



Manitoba Arts Council Accessibility Plan

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The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

Manitoba introduced The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) in 2013 to improve accessibility by removing barriers. It builds on the principals of The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), which overrides any other provincial law, unless that law specifically says otherwise. The AMA follows The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, enacted in 2005. The Government of Canada is now also considering introducing accessibility legislation.

Message from our CEO

The Manitoba Arts Council (MAC) takes its duty to serve all Manitobans to heart. The *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* delivers a host of welcome changes to ensure that all Manitobans have the information, communications support, employment information, and reasonable accommodation necessary to ensuring full participation and service.

We are pleased to share with you MAC's Accessibility Policy Framework and this Accessibility Plan. The plan sets out our vision for accessibility, coming changes to our web presence, service offerings, and accommodations within our programs.

Throughout the process of developing our policy and plan, we have worked in close consultation with community. Thank you to all who have generously offered their time and expertise on our Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The team at MAC is committed to continuing to work with community to ensuring that we continue to build organizational awareness and proactive service offerings to arts community members who are deaf and/or disabled by barriers which affect participation. We are dedicated to making continued improvements in our service over time!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Akoulina', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Akoulina Connell, CEO
Manitoba Arts Council

Part 1 – Baseline Report

An Overview of Our Programs and Services

The Manitoba Arts Council is an arm’s-length agency of the Province of Manitoba, established in 1965 “to promote the study, enjoyment, production and performance of works in the arts.” The Council makes awards to professional arts organizations and individuals in all art forms including theatre, literature, dance, music, painting, sculpture, architecture or the graphic arts, and includes other similar creative or interpretative activity, including arts education. The Council uses a peer assessment process in making awards. Historically, the main criterion used to assess applications is artistic excellence.

Our Accessibility Achievements

Before the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act*, MAC maintained a Reasonable Accommodation Protocol and regularly performed equity audits through community consultation, one-on-one dialogue with clients, and external research. The information gained through these audits allowed for constant reevaluation of its existing programs to ensure that they were accessible and equitable for all Manitobans.

In addition, MAC developed special programs within its programming 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; and discipline, art form, and genre preferences.

Those programs include the Community Connections and Access Program, the Artists in Community Residency Program, and the Travel/Professional Development Grant.

For its 50th anniversary, MAC renewed its strategic vision, which provided the foundation to review its existing program structure. After a great deal of hard work, the MAC team devised a simple, flexible, and adaptive framework to better respond to the needs of all Manitobans.

In 2016, the Manitoba Arts Council reasserted its commitment to encourage accessibility and inclusion in its programming and services.

The Manitoba Arts Council established an Accessibility working group as well as an Accessibility advisory committee composed of members from the community. The Accessibility working group reports to management on all issues regarding accessibility within Council's programs and services, and oversees the development of accessibility policy. The Accessibility Advisory committee guides the development of the accessibility plan and policies, and supports accessibility initiatives through the organization.

The Manitoba Arts Council conducted a consultation with community members and artists from identified groups in November 2016 in order to identify barriers, concerns, and needs, along with possible policy solutions.

In 2017, the Manitoba Arts Council developed the first of five accessibility standards, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (Appendix I).

Accessibility Barriers

To identify barriers to access, the Manitoba Arts Council held a consultation with artists with disabilities and organizations in January 2017. Some of the issues raised by attendees addressed attitudinal barriers faced within that larger community as well as barriers to accessing MAC's services.

The following are Attitudinal Barriers that have been identified through consultation:

- There is a lack of public awareness of artists with disabilities and disability art. This leads to :
 - Smaller audiences for work made by artists with disabilities;
 - Stigma that artists with disabilities only create disability art;
 - Artists with disabilities not being recognized as professional artists; and
 - Artists with disabilities not having as many mentorship and networking opportunities as artists without disabilities.
- In some cases, arts organizations avoid working with artists disabled by a barrier due to the perceived associated costs of accessible services.
- Juries could benefit from more critical diversity

The following are Informational and Communication barriers that have been identified through consultation:

- Signs for accessible services are not displayed.
- Marketing and communications materials are not always inclusive.
- Accessibility needs are not always addressed by an active offer (ASL interpretation, note-takers, etc.).
- Services and resources available to the applicant are not always clear.
- Events are not always planned to be accessible.

The following are Technological Barriers that have been identified through consultation:

- Not all Website graphics have alternative text descriptions
- Website is not built to accessibility standards

The following are Systemic Barriers that have been identified through consultation:

- Applications must be submitted in written format. This can be challenging for some applicants.
- Juries often take place in person over a long period of time which may discourage potential assessors from participating.

