



## EQUITY POLICY

Approved by Council September 2, 2005

### PREAMBLE

The Manitoba Arts Council, in accordance with the *Manitoba Human Rights Code*, recognizes the individual worth and dignity of every member of the human family. The Council believes that all individuals have the right to be treated, in all matters, solely on the basis of their personal merits, and to be accorded equality of opportunity with all other individuals. The Council actively opposes any unreasonable discrimination, stereotypes or generalizations based on the following group characteristics:

- ancestry, including colour and perceived race;
- nationality or national origin;
- ethnic background or origin;
- language
- religion or creed, or religious belief, religious association or religious activity;
- age;
- sex, including pregnancy, the possibility of pregnancy, or circumstances related to pregnancy;
- gender-determined characteristics or circumstances other than those included above;
- sexual orientation;
- marital or family status;
- source of income;
- political belief, political association or political activity;
- physical or mental disability or related characteristics or circumstances, including reliance on a dog guide or other animal assistant, a wheelchair, or any other remedial appliance or device

### POLICY

The Council recognizes that past discrimination against certain groups in Manitoba has resulted in serious historical disadvantage experienced by those individuals belonging to them. The Council has identified several groups that have suffered historical discrimination and resulting disadvantages in Manitoba's arts sector and in Manitoba society. These groups are identified as follows:

- Aboriginal peoples of Manitoba
- Franco-Manitobans
- Members of Manitoba's various ethno-cultural communities
- Residents of Manitoba's rural and northern communities
- Manitobans with disabilities
- Manitobans living in institutional settings
- Other Manitobans who historically have faced barriers to exercising an active role both in Manitoba's arts sector and in Manitoba society as a whole

In addition, the Manitoba Arts Council is committed to the reasonable accommodation of individuals based on special needs connected to any of the listed group characteristics.

The Manitoba Arts Council endeavours to redress existing discriminatory barriers and to promote the equality of treatment of all individuals in, through, and by the Council.

This policy document provides an overarching set of requirements and guidelines for establishing equity policies, procedures, and protocol designed to address the unique needs of each identified group.





## **PROCEDURE**

The Manitoba Arts Council maintains a range of policies, procedures, and protocols to promote full participation in Manitoba's arts sector for all of the province's artists. These include the establishment and maintenance of:

1. An Equity Committee that reports to Council
2. Processes for identifying historical barriers facing specific groups
3. Special programs and modified service delivery models designed to redress these barriers
4. Reasonable accommodation protocol for individuals with special needs
5. Processes to ensure that existing Council programs are equitable and accessible
6. Equitable assessment processes
7. Internal governance, management and staffing processes that reflect Council's ongoing commitment to equity
8. Programming in equity education for staff and council members
9. Communications strategies that foster effective community relations with identified groups and reflect to the general public Council's commitment to equity

### **1. Equity Committee**

The Equity Committee reports to Council on all issues regarding equity within Council's programs and services, and oversees the development of equity policy. To this end, through and with the support of the management staff of the Manitoba Arts Council, the committee is responsible for the following:

#### **Information-Gathering**

- initiating regular internal equity audits
- initiating or conducting reviews of local, national and international research on equity and arts funding
- facilitating community consultation around equity policy issues

#### **Programming and Services**

- establishing policy and procedures for special programs and modified service delivery models
- developing policy and protocol around reasonable accommodation measures
- ensuring that existing Council programs are accessible and equitable
- developing outreach strategies for identified groups
- developing intake protocol for clients from identified groups
- developing equitable assessment processes
- monitoring the success of new programming and service delivery modifications using established timelines and measurable goals

#### **Governance, Management, Staffing**

- developing governance, management, and staffing processes that reflect Council's commitment to equity
- facilitating education for staff and council members regarding equity issues

#### **Communications**

- initiating the development of an equity communications strategy

#### **Advising**

- acting, when called upon, as an advisory body to Council on the status of identified groups and on the changing needs of such groups



## **2. Identifying Barriers to Equity**

### **a) Barriers to Equity**

While specific historical barriers to involvement in Manitoba's arts sector differ from group to group, these barriers often stem from a presence in society of systemic abuse of human rights, deep-rooted inequalities, discriminatory attitudes. The Council recognizes that these long-term societal realities have at times been perpetuated through its own programs and services, and the Council works to identify and remedy barriers existing in its programming and service delivery. Barriers can include:

- physical barriers
- geographic barriers
- cultural barriers
- linguistic barriers
- socioeconomic barriers
- education-based barriers
- literacy-based barriers

### **b) Processes for Identifying Barriers**

Under the direction of the Equity Committee, the following steps are taken to determine the barriers faced by identified groups and to decide upon measures to eliminate these barriers. These steps form the groundwork of equity policy, program, and service development:

#### **i) Internal Equity Audit/Review**

The Manitoba Arts Council undergoes regular internal equity reviews or audits (i.e. every seven years). These reviews are undertaken to identify groups that face barriers to full participation both in the Manitoba arts sector and in Manitoba society as a whole. They serve to identify those characteristics of Council policies, programs, and services that might perpetuate historical and systemic barriers, and to provide recommendations on strategies for redressing these barriers.

#### **ii) Review of National and International Research**

The Manitoba Arts Council conducts regular reviews of Manitoban, Canadian and international research on equity and arts funding.

#### **iii) Community Consultation**

The Manitoba Arts Council conducts consultation with community members and artists from identified groups in order to identify barriers, concerns, and needs, along with possible policy solutions for these communities. Methods for consultation can include surveys, focus-groups, interviews, and community consultations.

