

Ministerial 2021/22 Annual Report

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act



Two people at an outdoor concert. A band appears out-of-focus in the background. The backs of two people appear in-focus. One person wears a black shirt and looks up at the other. The other person is in a wheelchair and wears a floppy hat.

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 that part of Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis.

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

We remain committed to working in partnership with the Indigenous peoples in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration in accordance with their constitutional rights and human rights.

Table of Contents

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act	1
Minister’s Message	4
Summary of Commitments in the 2021/2022 & 2022/23 Minister’s Annual Plan	7
Accessibility Advisory Council	8
Status of Accessible Information & Communication Standard	8
Status of Accessible Design of Public Spaces & Transportation Standards ...	9
Five-Year Review of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service	10
Accessibility Compliance Secretariat	13
Compliance Audit: Large Companies	14
Compliance Activities: Large Companies	15
The Accessible Employment Standard	17
Government-Appointed Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs):	18
Accessibility Planning	19
Compliance Presentations	20
Accessibility Concerns & Questions	21
Public Awareness	22
Impact of COVID-19	22
Participation of People with Disabilities on Juries	23
Introduction of the AMA Online Learning Portal	23
Accessibility News	24
Additional Awareness Initiatives	25
Manitoba Accessibility Fund	26
Manitoba Accessibility Fund Outreach	27
Events	27
Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW)	27
Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM)	28
Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM)	29
International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)	30
Manitoba Accessibility Awards (MBAA)	30
Collaborating with Community Partners	31
Contact Information	32

Minister's Message



Minister Rochelle Squires

As the Minister responsible for Accessibility, it gives me great pleasure to submit the 2021/2022 Annual Report of accessibility initiatives in Manitoba. The report outlines the activities undertaken between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022.

This report is being prepared while Manitobans are continuing to experience the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been with us since March 2020. The pandemic continues to highlight that accessibility is critical for Manitobans. During this period, government has adapted and acknowledged that integrating accessibility considerations improves results, and helps meet the needs of Manitobans who use government services, programs and supports in

their everyday lives.

I would like to affirm that our government continues to rely on consultation and public feedback as a vital component to help us identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers. The Province continues to offer excellent tools and resources to guide and assist government, public and private sector organizations to remove barriers and meet requirements set out in The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA).

This annual report outlines progress on the commitments described in the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 Ministerial Accessibility Plan. These include tools and resources to support the accessibility standards already in place, as well as those under development in the areas of information and communication, transportation and the design of public spaces.

A significant activity that occurred in 2021/22 was the [Five-Year Review of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#). As required under section 11 of the AMA, the Accessibility Advisory Council must review the effectiveness of accessibility standards every five years and submit their recommendations to government.

Between late 2020 and September 2021, the Accessibility Advisory Council (Council) conducted a robust engagement process to gather information and feedback on the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. Council's final report was submitted in November 2021 and results of this work will be profiled in this annual report.

In response, government created an interdepartmental implementation team to ensure that the 22 recommendations to improve accessibility in the area of customer service are addressed over the next two to three years.

During 2021/22, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat has been creating understanding and compliance across all organizations on the first two accessibility standards in customer service and employment. Details of specific compliance activities are noted in the section Accessibility Compliance Secretariat.

The Manitoba Accessibility Office (MAO) remains our government's public face and hub of expertise about accessibility and raising awareness about provincial legislation and related accessibility standards. I am pleased to highlight activities and efforts of the MAO, specifically, its work with the Accessibility Advisory Council to develop the Accessible Information and Communication Standard.



Logo for MAO - The Manitoba Accessibility Office.

Our government recognizes that to remove barriers, shift attitudes and meet requirements of accessibility standards, requires that all organizations take tangible steps to create policies and pivot operations to become more inclusive for all. For many this means devoting funds for this purpose. To help Manitoba organizations build capacity and fulfill requirements under the accessibility standards that are in force, we developed and launched the Manitoba Accessibility Fund (MAF) in February 2022.

MAF was designed to provide annual, sustainable grants for initiatives that promote AMA principles and provide assistance to Manitoba organizations that must comply with the legislation. The Manitoba government thanks the Winnipeg Foundation for assisting with this endowment investment fund, with grants up to \$50,000 per applicant for the 2022/23 year. Going forward, this fund will be

pivotal in helping public and private sector organizations meet their AMA obligations for current and future standards.

I wish to congratulate Yutta Fricke on her retirement from Manitoba's Public Service on March 31, 2022. Yutta began working with the Manitoba government in September 2003, at the then Disabilities Issues Office, later, Manitoba Accessibility Office, and was the long-time Executive Director. She helped lead the implementation of accessibility legislation in Manitoba and has been a devoted advocate for disability rights.

As this report reflects on our past year and our achievements, our government continues to move forward and strive for a vision of accessibility and full inclusion for all Manitobans.

