

Guide for
Public Sector Organizations

How to Create Your Accessibility Plan

*The Accessibility for
Manitobans Act*

Public sector to lead the way in making Manitoba more accessible

This guide was created to help Manitoba public sector agencies develop an Accessibility Plan, in compliance with *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.

This information is not provided as legal advice. For specific information about the act please refer to the legislation available at: www.AccessibilityMB.ca

The Disabilities Issues Office thanks the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (Queen's Printer for Ontario 2012) for allowing the adaptation of their resource materials for this publication.

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Introduction

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)

This legislation was passed on December 5, 2013 to provide a clear, proactive process to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility.¹

Accessibility creates opportunities for all Manitobans

Removing barriers to accessibility will give Manitobans of all abilities the opportunity to:

- participate fully in everyday life
- access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment

Accessibility Standards – Building Blocks for Change

The legislation requires accessibility standards to be developed over the next several years. The standards will address barriers and set out requirements in five key areas of daily living.

1. customer service standard
2. information and communication
3. transportation
4. employment
5. built environment

Each standard will be adopted as a regulation and will apply to common public areas where Manitobans live, work, learn and play.

¹ For more information on the act, see www.AccessibilityMB.ca

Introduction *Continued*

Public Sector Requirements

All government agencies (public sector) must develop an Accessibility Plan to address accessibility barriers in policies, practices and procedures. The goal is to ensure Manitobans of all abilities have full access to programs and services designed to meet the public's needs.

The Financial Administration Act defines a government agency as:

"any board, commission, association, agency or similar body, whether incorporated or unincorporated, all the members of which, or all the members of the board of management, board of directors or governing board of which, are appointed by an Act of the Legislature or by the Lieutenant Governor in Council".

Deadlines for Accessibility Plans – Plans to be Updated Every Two Years

- **2016:** Manitoba government and all its departments, universities and colleges, school divisions, Crown corporations,² regional health authorities and municipalities with populations over 10,000
- **2017:** all other public sector bodies, including smaller municipalities, any board, commission, association, agency or similar body whose management, directors or governing members are appointed by an act of the Legislature or by the Lieutenant Governor in Council

NOTE: The act allows two or more smaller municipalities to share an Accessibility Plan.

²Crown corporations affected include Manitoba Hydro, Workers Compensation Board, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation, and Manitoba Public Insurance

Introduction *Continued*

Consultation required as plans are developed

AMA legislation states that as plans are developed, public sector organizations must consult with those most affected – persons with disabilities, or representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities. Consultation can begin as early as you wish, but must take place before your plan is finalized.

Suggested consultation activities:

- Create a working group sub-committee focused on consultation.
- Gather information from staff and service users, in person or online.
 - Ask for suggestions to improve accessibility of the organization.
 - Request input on identifying accessibility priorities and possible examples, such as access to the building or a registration process.
- Provide an outline of your Accessibility Plan – electronically or a printed version, with questions to invite feedback.
 - Do they agree with proposed ideas?
 - Are policies or actions missing?
- Organize a consultation event – present your draft Accessibility Plan and invite feedback
 - Invite service users as well as organizations representing persons disabled by barriers.
 - See **Appendix D** – Disabilities Accommodations Checklist.
- Offer a contract to an organization representing persons disabled by barriers to review accessibility of infrastructure and programs.

Summary – How to Create an Accessibility Plan

Your Accessibility Plan should be forward-thinking. The plan should outline how to ensure barriers to participation are recognized and removed in the short term, and into the future. Policies that affect regular operations and practices are more significant than any one-time action.

Getting Started

- Develop a team approach.
- Learn about accessibility.
- Create an overview of your organization.
- Celebrate your achievements.
- Identify existing barriers.
- Document findings to create a baseline report.

Six Steps to Create an Accessibility Plan

1. Develop a statement of commitment.
2. Set priorities.
3. Develop accessibility policies.
4. Identify actions.
5. Make your Accessibility Plan public.
6. Review and update your Accessibility Plan.

Getting Started

Develop a Team Approach

Teamwork invites participation from the various areas affected by your plan – from frontline workers to website developers, human resources staff and managers. When people are involved in the process, they care about the outcome. Create a team with suitable qualities:

- Members of the accessibility team should have a good working knowledge of your organization's business, policies, programs and services.
- Wherever possible, include people who have related life experience, including people disabled by barriers.

Appoint an Accessibility Coordinator

You may wish to appoint an accessibility coordinator as the team leader who liaises with senior management and provides consultation services to staff. Some organizations, including the Manitoba government, have already appointed employees to coordinate accessibility initiatives.

