, and related forms and ensured departments developed and implemented individualized accommodation and workplace emergency plans for employees with disabilities, as needed
- launched a new learning module developed by the Manitoba Accessibility Office for public servants through the Manitoba government Learning Management System
- restructured and relaunched the Manitoba Laws website in an accessible format and provided learning sessions to public servants about how to navigate the website
- on Jan. 1, 2024, Manitoba adopted the 2020 National Building Code and Manitoba Labour and Immigration subsequently updated the Manitoba Building Code regulations to align with accessibility requirements, including amendments to expand the use of visual sign devices and requiring handrails on both sides of stairways and ramps

Click to view the full Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan, including the list of all achievements made in 2023/24.

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.

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