Sincerely,

Rochelle Squires
Minister of Families
Minister responsible for Accessibility
Minister responsible for the Status of Women
Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs

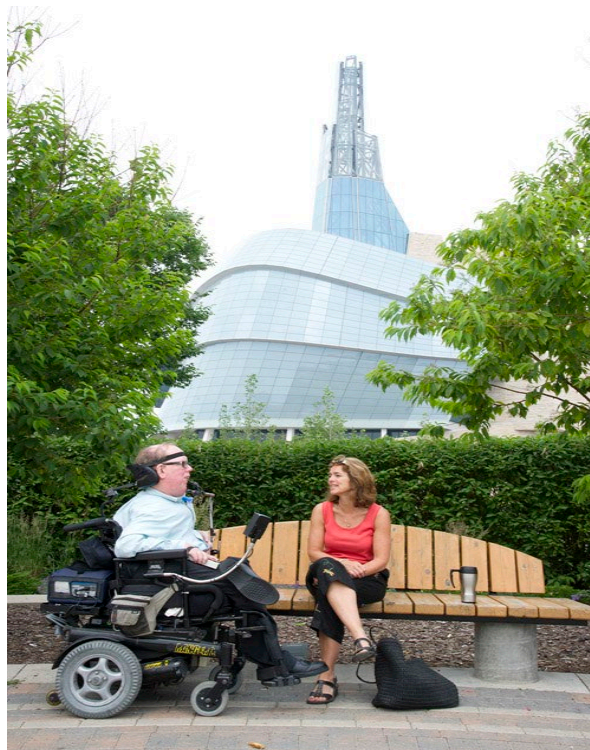


Image of Dave Martin in a motorized wheelchair turned toward Yutta Fricke, who is sitting on a bench outdoors in front of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

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

- ✓ 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 maximum impact of the new fund.
- ✓ Review of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, spring 2021.
- ✓ Consultation on the remaining three standards and enactment of these standards in 2023.
- ✓ Introduction of an online learning portal in 2021, to support Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) learning and training opportunities for Manitobans, anytime from anywhere.
- ✓ Ongoing webinar training opportunities until in-person workshops and presentations resume.
- ✓ Proactive awareness raising and support of compliance measures under the AMA.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Offering the second Manitoba Accessibility Awards in 2023.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Continued production of an electronic newsletter to serve as a key public awareness and education resource for Manitoba organizations and people.
- ✓ A new communications strategy that promotes accessibility in a variety of ways, including accessible online methods.

Accessibility Advisory Council

The Accessibility Advisory Council (Council) is responsible for standard development under the AMA. Council held eight meetings between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022. Council's main activities included overseeing the Five-Year Review of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service and providing feedback on the comments received during the second 60-day period of public consultation for the Accessible Information and Communication Standard.



Logo for Council - the Accessibility Advisory Council.

Status of Accessible Information & Communication Standard

The Province created an interdepartmental working group to review the Council's recommendations for an Accessible Information and Communication Standard (submitted in September 2019). A second period for public feedback on a draft standard through the Regulatory Accountability Portal was available from August 16 to October 7, 2021. Twelve comments were received during the 60-day public consultation period, reviewed by the Council in December 2021, and forwarded to the Minister as required by the AMA.

Government worked throughout 2021/22 to ensure it would meet the target to have the Accessible Information and Communications Standard Regulation come into effect on May 1, 2022.



Two people using desktop computers in an office setting.



Accessibility icons featuring four symbols in circles. The first symbol is a stick man, the second is an i, the third is a telephone receiver, and the fourth is a laptop

Status of Accessible Design of Public Spaces and Transportation Standards

Council submitted its reports and recommendations for the accessibility standards for Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces to the Minister in February and May 2020. Two separate interdepartmental working groups are working to draft the standards prior to a second 60-day period for public comment. These standards will come into force in 2023.

The Department of Families participates in monthly meetings with Accessibility Standards Canada (also known as the Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization), to exchange information on accessibility legislation. This federal departmental corporation is tasked with developing parallel accessibility standards that affect federal jurisdiction, in collaboration with industry and the disability community.



In a park setting, a smiling person wearing sunglasses, a green shirt, and blue jeans uses a wheelchair bike on a dirt path. Two people, one holding a white cane stand in the background.

Five-Year Review of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service

Council conducted a review of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, under section 11 of the AMA. Council reviewed the existing provisions of the standard, participated in pre-consultation meetings with stakeholder groups, and launched a multi-pronged consultation plan that included the following engagement activities: eight sector-specific focus groups, an online EngageMB survey, two virtual town halls and written and oral submissions. The Manitoba Accessibility Office (MAO) provided research and secretarial support, coordinated consultations, acted as note takers and assisted in preparing the final report. Representatives from the following groups were invited to participate:

- persons disabled by barriers and organizations that represent them
- large and small municipalities
- public sector organizations
- Manitoba government
- the K-12 education sector
- businesses; non-profit organizations
- the Francophone community



Logo for Engage MB imposed on a photo of a yellow canola field and blue sky.

Council heard concerns from the disability community that the standard failed to increase awareness among businesses and other obligated organizations. Representatives stated that a robust compliance and enforcement mechanism is necessary. They recommended that the threshold of organizations required to document their policies be lowered from 50 to 20 employees. Participants asked government to update the Manitoba Building Code to address critical barriers in the built environment. Members of the Deaf community requested that government materials, including this standard review, be provided in American Sign Language (ASL) and they would like the Accessible Customer Service Standard to compel organizations to communicate in this language. Participants asked the government to introduce accessible procurement practices and more resources to assist organizations with standard implementation and training. Public sector participants generally believe standard requirements are fair and not onerous.