Establish an Accessibility Working Group

The accessibility coordinator could lead an accessibility working group. The coordinator and the working group help integrate accessibility initiatives throughout the organization. They develop the Accessibility Plan, participate in implementing change and update the plan as required. The working group coordinates training activities and provides information about accessibility to staff.

For more information and examples of coordinator and working group duties, see **Appendix E**.

Seek an Accessibility Champion

Invite individuals from senior management or your board to promote accessibility, add profile and engage higher levels of the organization. You may wish to involve these individuals in important presentations, meetings or at public events. As with all members of your team, personal experience with a disability is a strong catalyst for involvement and commitment to making change happen.

Learn about Accessibility – Focus on Barriers, Not Disabilities

A barrier to accessibility is anything that limits or prevents a person from being able to receive information, services and goods, and access space or activities. Barriers may prevent access to housing, transportation, community participation, employment or education. Attitudes can be the biggest barrier.

Who are people disabled by barriers?

Barriers to accessibility are a daily reality for more than 180,000 Manitobans with disabilities. A person can have a disability that is visible, non-visible, permanent or one that occurs only at certain times. You can't always tell when someone has a disability.

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their participation on an equal basis with others. A disability, aging, an injury and other life events may temporarily or permanently affect:

- mobility
- dexterity (use of hands)
- vision
- hearing
- communication
- understanding
- mental health

Getting Started *Continued*

Many people think disabilities are the barriers, but that is not the case.

Barriers exist because the range of accessibility needs is not considered. Once you understand what accessibility barriers are, you will be able to identify them more easily in your organization. There are many different types of barriers, both visible and invisible. Examples:

Attitudinal barriers – When people think and act based on false assumptions (Example: receptionist talks to an individual's support person because she or he assumes the individual with a disability will not understand).

Informational and communication barriers – When information is offered in a form that suits some, but not all, of the population (Example: print that is too small for some people to read, public address systems that alert only people who can hear the message and when a service provider does not know how to interact with a person whose speech is unclear or who communicates using a picture, symbol or other device).

Technological barriers – Focusing information and service delivery on technology that is not accessible (Example: websites not accessible to people who are blind and use screen reader software).

Systemic barriers – Policies, practices or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded (Example: eligibility criteria that effectively exclude people based on a disability, such as requiring a job applicant to have a driver's license even though there are ways to reorganize a job to use another form of transportation).

Physical and architectural barriers – When the environment presents challenges that make it difficult for some to easily access a place (Example: a door knob that cannot be turned by a person with limited mobility or strength, or a hallway or door that is too narrow to allow a person who uses a wheelchair to pass through safely).

Getting Started *Continued*

Understand the Law

- Read *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)* at www.AccessibilityMB.ca/standards
- For further information on implementing accessibility, visit www.AccessibilityMB.ca

Explore Resources

Review resources and complete exercises contained in this guide.

- Glossary of Terms – **Appendix A**
- Barriers and Solutions – **Appendix B**
- Invite a local organization to offer disability awareness training
– see Disability Resources and Organizations in Manitoba – **Appendix C**

Other information sources

Similar legislation was introduced in Ontario in 2005 and is supported by a variety of online resources, some targeting specific sectors. To benefit from Ontario's resources, visit www.Ontario.ca/accessON

Read about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at: www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml

Create an Overview of Your Organization

This is the first step in creating your accessibility baseline report – the foundation for your Accessibility Plan. Begin by providing an overview of your organization, including areas or divisions, a list of programs and services provided and a brief profile of your client base. You might want to refer to your annual report.

Exercise:

1. List programs and services your organization provides. Highlight ones that are most significant to the public.
2. Create a profile of your clients/program users. Note age range, (dis)abilities and diversity of needs among them.

Celebrate Your Achievements

Most government agencies have already taken steps to ensure Manitobans with diverse abilities are able to participate, such as creating a welcoming environment, accessible communication, hiring practices and staff training. Consider the motivating factors for introducing these changes. Was there a champion among staff? An employee with a disability who motivated change? You may wish to build on your positive experiences.

Exercise:

1. What experience does your organization have in reaching out and including persons with disabilities?
2. What, if any policies, promote accessibility of your organization, by the public and by staff affected by accessibility barriers?
3. List the steps taken to make the entire organization operate in a way that is accessible to persons with disabilities.

Examples of accessibility achievements:

- introduced a policy promoting accessible hiring processes
- cleared clutter from hallways and corridors
- created a large print participant registration
- included organizations representing persons with disabilities in public consultation

Getting Started *Continued*

Identify Existing Barriers

If people who face accessibility barriers want to access your programs or services, can they? What about staff and board members? Consider barriers related to an individual's mobility, dexterity, vision, hearing, communication, understanding or mental health.

