



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2022-2024

**If you have accessibility requirements for this document,
please contact us at 1-866-994-2787.**

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The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

In December 2013, the Manitoba Government passed the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) into law. The AMA lays out the foundation for removing barriers for people with disabilities and developing standards for making Manitoba accessible for everyone.

The AMA applies to organizations that provide services or information, employs persons, or owns a building or premises. The AMA provides the legislative authority and framework for several accessibility standards that will be passed in stages as regulations under the AMA.

The first two of these standards is the Customer Service Standard, which applies to MAC and similar bodies as of November 1, 2017, and the Employment Standard, which applies to MAC and similar bodies as of May 1, 2020. The Information and Communications Standard will apply to MAC as of May 1, 2024. Further standards are anticipated for the Built Environment and Transportation.

As part of the Act, public-sector entities such as MAC are required to update an accessibility plan every two years to reflect any new or proposed standards introduced by the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The plan should also include a review of progress made, future priorities for accessibility, and updates to policies and procedures.

You can read the Accessibility for Manitobans Act here: <https://accessibilitymb.ca/>.

Message from our Executive Director

The Manitoba Arts Council (MAC) embraces the Accessibility for Manitobans Act as an important framework towards achieving equity for all Manitobans.

As an organization that values equity in our funding, programs, and policies, adhering to the requirements of the AMA is an opportunity for MAC to make improvements to support our goal of “arts and culture for all Manitobans.”

The team at MAC is committed to continuing to build organizational awareness, develop proactive service offering, and provide employment opportunities to community members who face barriers which affect participation.

Towards this, we are pleased to share our 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan and Policy framework.

Sincerely,



Randy Joynt, Executive Director
Manitoba Arts Council

Part 1: Background

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.

Accessibility Barriers

To identify barriers to access, the Manitoba Arts Council held consultations with artists with disabilities in 2017 and in 2022.

The following are outstanding barriers that our consultants identified at MAC:

Information and Communication Barriers

- Signs for accessible services are not displayed.
- Program guidelines and information are sometimes not written in plain language.
- Marketing and communications materials are not always representative of the Deaf and disability community.
- Accessibility needs are not always addressed by an active offer (ASL interpretation, note-takers, etc.).
- Services and resources available to an applicant are not always clear.

Technological Barriers

- Not all website graphics have alternative text descriptions.
- Not all social media posts have an image description.
- Website is not built to accessibility standards.

Systemic Barriers

- Applications must be submitted in written format.

Physical Barriers

- Many doors have knobs or need to be pulled to open.
- There are no dedicated accessible parking spaces at the MAC office.

Attitudinal Barriers

Below are outstanding attitudinal barriers faced within the larger arts & cultural community in Manitoba, as well as barriers to accessing MAC's services.

- A lack of public awareness of artists with disabilities and disability art, which leads to
 - Artists with disabilities not being recognized as professional artists.
 - The perception that artists with disabilities only create disability art.
 - Smaller audiences for work made by artists with disabilities.
 - Artists with disabilities not having as many mentorship and networking opportunities as artists without disabilities.
- In some cases, arts organizations avoid working with artists with disabilities because of the perceived associated costs of accommodations that will need to be made.
- 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.

Our Accessibility Progress

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

In 2016, 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 advised MAC towards its first Accessibility Plan.

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

In 2020, the Employment Standard Policy was adopted (Appendix 2).

Progress since 2017

- Accessible access information for the MAC office is available on the MAC website.
- Making sure all events are as accessible as possible.
- An accessible washroom in the MAC office.
- An automatic door opener in the MAC office.
- Assessment panels happen on Zoom and include adequate breaks, which can make it more feasible for artists with disabilities to participate.
- MAC reports annually on the number of peer assessors who self-identify as Deaf or hard of hearing, or as having a disability.
- MAC reports annually on the number of individual grant recipients who self-identify as Deaf or hard of hearing, or as having a disability.
- MAC has updated its voluntary identification categories so that individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing or have a disability can self-identify in a manner which they choose.
- MAC staff has completed Customer Service training provided by the Manitoba Accessibility Office.