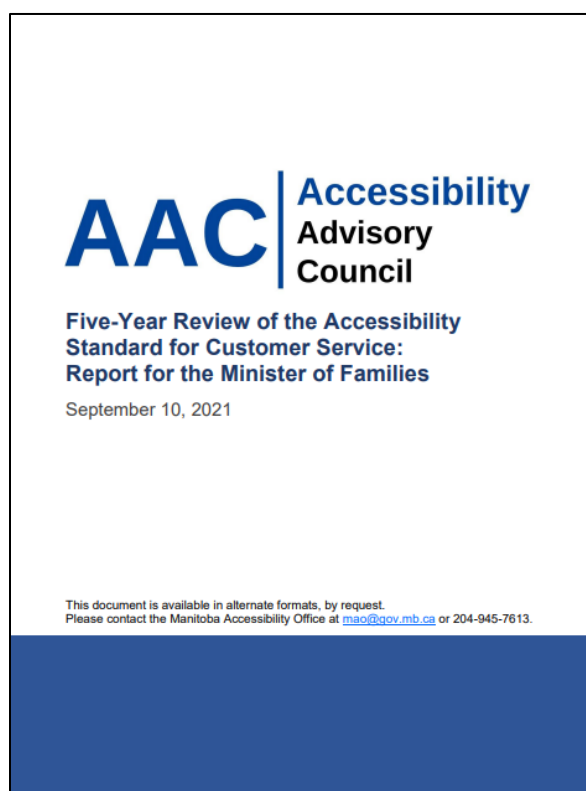


In a public setting, a person in a wheelchair points to ingredients on a counter behind a glass barrier. On the other side, a person handles the selected ingredient to place on a sandwich.

Council analyzed the information from the consultation process to prepare a final report which was submitted to the Minister on September 10, 2021. The report outlines review findings, including 22 recommendations. Council recommendations fall 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 Council

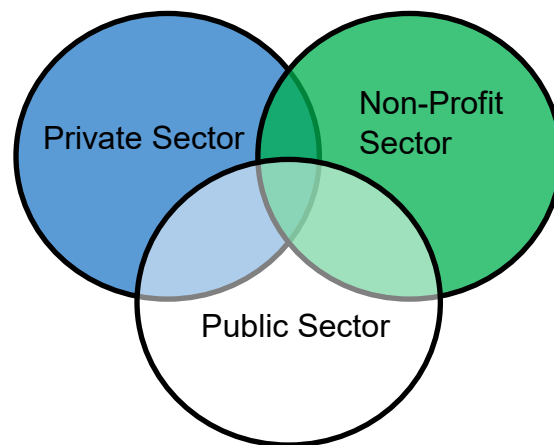
Council met with the Minister on October 21, 2021, to discuss their findings. An implementation plan was developed and approved with current and future action items. The Department of Families is leading an interdepartmental team to implement each of the recommendations. This working group meets regularly and includes representatives from the Public Service Commission, Accessibility Compliance Secretariat and other Department of Families staff. [Council's report is posted on AcessibilityMB.ca](#) and was announced publically in a [November 10, 2021 government news release](#).



The Five-Year Review of the Accessibility for Customer Service: Report for the Minister of Families

Accessibility Compliance Secretariat

[Manitoba's Accessibility Compliance Secretariat \(Secretariat\)](#), is an office that promotes and monitors compliance with accessibility legislation among stakeholders in the private, non-profit and public sectors.



A Venn diagram, three circles that overlap in the middle, representing blue for private sector, green for non-profit sector, and white for the public sector.

The Secretariat works directly with organizations, members of the public and associations across the Province to raise awareness about accessibility and to support compliance. As more accessibility standards (i.e., regulations) are passed in Manitoba, an increasing number of requirements come into force for organizations. Some accessibility requirements vary across sectors and by the size of an organization, and some sectors have more time to comply with accessibility standards. For example, the Manitoba government needed to comply with the Accessible Employment Standard Regulation two years before organizations operating in the private sector. [Learn more about compliance requirements and deadlines.](#)

Working with affected organizations

Before a new accessibility standard (i.e., regulation) comes into effect, the Secretariat issues notices, delivers educational presentations, and responds to inquiries to ensure organizations know their compliance date and requirements.