For more information on barriers and solutions, see **Appendix B**.

Exercise:

1. List barriers people in Manitoba may face in accessing your programs, facilities and services. Highlight the ones that are most significant to the public.
2. What organizational policies may inadvertently create barriers by not considering their affect on persons with disabilities? Consider policies affecting the board of directors, staff, and program participants.
3. What, if any, temporary barriers have been unconsciously created by renovations, computer software upgrades, pathways that are blocked, or chemicals used that affect persons with sensitivities?

TIP: We tend to be more aware of disabilities with visible cues, such as a wheelchair, white cane or a service animal. It is important to remember that people come in different shapes, sizes and ages and may have conditions that are invisible, such as mental illness, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, chemical sensitivities and disabilities caused by illnesses such as diabetes. People may also experience gradual changes in their ability (Example: multiple sclerosis or fibromyalgia).

Consultation

Talk to employees, volunteers, clients, students and others outside your organization to identify any barriers they have experienced. To contact Manitoba organizations representing persons with disabilities, see **Appendix C**.

When asking for staff feedback, an anonymous questionnaire may help individuals be more open about the barriers they have encountered, even if they have not disclosed a disability.

Document Findings to Create a Baseline Report

Document the information you have gathered in the previous exercises. These details will be used to create your organization's baseline report – the first part of your Accessibility Plan.

Your baseline report should include:

1. a review of how accessibility affects each area of your organization
2. steps already taken to improve accessibility, including policies and procedures that have been introduced
3. barriers users may face in accessing your programs, facilities and services

Review a sample baseline report. See **Appendix F – Part 1**.

Use the baseline report template provided. See **Appendix G – Part 1**.

In the next section you will consider how these barriers can be removed and prevented.

Six Steps to Create an Accessibility Plan

An Accessibility Plan has three components which work together to make accessibility a permanent part of workplace culture and business practices of an organization.

1. **Statement of Commitment** – establishes an organization’s vision and goals for accessibility.
2. **Policies** – set out the rules the organization will follow to become more accessible.
3. **Actions** – are steps to be taken to remove the accessibility barriers identified and meet AMA requirements.

Step 1: Develop a Statement of Commitment

Summarize your organization’s commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. Consider your organization’s vision and overall goals. What is the accessibility message you want to convey to your employees and the public?

Promote Your Commitment

- Post it on your intranet site or ask an executive member of the team to send an email message to all employees.
- Make it available to the public, on your website or displayed on a public-facing wall.
- Make it available in an accessible format on request.

Example:

[Name of Organization] is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers by identifying, removing and preventing these barriers and by meeting requirements of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.

Six Steps to Create an Accessibility Plan *Continued*

Step 2: Set Priorities

Your baseline report might identify a number of barriers to accessibility. The Manitoba government is sensitive to budget limitations. Not all barriers must be addressed immediately. Start by ensuring that critical services are barrier free.

Consider these factors:

- staff and financial resources
- strategic plan
- your organization's most important public functions
- barriers that affect the greatest number of clients, students, other members of the public

Example:

If programs and services are delivered by frontline staff, interacting directly with the public, staff should be trained to be resourceful and knowledgeable about barriers and barrier removal.

Ensure priorities include compliance with AMA standards.

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service became a regulation in November, 2015.

Other standards will be introduced over time, beginning with the Accessibility Standard in Employment. To learn about requirements, visit www.AccessibilityMB.ca.

Six Steps to Create an Accessibility Plan *Continued*

Step 3: Develop Accessibility Policies

Policies are rules that outline how an organization operates and how it interacts with employees, clients and the public. Some of your policies might already address accessibility barriers, such as holding meetings in locations accessible to persons with physical disabilities. Other policies may unintentionally create barriers to participation. For example, your organization might require completion of a printed form that would be difficult or impossible for someone with a vision impairment.

When developing accessibility policies:

- Identify gaps in current policies.
- Ensure all new initiatives, programs and services are reviewed for accessibility compliance.
- Present them in a clear, logical sequence, using language that is easy to understand.
- Ensure they are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Example:

[*Name of organization*] will provide information, in an accessible format on request, or with communication supports that consider a person's specific needs.

Six Steps to Create an Accessibility Plan *Continued*

Step 4: Identify Actions

Determine the actions required to remove existing accessibility barriers you have identified and to prevent future barriers. The actions should reflect the priorities you noted in Step 2. You can be strategic about which actions to tackle immediately, in the next two years and so on. Build actions into your budget. Your list of actions might be related to customer service, information and communications, employment and training.