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.

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.

Our Accessibility Goals

MAC strives 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 and hard of hearing persons and persons with disabilities.
- Deaf and hard of hearing 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 and hard of hearing people and people with disabilities.

Our Actions

2022-2023

Initiatives and actions	Outcomes
Renew the composition of MAC's Accessibility Committee	New perspectives on MAC's accessibility challenges/progress
Some public information sessions provided with ASL	Provide Deaf and hard of hearing Manitobans with information about MAC programs in an accessible manner while building MAC's capacity to provide information services with ASL
Explore partnerships with organizations which serve artists with disabilities	Expand our communications reach to include more Deaf artists and artists with disabilities
Build relationships with accessibility service providers	Accessibility requests can be met in a timelier fashion
Staff undergoes accessibility training and professional development in a number of areas	MAC communications materials are more accessible, and staff are more competent at meeting accessibility requests
Explore ways to encourage MAC clients to consider accessibility in project and operating grants	MAC clients also consider accessibility in projects and operations

2023-2024

Initiatives and actions	Outcomes
Website updated to meet accessibility standards	Better access to MAC's programs and information for more users
Alternate formats for receiving grant applications explored	Breaking down systemic barriers to accessing MAC funding
Review MAC materials for plain language	Written MAC materials and websites are more accessible and understandable.

Explore ways to improve the accessibility of MAC's online application system	The grant application process is more accessible to more clients
Review the process of MAC's Accessibility Fund	More clients and organizations know of and can access additional funding for accessibility initiatives

Feedback

The Manitoba Arts Council welcomes all feedback on our accessibility work. To share your thoughts, please contact our Accessibility Coordinator:

Martine Friesen

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Winnipeg, MB R3B 3B1

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Appendix I: MAC's Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Policy

Policy purpose

This policy has been made by the Manitoba Arts Council to make sure that our programs and services comply with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and "Customer Service Standard Regulation."

1. Our purpose

The Manitoba Arts Council funds the creation and sharing of arts and culture for the benefit of all Manitobans.

2. Our commitment

In fulfilling our purpose, the Manitoba Arts Council strives 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 clients, including people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or living with disabilities.

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

People with disabilities are encouraged to contact us to identify and discuss whether our programs and services could be provided in ways that would better consider 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 ensuring people of all abilities have 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 include 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 include large print, recorded audio, or Braille instead of standard printed material.

Barrier

As related to this policy, barriers are 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 exchanging of information or news.

Communication supports

Supports that individuals with disabilities may need to access information. Examples include captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Customer / Client

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 aid a person with a disability.

Support person

A person accompanying a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with accessing 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 facing barriers in the ways that consider 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 better meet the needs of people with disabilities and help eliminate barriers.

5. Assistive devices

We are committed to serving people 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 may use service animals to access our programs and services. We welcome people who are accompanied by a service animal to all parts of our premises.

7. Use of support persons

We recognize that some people rely on support persons for assistance while accessing our programs and services. A person with a disability and their support person will be welcomed to our 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:

- Automatic door
- Accessible washroom
- Elevator

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 better meet the needs of people with disabilities, including those who use assistive devices, service animals or support persons, and help eliminate or mitigate barriers
- How to use any equipment or devices available on our premises, or otherwise, that may assist with the provision of programs or services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the 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 events in accessible meeting places.
- Inviting requests for accessibility accommodations.

11. Feedback process

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

Client feedback will be directed to the Manitoba Arts Council's Accessibility Coordinator. Where possible, complaints will be addressed immediately. However, some complaints may require more time to address and must be reviewed for action.

MAC will work to make sure that responses to feedback are communicated to the client in an accessible way that meets their needs.