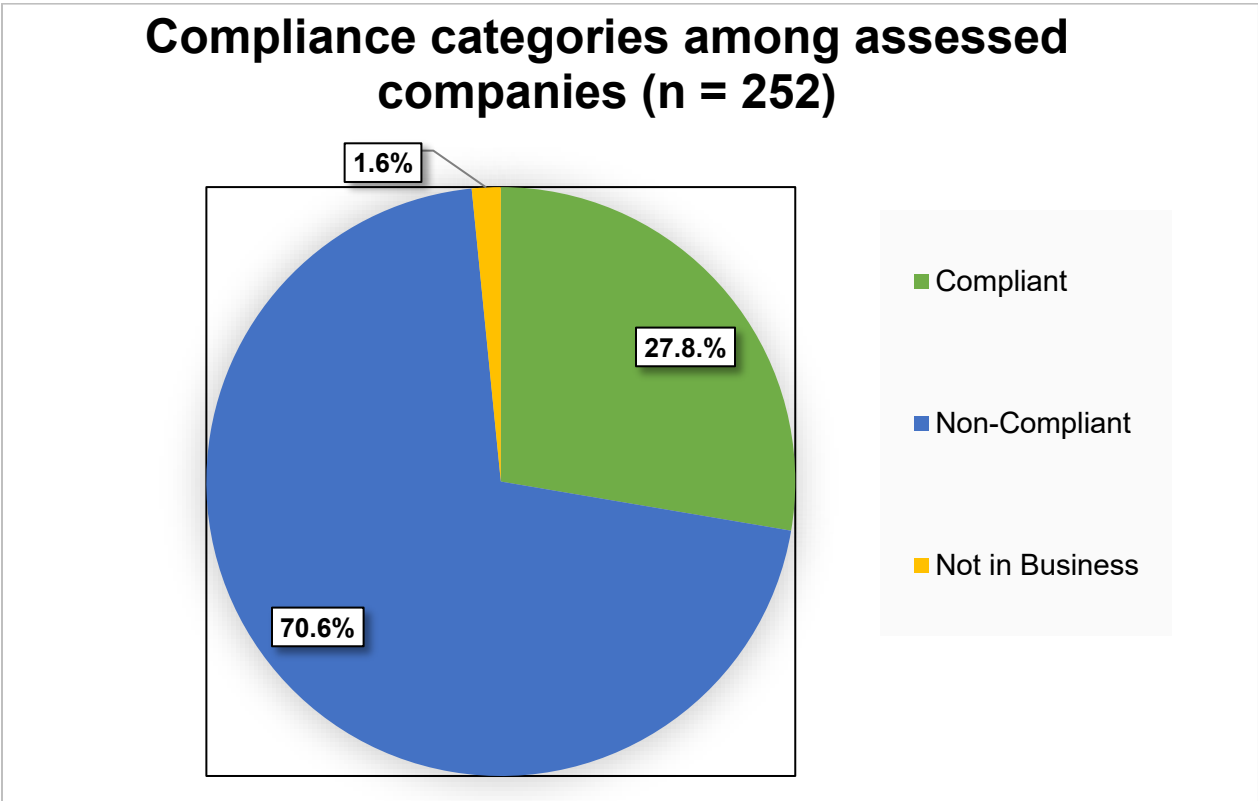
After an accessibility standard comes into force, the Secretariat conducts special audits to assess organizations' level of compliance. The office reaches out to organizations when it believes requirements have not been met. It works to educate organizations about the regulations not being met and helps them to become compliant.

Compliance Audit: Large Companies

In 2021/22, 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 large businesses were reviewed as a part of the audit, representing 19 industries in Manitoba, such as department stores, home good retailers, grocery stores, restaurants, and hotels.

Results:

- **The rate of compliance with the requirement to have a written policy among the 252 companies reviewed was 27.8% (70 of 252 companies).**
- **70.6% of the companies reviewed were non-compliant (178 of 252 companies).**
- **Four companies (1.6%) did not appear to be in business as of July 2021.**



A pie graph depicting compliance categories among assessed companies, total 252 companies. 70.6% companies were non-compliant. 27.8% were compliant. 1.6% were not in business.

Compliance Activities: Large Companies

Based on the results of the compliance audit, the Secretariat began to connect with large companies to inform them about the legal obligation to document their accessible customer service policies and make them available to the public upon request.

From September 3, 2021 to April 1, 2022, staff issued 28 formal Achieving Compliance Plans to individual companies. ¹ Twelve of 14 (86%) companies that received an Achieving Compliance Plan with a deadline to comply by March 31, 2022 accomplished compliance. Proactive outreach with organizations and awareness raising activities are critical components of Manitoba’s Accessibility Compliance Framework.

¹ A higher number of Achieving Compliance Plans were issued, but were subsequently deemed out of scope, as some companies had fewer than 50 employees, or were federally regulated.

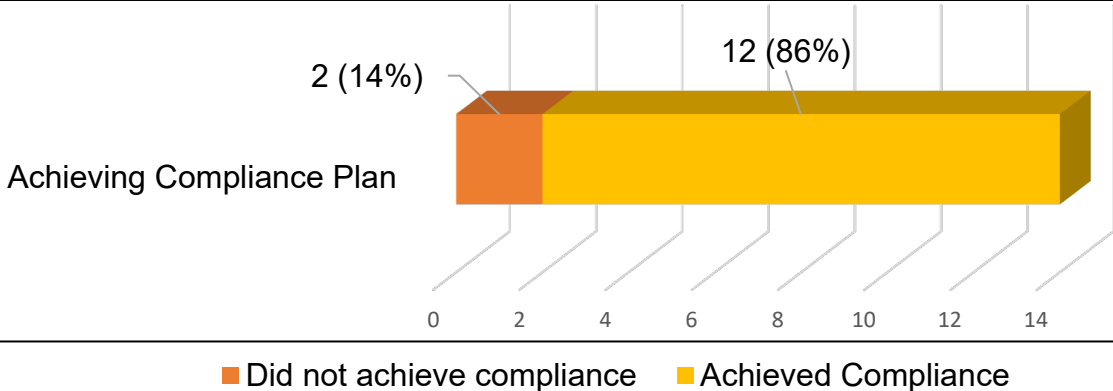
The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to make direct contact with companies, and issue Achieving Compliance Plans. In addition, working in partnership with the Manitoba Accessibility Office, the Secretariat will promote accessibility awareness raising campaigns, events, and financial grants to enhance understanding of, and stimulate compliance with, Manitoba’s accessibility legislation. For more information, please see the Public Awareness Section of this annual report.