Based on the information-gathering methods listed above, the Council identifies possible strategies for removing identified barriers to Council services and to participation in Council programs. Through internal review, along with research and consultation, policy is developed and regularly evaluated and revised in order to support strategies such as special program and service delivery initiatives, staff and council education, and effective communications planning.



### **3. Developing Special Programs and Modified Service Delivery Models**

#### **a) Special Programs and Modified Service Delivery Models**

##### **i) Special Programs**

Special programs are developed to redress physical, geographic, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, education-based and literacy-based barriers present in the components of Council programs such as:

- Eligibility and program requirements
- Assessment processes
- Discipline, art form, and genre preferences

##### **ii) Modified Service Delivery Models**

New service delivery models could modify, add to, or replace existing service delivery practices. These models endeavour to eliminate physical, geographic, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, education-based and literacy-based barriers present in elements of Council services, and should address areas such as:

- outreach strategies
- access points and processes
- intake protocol
- application procedures
- client consultation procedures
- community consultation procedures
- communications strategies

#### **b) Processes for the Development of Special Programs and Service Delivery Models**

Special programs and modified service delivery models aim to address certain barriers to access and participation for an identified group. It should be kept in mind that full opportunity for access and participation must be available and achievable at all levels, and not just at entry level. Also, according to the Manitoba Human Rights Code, a special program or service delivery model can be unique and exclusive to one group, as it reflects the unique nature of the historical experiences and disadvantages faced by that group.

In order to design effective special programs and service delivery models, the following steps must be taken:

1. Clear identification and definition of the group(s) facing the disadvantage or barrier, and a clear method of determining eligibility for the modified service or special program.
2. The provision of supporting research and documentation to demonstrate that the group in question has faced barriers to participation both in the Manitoba arts sector and in Manitoba society as a whole. This data should be provided from a combination of sources such as internal equity audit results and recommendations, external research, and community consultation.
3. The establishment of a strong link between the barriers faced by the identified group and each element of the service delivery model or program design (it must be shown that the special program or service delivery model will relieve the disadvantage experienced by the group, or that it will otherwise assist in achieving equality for that group).
4. A set of measurable goals for the program or the service delivery model, a timeline during which these goals are to be met, and defined measurement techniques to determine the performance of the program or service delivery model against these initial goals.





5. The establishment of timeframes for the review and adjustment of each special program and/or service delivery model. It is understood that some programs and service delivery models exist in the short term, while some are maintained over a much longer period of time, depending on measurable goals and on the changing needs of identified groups.

#### **4. Developing Reasonable Accommodation Protocol**

##### **a) Reasonable Accommodation Protocol**

The Council maintains a protocol for reasonable accommodation, through which individuals with special needs related to any group characteristics identified in the preamble of this document are granted special arrangements or accommodation within the framework of the Council's existing services and programs. The Council is committed to accommodating individuals with special needs, and will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate these needs. However, according to the Manitoba Human Rights Code, accommodation efforts that create undue hardship for the Council (such as high financial cost or the compromising of workplace health and safety) are not required.

##### **b) Process for Developing a Reasonable Accommodation Protocol**

The Manitoba Arts Council maintains a Reasonable Accommodation Protocol outlining the measures taken in the event of:

- a request for reasonable accommodation, or
- a perception by Council of a client's potential need for reasonable accommodation

In addition, the Council maintains a protocol for determining "undue hardship".

#### **5. Equity and Accessibility of Existing Programs and Services**

The Council, taking into account recommendations from regular equity audits, and through information gained from community consultation, one-on-one dialogue with clients, and external research, constantly reevaluates existing mainstream programs to ensure that they are accessible and equitable for all Manitobans.

#### **6. Equitable Assessment Processes**

The Manitoba Arts Council maintains an equitable assessment process. Components of an equitable process should include the following:

- Clear protocols for equitable application procedures
- Clear protocols for equitable juror nomination processes
- Clear protocols for equitable jury selection practices
- Guidelines for equitable representation on juries
- Guidelines for jury instruction
- Examination and integration of the various definitions of "artistic merit" and "artistic excellence" within the context of the range of communities represented in the province

#### **7. Internal Governance, Management, and Staffing Guidelines**

The Council develops and maintains guidelines around governance, management and staffing that reflect its commitment to equity. These guidelines could address:

- Equitable representation of various communities within council membership, staff membership, and membership on bodies such as the Arts Advisory Panel
- The forming of community advisory committees representing identified groups in the development and review of policy
- The roles and responsibilities of management and staff in special program and service implementation, evaluation, and reporting.





## **8. Education for Council Members and Staff**

The Council promotes a working environment, among both its board members and its staff members, that supports its efforts in the area of equity. Education programming for staff and Council members is a key component of this goal, and could include:

- An information handbook on special programs, service delivery models, and reasonable accommodation
- Annual equity training/workshops
- Periodic information sessions on current issues around equity and special programs/service delivery models (i.e. changing community dynamics, changing programming and service trends, changing terminology and language use, etc.)

## **9. Communications Strategy**

The Manitoba Arts Council maintains effective communication with identified communities. This could involve the use of non-traditional or innovative communication networks, methods, and strategies tailored to each identified community.

In addition, the Council communicates its commitment to equity both to its clients and to the general public through its annual reports, its promotional material, and its advocacy efforts.