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. No changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

13. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to people with disabilities. If you have a question about the policy, or if the purpose of this policy is not understood, please contact our Accessibility Coordinator:

Martine Friesen

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Winnipeg, MB R3B 3B1

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Appendix II: MAC's Accessibility Standard for Employment

Introduction

The Manitoba Arts Council is committed to adhering to the Accessibility Standard for Employment under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Our policies, practices, and measures reflect principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

We aim to remove barriers in our workplace. If a barrier cannot be removed, we seek to provide reasonable accommodations to affected employees.

The following policy statements and organizational practices are intended to meet the requirements of Manitoba's Accessibility Standard for Employment.

This policy applies to Manitoba Arts Council management and employees.

Pre-employment Accessibility Requirements

1. Remove barriers to recruitment and selection

During recruitment, we inform potential applicants that reasonable accommodations are available during the selection process, and we respond to requests for accommodations.

We include a statement on all job postings that reasonable accommodations are available to applicants with disabilities, and we seek advice from applicants on how best to accommodate their needs.

2. Inform of workplace accommodations when offering employment

When hiring, we inform selected applicants of our policies and practices for accommodating employees with disabilities.

We include information about workplace accommodations in our letter of offer to new employees.

We include information about workplace accommodations in our new employee orientation materials.

Employment Accessibility Requirements

3. Inform employees about accommodation policies and practices

We keep employees informed about our accommodation policies and practices for employees with disabilities.

4. Communicate in a way that meets the needs of employees

We aim to meet the communication needs of our employees by providing workplace information and communications in ways that are easy to access for everyone.

If requested by an employee with a temporary or permanent disability, we consult with the employee to identify the accessible formats, or communication supports needed when providing information to the employee.

5. Provide individualized accommodation plans

We provide reasonable accommodations by developing and documenting individualized accommodation plans for employees with disabilities who request them.

The individualized accommodation plan may include:

- accessible formats and communication support
- workplace emergency response information
- details of how and when any other accommodations will be provided
- when the plan will be reviewed

Our employees will participate and cooperate in the accommodation process by:

- providing related information and taking part in assessments, if requested by the employer
- complying with the individualized accommodation plan
- offering ongoing feedback related to modifications, including whether the accommodation is no longer required

6. Manage performance

We ensure our performance management process considers the following:

- That an employee may be temporarily or permanently disabled by one or more barriers in the workplace.
- The details of an employee's individualized accommodation plan.

- That the accommodations provided for an employee may not fully address a workplace barrier.

7. Put return-to-work processes in place

Our return-to-work practice ensures reasonable accommodations for employees who are absent due to a disability or health condition. We will make efforts to modify an employee's duties and work schedule based on their functional abilities. Our aim is to increase duties safely to help an employee reach their full potential.

We keep in touch with an absent employee throughout their recovery to help them maintain a connection with the workplace and to show that they are valued.

We ensure supervisors and co-workers support employees who have been absent due to a disability and participate in the return-to-work process.

8. Provide workplace emergency response information

We notify all employees of steps to be taken during emergencies, to ensure the safety of employees who are temporarily or permanently disabled. We ensure workplace emergency response information is specific to each employee's needs and the physical nature of the employee's workspace.

Once we learn an employee requires assistance during a workplace emergency, we offer the employee individual workplace emergency response information as soon as possible.

If an employee who receives workplace emergency response information requires the assistance of another person during an emergency, we obtain consent from the employee who will assist, and we inform that person how to assist.

9. Maintain privacy

We protect the privacy and confidentiality of an employee's personal information and personal health information. We will only collect, use, and disclose information as required for the purposes of the Accessibility Standard for Employment, unless otherwise agreed to by the employee.

We also follow the requirements of other privacy legislation, including the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Manitoba) and the Personal Health Information Act (Manitoba).

11. Provide training

We provide training on how to accommodate employees with a disability to staff who have the following responsibilities as part of their job description:

- recruiting, selecting, or training employees
- supervising, managing, or coordinating the work of employees
- promoting, redeploying, or terminating employees
- developing and implementing employment policies and practices

Questions about this policy

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