What is an Achieving Compliance Plan?

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

The letter notes that support and guidance is available by Secretariat staff to help the organization meet compliance. In addition, the Secretariat includes in the package a copy of the relevant legislation, and an easy to follow checklist that has been specially developed to help organizations understand accessible customer service provisions.

Number and Percentage of Large Companies that Achieved Compliance after receiving an Achieving Compliance Plan with a deadline to comply by March 31, 2022



A single bar graph depicting the number and percentage of large companies that achieved compliance after receiving an Achieving Compliance Plan with a deadline to apply by March 31, 2022. Out of 14 companies, 12 or 86% achieved compliance, two (14%) did not achieve compliance.

The following companies achieved compliance after receiving an Achieving Compliance Plan with a due date to comply by March 31, 2022:

Company Name	Link to policy
North West Company	Available upon request
Red Apple	Red Apple Accessible Customer Service Policy
Canadian Footwear	Canadian Footwear Accessible Customer Service Policy
Coldwell Banker – Preferred Real Estate	Available upon request
Courtyard Marriot – Winnipeg Airport	Available upon request
Domo	Domo Accessible Customer Service Policy
Five Guys Restaurant	Available upon request
Holiday Inn – Winnipeg South	Available upon request
Jysk	Available upon request
Keewatin Air LP	Kivalliq Air Accessible Customer Service Policy
Hudson’s Bay	The Hudson's Bay Accessible Customer Service Policy
The Brick	The Brick Accessible Customer Service Policy

The Accessible Employment Standard

The [Manitoba Accessibility Compliance Framework](#) requires the Manitoba Government to undertake awareness raising activities well in advance of compliance deadlines. This gives organizations the opportunity to learn about the coming requirements and to make changes that are needed for them to comply.

The Accessible Employment Standard Regulation came into force for small municipalities, as well as the private and non-profit sectors on May 1, 2022.

To ensure organizations began to prepare to comply with this particular accessibility standard, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat sent notices to over 3,000 organizations, associations and stakeholders, to inform them about

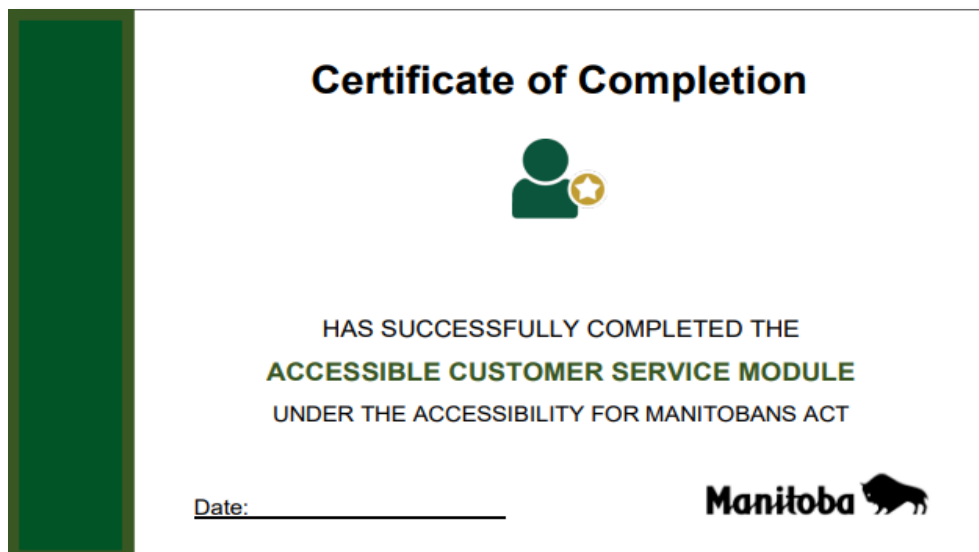
the upcoming compliance deadlines. These formal notices were sent 15 months, 6 months and two and a half months before the May 2022 coming into force date.

Government-Appointed Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs):

The Government of Manitoba makes appointments to numerous agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs). These are entities established by government to carry out a range of functions and services, and include councils, authorities, advisory bodies, funding bodies, professional organizations and quasi-judicial tribunals. Each provincial department has specific ABCs that they oversee, and ABC members are required to complete training on accessible customer service.

In 2021, with assistance from numerous departments, the Secretariat notified ABC members across government of the requirement to complete training on accessible customer service. The AMA Online Learning Portal's free, online training was promoted as a means to comply with this requirement.

As of March 31, 2022, 203 ABC members had completed the required training and many submitted Certificates of Completion, for record keeping purposes.



A Certificate of Completion for the Accessible Customer Service Module from the AMA Online Learning Portal.