The following are Physical Barriers that have been identified through consultation:

- Main entrance doors are not automatic. There are two consecutive doors at both entrances
- Most doors have knobs or need to be pulled to open
- There are no accessible parking spaces near the building
- There is only one accessible washroom located on the main floor of the building
- Artists are limited in their options of only working in schools and venues that are accessible to their needs (for residency and community programs).

It is the Manitoba Arts Council's intention to address these barriers through the actions outlined in this *Accessibility Plan*.

Part 2 – Accessibility Plan

Our Statement of Commitment

The Manitoba Arts Council is committed to the principles of equal access and participation for all people, whatever their abilities.

With the advice and guidance of the community, we will work to address visible and invisible barriers and meet all requirements of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

In 2016, an advisory committee was formed to guide our work in developing a policy framework and an accessibility plan, as well as the first standard of the Act, The Customer Service Standard, ensuring that we are compliant by the November 2017 deadline.

Our advisory group is comprised of:

- Yvette Cenerini
- Susan Lamberd
- Debbie Patterson
- Duncan Thornton

Our working committee is comprised of:

- Tracey Longbottom
- Elyse Saurette
- Diana Sefa
- Charlene Brown

Our Accessibility Goals

MAC strives at all times to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following accessibility goals:

- Our programs and services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of Deaf persons and persons with disabilities;
- Deaf persons and persons with disabilities must be given the same opportunity provided to other members of the public to access our programs and services;
- Our organization will create and provide information and communications in ways that are accessible for Deaf people and people with disabilities;

Future Policies at MAC for Accessibility Standards will be posted on our website in compliance with the *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*. Legislation for the following standards have yet to be enacted and will be updated accordingly:

1. The **Employment** accessibility standard will address practices related to employee recruitment, hiring and retention.
2. The **Information and Communications** accessibility standard will address barriers to accessing information – information provided in print, in person, on websites or in other formats.
3. The **Built Environment** accessibility standard will deal with accessible public spaces (entrances, ramps, etc.)

For more information on these standards please refer to:
<http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/accessibility-standards.html>

Our Actions

Action 1 – Establish Accessibility Working Group - 2016/2017

Initiatives/Actions	Outcomes
Management has designated staff for the accessibility working group.	Each area or division that serves the public is represented on the working group.
Management has established an accessibility advisory committee comprised of artists with disabilities.	Group members participate in developing, implementing and updating the Accessibility Plan.
	Working group has detailed work plans, timelines, etc.

Action 2 – Offer and provide information and services in accessible ways and formats upon request 2017/2018

Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes
Accessibility working group to develop a process for receiving and responding to requests for accessible supports and services.	Staff are aware of alternate formats and how to make them available to the public.
Accessibility coordinator to communicate process to all staff by email.	Website will advertise the availability of alternate formats
Communications to promote the availability of alternate formats on request.	Resource page for people with disabilities on MAC website via web links.
Public events will be promoted in advance in a manner that is accessible to persons disabled by barriers.	Increase in requests for accommodation in all aspects of MAC programming and services
Public events will be held in an accessible meeting space.	Increased participation in all aspects of MAC programming and services

<p>Notice will be given that persons disabled by barriers may request that relevant supports be provided.</p>	<p>Increase in peer assessors from the Deaf/and Disabled community.</p>
<p>Website redesigned to accessibility standards.</p>	<p>MAC will take on a leadership role in their approach to accessibility and related resources within the Manitoba arts community.</p>
<p>Accessibility to MAC premises will be implemented- automatic doors, and a designated handicap parking space.</p>	
<p>Shared best practices for stakeholders</p>	

Action 3 – Staff Awareness and Training 2018

Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes .
All MAC staff will be offered training/awareness presentations.	All MAC staff understands accessibility and supports implementation of the plan.
New staff will receive accessibility training within the first year of their employment.	Information on progress on implementing Manitoba Arts Council's Accessibility Plan is available to staff.

Action 4 – Monitor Progress 2018/2019

Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes
Accessibility coordinator, with assistance of working group, to track progress on challenges, and requests to accommodations with budgetary implications.	Accessibility Plan is posted on website and available in alternate formats.
Accessibility coordinator to report annually to management.	Management is aware of progress on AMA compliance and considers future plans.
Future plans and budgets to be integrated into operational plans.	Annual report includes a section highlighting progress on accessibility.
Communications to include progress report and update on AMA in MAC's annual report.	
Accessibility plan to be reviewed and revised on an annual basis.	

Feedback

The Manitoba Arts Council welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service.

Tracey Longbottom, Accessibility Coordinator

525-93 Lombard Avenue

Winnipeg, MB R3B 3B1

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This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

Appendix I

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 communicate 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
- 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

525-93 Lombard Avenue

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