Use a checklist to review each action:

- Is the action practical?
- If it is a multi-step action, does the sequence you have outlined make sense?
- Is the timeline realistic? Is there enough time to complete each step?
- Are resources available now, or is further planning or a proposal to management required?
- Will the completed action result in the barrier being removed or prevented?
- Will the proposed approach to meeting a requirement or removing a barrier create a new barrier to accessibility?

Create a work plan to show how actions will be coordinated and implemented:

- Allocate resources: Estimate the human, financial and technical resources required.
- Assign responsibility: Decide who will lead your efforts to meet each commitment.
- Decide on a timeline: Develop a work schedule that aligns with the AMA compliance deadlines.

See the Sample Work Plan in **Appendix H**.

Consult with persons disabled by barriers:

AMA legislation requires public sector organizations to consult with persons affected by barriers, or representatives of organizations of persons disabled by barriers. See **Appendix C**.

Before finalizing your Accessibility Plan, invite people affected by your organization to review and offer feedback on your priorities, policies and actions.

See **Introduction – Public Sector Requirements**.

Six Steps to Create an Accessibility Plan *Continued*

Step 5: Make Your Accessibility Plan Public

The AMA requires all public sector agencies to make their Accessibility Plan available to the public. It is also a good idea to make your Accessibility Plan part of regular organizational reports and business plans. This ensures staff at all levels are aware of commitments. It also identifies actions requiring additional resources.

Post the Accessibility Plan on your organization's website. It's up to you to decide on the level of detail, but it should include the statement of commitment, policies and actions to be taken. Specific information in the work plan may remain internal. Examples: responsibilities and resource allocation

Suggestions:

- Use plain language.
- Write short sentences.
- Avoid industry jargon or acronyms.
- Use the active voice.

Public Accessibility Plan

- Provide statement of commitment, policies and list actions.
- Make it available on organization website, and/or post it in a public area – on a wall or bulletin board.
- Offer accessible formats on request – see **Appendix D**.
- Invite comments and questions and create a process to respond.

Information for internal review and planning

- Include steps associated with specific actions.
- Identify project lead and participants.
- Provide budget lines in operating plans.

Six Steps to Create an Accessibility Plan *Continued*

Step 6: Review and Update Your Accessibility Plan

Review and update your Accessibility Plan regularly. Consider integrating the plan into quarterly or annual reporting periods, and/or board meetings. Build accessibility reviews into existing corporate and strategic business cycles.

As standards are developed and introduced in the next several years, ensure your organization complies with new regulations. Check www.AccessibilityMB.ca for compliance requirements that apply to your organization and update your Accessibility Plan accordingly.

The AMA requires that your Accessibility Plan be updated every two years

- Make the updated plan available to the public
- Updated plan to include
 - overview of achievements and progress on priorities previously outlined
 - measures taken to comply with AMA

Appendices

Appendices

- Appendix A** Glossary of Terms
- Appendix B** Barriers and Solutions
- Appendix C** Disability Resources and Organizations
- Appendix D** Disability Accommodations' Checklists
- Appendix E** Accessibility Coordinator and Working Group Duties
- Appendix F** Accessibility Plan Sample
- Appendix G** Accessibility Plan Template
- Appendix H** Sample Work Plan

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Accessibility – Related to this legislation, 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.

Accessibility coordinator – An accessibility point person who liaises with senior management and provides consultation services to staff in their organization.

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.

Accommodations – Arrangements made to allow persons with disabilities to participate or benefit equally. There is no set formula for accommodating people with disabilities; the person involved must be consulted. Examples: healthy snacks at events accommodate individuals with dietary needs; flexible hours accommodate employees whose schedules are affected by homecare duties or medication.

Active Offer – Offering the public the opportunity to request an accommodation. Examples: inviting requests for disability accommodations in event advertisements; including the active offer on print materials: “this information is available in alternate formats on request” or advertising disability accommodations, for instance with a wheelchair access icon.

Alt Tags – Also referred to as alt attributes, alt tags provide a verbal description of a visual or graph for individuals with visual impairments who use screen readers.

Alternate Formats – Alternate ways of providing information beyond traditional printed material. Examples: large print, electronic text, CD ROMs, DVDs and Braille.

American Sign Language (ASL) – Interpreters use hand gestures and physical expression to translate spoken words into “sign language” for persons who are Deaf. American Sign language is common to English-speaking North Americans. In Quebec another form of sign language is used (LSQ).

Barriers – Related to this legislation – 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.