Accessibility Planning

The AMA requires public sector organizations to develop written accessibility plans. The documents, which must be updated every two years, outline measures organizations have taken and will take to identify, remove, and reduce barriers to accessibility.

Large public sector organizations in Manitoba include the provincial government, post-secondary institutions, crown corporations, regional health authorities, school divisions and the ten largest municipalities. As of March 31, 2022:

- **67 (or 100%) of these organizations had original accessibility plans, and**
- **35 (or 52%) had updated these documents for 2021 and 2022**

Small public sector organizations in Manitoba include 127 small municipalities across the province. As of March 31, 2022:

- **104 (or 82%) per cent of small municipalities had original accessibility plans, and**
- **25 (or 20%) had updated these documents for 2022 and beyond.**

“Monitoring Progress and Audit Function”

Town of Neepawa Accessibility Plan

“As a status report of this Plan is required every two (2) years, reviews by the Accessibility Policy Review Committee will occur prior to the annual budget preparation cycle. The purpose of the annual review of the Accessibility Plan will be to evaluate whether or not targets are being met and to adopt a plan to meet current expectations. The Accessibility Policy Review Committee shall meet biannually with an annual public meeting held to invite and involve persons with disabilities to review and provide feedback on this plan.”

[Excerpt from the Town of Neepawa’s 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan](#)

The Secretariat heard from numerous public sector organizations that the competing demands placed by the pandemic affected the time and resources they had to make updates to accessibility plans. These public sector organizations were committed to removing barriers in their communities and within their organizations, and asked for further assistance from the Manitoba Government to update the plans.

In response, the Department of Families created and uploaded an eight-minute YouTube video to provide guidance to organizations. An easy to follow [consultation process document](#) for organizations to follow when updating accessibility plans was also developed, and uploaded on the Manitoba Accessibility website.



A screenshot of the "How to Update an Accessibility Plan" video featured on YouTube.

Compliance Presentations

In 2021/22, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat presented to the Accessibility Advisory Council on compliance matters. In addition, various presentations related to accessibility requirements were delivered to human resource practitioners, municipal officials, as well as directors of childcare facilities and long-term care homes. These presentations reached over 181 organizations across the province, and brought awareness to community partners of the functions and supports provided by the Secretariat.

Accessibility Concerns & Questions

The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat fields calls, emails and faxes 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. In addition to specific concerns, the office also receives questions from organizations that need guidance to understand the law, and its specific provisions.

The number of calls, e-mails and faxes the Secretariat responded to on matters related to compliance increased from 33 inquires in 2020/21 to 65 in 2021/22.

Of the 65 people who called, emailed or faxed the office:

- 26 (or 40%) were members of the public, including employees working in obligated organizations who had requested accommodations in the workplace
- 20 (or 31%) represented the public sector, including municipalities, the Manitoba government, post-secondary institutions, and regional health authorities
- 10 (or 15%) represented the private sector
- Nine (or 14%) were working in non-profit organizations

Of the 65 contacts made with the office in 2021/22:

- 41 (or 63%) represented questions from organizations who needed clarity on accessibility requirements and guidance on how to comply
- 21 (or 32%) were calls, emails or faxes relating to alleged non-compliance by a specific organization ²

Of the 21 concerns associated with specific organizations, 17 (or 81%) were in relation to customer service, whereas 4 (or 19%) dealt with accessibility by employers in Manitoba. In addition, the majority of concerns related to alleged non-compliance were in relation to organizations in the private sector (12 concerns or 57%), followed by the public sector (8 concerns or 38%), and the non-profit sector (1 concern or 5%). The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat will continue to provide guidance and monitor accessibility concerns and questions, all of which are anticipated to rise in forthcoming years.

² Another three contacts (4%) were outside of the scope of accessibility legislation.

Public Awareness

Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 continues to have profound effects on the lives of all Manitobans, including the delivery of accessible customer service, and accessible employment for persons with disabilities. In particular, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service provides significant guidance on how to offer safe and effective access to goods and services during the pandemic. Equally important,

The May 2020 safety requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Employment demonstrate how reasonable accommodations in the workplace keep everyone safe by planning in advance and helping employees with disabilities who need assistance stay safe during emergencies and gradually transition from remote work to a hybrid model.



A person wearing a green polo, blue jeans and sneakers in a wheelchair holding a green hose that is spraying a large mist on to green vegetation in an extra large planter in an outdoor courtyard.

COVID-related public messaging and resources established in 2020/21 continue to be enhanced and shared under the COVID banner on [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca), in Accessibility News (the MAO's bi-monthly newsletter), training events and social media campaigns. New "Flexible Work Guidelines" introduced in July 2021 provided accommodations to employees with disabilities or those who are immune-compromised for remote work, as Manitobans began a gradual return to

the office. As the government continues to lift restrictions, the guidelines are being further refined with advice about how to keep everyone safe.

Participation of People with Disabilities on Juries

In an [August 17, 2021 government news release](#), the government introduced legislation to allow people with disabilities who can be reasonably accommodated to serve on juries. The goal is to add fairness to the court process by implementing clear changes to ensure Manitobans with disabilities can equally participate in Manitoba's jury trial system. One in four Manitobans with disabilities represent a significant portion of society in our province.



