

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

PURPOSE: This policy has been established by the Manitoba Arts Council to govern the provision of its programs and services in accordance with the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and “Customer Service Standard Regulation”.

1. Our mission

We champion excellence in the arts through support for artists and arts organizations in Manitoba.

2. Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, the Manitoba Arts Council strives at all times to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles outlined in the Customer Service Standard Regulation.

The Manitoba Arts Council is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Any policies of The Manitoba Arts Council that do not respect and promote the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Persons with disabilities are encouraged to contact us to identify and discuss whether the provision of our programs and services could be provided in

ways that would better take into account their disability. Please see section nine of this policy for more details on the feedback process.

3. Definitions

Accessibility

Related to this policy, accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. Accessibility refers to the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.

Assistive devices

Technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids that are used to increase, maintain, or improve how a person with a disability can function. Examples may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, and assistive listening devices.

Accessible formats

Information provided in a way that is accessible to people with disabilities. Examples: large print, recorded audio or Braille instead of standard printed material.

Barrier

Related to this policy – obstacles that limit access and prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. Most barriers are not intentional. Barriers usually arise because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered from the beginning.

Communications

The interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

Communication supports

Supports that individuals with disabilities may need to access information. These may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Customer

The direct user or recipient (sometimes involuntary recipient) of a service.

Information

Includes data, facts, and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.

Service animal

An animal (typically a dog) trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability.

Support person

A person accompanying a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or to access goods or services.

Temporary disruption

A short term planned or unplanned disruption to facilities or services that the public usually uses to obtain goods and services.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

Provincial legislation introduced to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Standards will be developed in five key areas of daily living. These standards will outline specific measures to be taken by public sector and private sector organizations. Changes will result in improved accessibility for all Manitobans, regardless of (dis)abilities.

4. Communication

We will communication with people disabled by barriers in the ways that take into account the nature of the barrier.

The Manitoba Arts Council will work with the person to determine the barrier and what method of communication works best for them.

We will train staff who communicate with the public on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

5. Assistive devices

We are committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to access our programs and services.

Our staff will be trained on any assistive devices available on our premises.

6. Use of service animals

We recognize that some individuals with disabilities may require the use of service animals in order to access our programs and services. We welcome persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal to all parts of our premises and to keep the animal with them.

7. Use of support persons

We recognize that some individuals with disabilities rely on support persons for assistance while accessing our programs and services. A person with a disability and their support person will be allowed to enter our premises. They will not be prevented from having access to each other while on the premises.

Support persons accompanying or assisting individuals with disabilities may be required to abide by our conflict of interest and confidentiality policies.

When support persons are required (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, attendants) for Manitoba Arts Council sponsored meetings, consultations, events or information sessions, the Manitoba Arts Council will pay support persons directly for their time and travel expenses upon request, in accordance with MAC reimbursement guidelines for accessibility accommodations.

8. Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities The Manitoba Arts Council will promptly post notices and, when possible announce the disruption.

A clearly posted notice or announcement will include the reason for the disruption, information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Examples of alternate services/facilities include:

- Accessible washroom
- Elevator
- Parking spaces designated for people with disabilities

9. Training for staff

The Manitoba Arts Council will provide accessible customer service training to all employees.

New staff will be trained as part of their orientation upon employment.

Training will include the following:

- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities, including those who use assistive devices, service animals or support persons
- How to use any equipment or devices available on our premises, or otherwise, that may assist with the provision of programs or services to persons with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Manitoba Arts Council's programs and services
- Background and purpose of *the Accessibility for Manitobans Act*
- The requirements of the Customer Service Standard Regulation
- Explanation of all policies relating to the Customer Service Standard Regulation

Staff will be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

10. Accessible Events

The Manitoba Arts Council will make public events accessible by:

- Announcing events in a manner that is accessible
- Holding event(s) in accessible meeting places
- Inviting requests for relevant disability accommodations

11. Feedback process

The Manitoba Arts Council welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

The Manitoba Arts Council will let the public know that methods are available for giving feedback. If a method is not suitable, individuals may request another method. Privacy will be respected and all feedback will be reviewed for possible action that can be taken to improve access to our programs and services.

Feedback received will be directed to the Manitoba Arts Council's Accessibility Coordinator and will be addressed in accordance with our normal complaints administration procedures and timelines. Where possible, complaints will be addressed immediately. However, some complaints may require more time to address, and must be reviewed for action, possibly at a higher level.

Feedback responses will endeavour to be in a format that is accessible to the complainant.

12. Modifications to this or other policies

We are committed to ensuring that our public service policies, practices and procedures respect and promote the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities.

Any policy of the Manitoba Arts Council affecting service to the public that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence, integration and equal opportunity of persons with disabilities will be modified or removed.

13. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to persons with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of this policy is not understood, please contact:

Tracey Longbottom, Accessibility Coordinator

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Winnipeg, MB R3B 3B1

Telephone: 1-866-994-2787 ext. 3180 or 204-945-3180

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