Two people using motorized wheelchairs proceed up a ramp in front of a large, stone building.

Introduction of the AMA Online Learning Portal

In June 2021, the Manitoba government launched the [AMA Online Learning Portal](#) on [AccessibilityMB.ca](#) to feature accessibility standard-specific training modules to provide online training opportunities for all Manitobans, and to allow affected organizations an opportunity to meet the training requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard.



Accessible Customer Service

[View Learning Module](#)



Accessible Employment

[View Learning Module](#)

Accessible Customer Service and Employment modules featured on the Online Learning Portal.

Following the launch of the Accessible Customer Service module in June 2021, a second module on accessible employment was added in October 2021. The portal includes knowledge checks, facilitator guides, and certificates of completion, all of which are offered in English and French. The Online Learning Portal will be further enhanced to allow organizations to download and feature our Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) training content within their own training opportunities.

Accessibility News



The Accessibility News header featuring dark blue and canary yellow colours.

The MAO continued to feature disability/accessibility-related community content (events, funding, opportunities, and resources) alongside regular updates on provincial standard development, new tools, and Manitoba-specific accessibility information to over 1,800 subscribers in five issues of its electronic newsletter, [Accessibility News](#). Issues offered updates on standard development and implementation, the creation of accessibility resources, new initiatives from Accessibility Standards Canada on the Accessible Canada Act, personal stories from Manitobans with disabilities, and articles from 2020/21 Manitoba Accessibility Award winners. The government also communicated important accessibility standard updates and related information directly to over 3,800 Manitoba businesses and organizations.

Additional Awareness Initiatives

In fall 2021, the Department of Families created a Frequently Asked Questions and Workplace Barriers and Solutions documents to supplement resources on the Accessible Employment Standard. The new documents provide people and groups additional reflection and discussion opportunities that strengthen their accessibility standard knowledge.

In March 2022, the department launched a new, large postcard direct mail campaign to over 52,000 businesses and farms in rural and urban Manitoba to remind them of their AMA responsibilities and encouraged them to apply for the Manitoba Accessibility Fund.

Accessibility is... Good for your customers.
Good for your employees.
Good for your business.

Did you know nearly one in four Manitobans has a disability?

To remove barriers for people with disabilities, the Manitoba government has made it the law for all businesses to:

- offer accessible customer service,
- provide reasonable accommodation at all stages of the employment process, and
- have a workplace emergency response plan in place for staff.

Prioritizing accessibility within your organization is not only the right thing to do — it's the smart thing to do.

Offering respectful customer service, and accommodating employees will help make your business more inclusive, innovative, and productive.

Visit AccessibilityMB.ca, to learn how to improve accessibility within your organization, and access free training and resources.



AccessibilityMB.ca **Manitoba** 

 **Manitoba Accessibility Fund**

Organizations & Businesses – Apply Now

The new Manitoba Accessibility Fund provides **grants up to \$50,000**, to create awareness and compliance with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

Projects must support Manitoba's accessibility law by:

- raising awareness about the prevention and removal of barriers,
- developing tools, resources and training to support compliance with the law, or
- removing barriers to information and communications.

Learn more about the Manitoba Accessibility Fund and how to apply at: AccessibilityMB.ca



AccessibilityMB.ca **Manitoba** 

Two ads that were featured in the Winnipeg Free Press pertaining to the Accessibility Standards & the Manitoba Accessibility Fund. One ad shows a smiling older person in a wheelchair, a younger smiling person next to them, and a small dog on the larger person's lap. The second ad shows a smiling person in front of a computer screen using assistive technology and a paper with braille.

Additionally, the department will work with a web design vendor, accessibility expert, and an advisory team of users to redesign [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca). The website was first launched by the MAO in 2014. The aim is to significantly improve website accessibility and navigation. The website is the main public education and awareness tool for communicating the AMA, standards, and resources. Key documents will also be featured in plain language and as videos in American Sign Language. In addition, the province is developing resources for the launch of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard on May 1, 2022. Resources include a standard overview document, frequently asked questions document, and checklists and guides to make documents more accessible. Training on the new standard will be offered during Manitoba Access Awareness Week 2022.

Manitoba Accessibility Fund

In 2021/22, with the establishment of the Manitoba Accessibility Fund (MAF) the government met its commitment to develop a funding opportunity to support businesses and community organizations to improve their capacities to comply with Manitoba's accessibility standards.



Manitoba Accessibility Fund logo featuring four accessibility icons.

The fund and its grant program assists municipalities, non-profit organizations and businesses in Manitoba by providing financial support for projects that remove barriers for people with disabilities, and promotes accessibility across the province. The fund is a one-time, \$20 million contribution to the Winnipeg Foundation, which administers the grant dollars.

The MAF pilot year launched on February 14, 2022 and applications were accepted up to April 15, 2022. Applicants could apply for a grant of up to \$50,000 for projects addressing one of the following priorities:

- To raise awareness about preventing and removing accessibility barriers;
- To develop tools, resources and training to support AMA compliance;
- To remove barriers to information and communication electronically, in-person or in print.

Eligible MAF applicants must have been in operation for one year prior to application and are:

- non-profit organizations,
- local businesses or corporations based in Manitoba providing services to Manitobans registered with the Companies Office,
- municipalities and local authorities, such as planning districts and Northern Affairs Community Councils,
- on-reserve businesses and organizations,
- universities, colleges and school divisions.

To support applicants, the MAO created guidelines, an online application form, FAQs, and a glossary. Materials were available on the [MAF website](#), which will be updated in the years to come.

Manitoba Accessibility Fund Outreach

The MAO held a webinar in English and French to more than 350 Manitobans. The webinar provided important MAF information, step-by-step directions on completing an application, and an opportunity for people to ask questions and receive answers about the fund. Additionally, information about MAF was sent to various networks through Accessibility News, social media posts, and in emails across government from Department Accessibility Coordinators.

The MAO developed a standard assessment form, rating rubric, and terms of reference for a Selection Committee who are tasked to evaluate MAF applications and make recommendations to the Minister on the final list of projects to receive funding for the pilot year (April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023).

Events

Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW)

In June 2021, the Manitoba government recognized Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW) with a webinar with over 250 people. The webinar focused on accessible employment, and included a feature presentation by Yasmine La Roche, Deputy Minister, Federal Public Service and a panel of Manitobans with disabilities who shared their employment experiences. To boost public

recognition and awareness of MAAW, the department invested approximately \$20,000 in a social media campaign.

Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM)

In October 2021, the government celebrated Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) with a presentation at the Manitoba Tourism Education Council's online Accessibility Expo. The Manitoba legislature was also lit up in purple and blue on the evening of October 21, as part of a national "Light it Up!" project to remind Manitobans of the importance of creating a barrier-free work environment and hiring people with disabilities. Messaging about "Light It Up!" was posted on the Manitoba government's Facebook and Twitter accounts, on the DEAM-MB website, as well as the social media accounts of many community organizations. Small Business Week is celebrated the third week of October, and also provided an opportunity for government to publicly promote the importance of accessible and inclusive employment with a large advertisement featured in a special business edition of the Winnipeg Free Press.



Accessibility is good for business.

Good for your employees and customers.

Nearly one out of every four Manitobans face daily challenges with accessibility.

Ensuring your business is accessible helps improve productivity and makes workplaces healthier and safer for everyone. Removing barriers to employment for people with disabilities helps you hire, support and keep employees.

The new **Accessibility Standard for Employment** under Manitoba's accessibility law requires businesses to have policies on workplace accommodations by **May 1, 2022**.

Learn more about how your business can meet accessibility standards at [AccessibilityMB.ca](https://www.accessibilitymb.ca).

Accessibility Benefits Everyone.

Manitoba 

A large Winnipeg Free Press for Small Business Week. The ad says Accessibility is good for business. Good for your employees & customers. In a kitchen, a person wearing a blue apron & hairnet uses a large knife to cut a carrot

Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM)

In November 2021, for the first-time ever, the Manitoba government proclaimed Indigenous Disability Awareness Month. The department participated in a webinar hosted by the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society and invited Audrey Henderson and Sharon Courchene, Project Coordinators from the Southeast First Nations Disability Initiative (Sagkeeng First Nation) to share information about their programs, research, and community-driven accessibility initiatives. Audrey and Sharon also shared invaluable reflections about the successes and barriers experienced by people with disabilities in their communities.



Image showing the MAO logo and British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) indicating that November is Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM).



Image showing the Southeast Manitoba First Nations Disability Project – Sagkeeng Anicinabe

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)

Over 300 people registered for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities December 3, 2021 webinar, which focused on removing barriers for persons with disabilities who use service animals. The event included presentations by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat, and a lively and informative panel discussion among service animal experts. All MAO webinars are available on the [MAO YouTube playlist](#).



Service animals welcome.
Pets not allowed.

An image showing a stick man with a service dog. Underneath, it says "Service animals welcome. Pets not allowed".

Manitoba Accessibility Awards (MBAA)

In 2020, the government launched the Manitoba Accessibility Awards (MBAA) during a webinar to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd. In post-pandemic times, the aim is to include the MBAA in existing community awards programs to expand awareness, for instance among members of the Manitoba and Winnipeg Chambers of Commerce and Volunteer Manitoba. The Manitoba government will continue to promote the awards among the public. The government recognizes the contributions of nominees and award winners in print and social media, on government websites and in Accessibility News. The Minister's Annual Plan 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. Due to the pandemic, we learned that many organizations would not be holding awards events during that time. The MAO was unable to host an awards celebration in 2022/23. The second Manitoba Accessibility Awards Program will take place in 2023/24.



**Manitoba
Accessibility
Awards**

Logo for MBAA - the Manitoba Accessibility Awards.

Collaborating with Community Partners

The government regularly meets with allies in the disability community and public and private sector organizations, many of which are responsible for implementing accessibility standards and training within their organizations. Participating organizations support the MAO by providing opinions, perspectives, and ideas related to accessibility initiatives.



MBAAN
Manitoba
Accessibility
Advisory
Network

Logo for MBAAN - the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network.

In 2021, this meeting of organizations was officially named the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Network (MBAAN). During the pandemic, this network has been particularly helpful in promoting our webinars and events via social media. The MAO is always seeking collaborations with business and organizations that share a vision of a more inclusive and accessible Manitoba.

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