Braille Transcription – An alternative format that uses a combination of tangible dots to represent characters and letters. Persons who are blind use their fingertips to read Braille.

Built Environment – More than buildings, the built environment includes everything humans have changed in the natural environment, such as sidewalks, curbs, roadways and parks.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms *Continued*

Captioning – Text at the bottom of the screen (television/video) allowing persons who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing to follow the spoken dialogue. It is also widely used in bars and sports facilities. Closed captioning is similar but the text must be decoded to appear on the screen.

Communications Access – Various tools and methods used by people who work in businesses and organizations so that individuals who have speech and language disabilities can understand what is being said, have their messages understood, and use their preferred ways of communicating in face-to-face interactions, over the telephone, at meetings and events.

Communication Access Real Time Translation (CART) – A professional CART writer transcribes the spoken word into written English or French text. The text is then displayed on a laptop or projected onto a large screen. This allows meeting or conference participants who are hard-of-hearing to follow a discussion or presentation.

Communication Intermediary – A Communication Intermediary is a Speech-Language Pathologist with additional training to assist people with speech and language disabilities to communicate in police, legal and justice situations.

Communication Methods – Picture, letter and speech output devices that people with speech and language disabilities may use to communicate their messages.

Computerized Note-Taker (Print Interpreter) – A note-taker provides a summary of spoken words, maintaining the spirit and intent of the speaker to allow participants who are hard-of-hearing to follow a presentation (not verbatim). Note-takers type into a notebook or laptop computer connected to an overhead screen or video monitor.

Descriptive Video Service (DVS) – Narration is added to visual media to describe actions, characters, locations, costumes and sets, without interfering with dialog or sound effects. DVS allows people who are blind or visually impaired to enjoy television programs, feature films, online videos.

Disability – A disability is a condition that limits a person's daily activities. Persons with disabilities may have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their participation on an equal basis with others. A disability, aging, an injury and other life events may temporarily or permanently affect mobility, dexterity (use of hands), vision, hearing, communication, understanding or mental health.

Duty to Reasonably Accommodate – The requirement established by *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba) to remove barriers up to the point of undue hardship.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms *Continued*

Infrared Systems (IR Systems) – Assistive listening technology used in large settings such as conference rooms, theatres or classrooms. IR Systems transmit sound using infrared light waves to send signals to the listener's receiver. Sound can be adjusted to a desired volume.

Interveners – People specially trained to communicate auditory and visual information to persons who are deaf-blind. Various methods are used depending on individual needs. These include visual sign language, tactile sign language, tactile finger spelling, Braille and large print notes.

Large Print – Printed information provided in a large font size (14 points or larger) for people who have low vision. For easier reading, select "sans serif" fonts.

Oral Interpreters – An oral interpreter is a person that silently mouth interprets speech. This is done when a person who is hard-of-hearing or Deaf is able to lip read but does not use sign language.

Persons Disabled by Barriers – Individuals with a physical or mental impairment prevented from full participation by a factor in the environment.

Personal Care Attendants – Attendants who assist persons with disabilities with the care of their physical needs. Tasks may include assistance with dressing, management of bodily functions and eating.

Persons with disabilities – Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, communication or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation on an equal basis with others.

Reasonable Accommodations – A wide range of modifications or adjustments to meet the needs of persons in a respectful manner. Usually simple and inexpensive, reasonable accommodations consider the needs of persons or groups who have characteristics protected under *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba), such as a disability.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms *Continued*

Relay Services

Internet Protocol Relay (IP Relay) – Online chat applications used by persons who are Deaf or have hearing and speech disabilities. IP Relay users connect to specially trained operators who place phone calls over the internet on their behalf and facilitate conversations. Calls are entirely confidential and operators follow a strict code of ethics; no record is retained.

Video Relay Service (VRS) – Similar to IP Relay, VRS is the newest technology to facilitate communication for persons who are Deaf and use sign language. VRS uses internet-based video conferencing to communicate via relay operators using sign language.

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

Sign Language Interpreter – A person who translates from one language (English) to another language (American Sign Language) using gestures and physical expressions (sign language). Interpreter services are critical to ensure accurate communication between individuals who are Deaf and hearing persons who do not use sign language.

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.

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.

Universal Design – Refers to making things safer, easier, and more convenient for everyone. It involves a broad range of design concepts – including design of products, spaces and environments – to provide access in a way that respects all (dis)abilities.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions

Some people see disabilities as barriers. But that is not the case. Barriers exist because accessibility needs are not considered.

Example: Sarah has low vision and has a hard time reading some restaurant menus. Her low vision is not the barrier. It is the small print on the menus. When a restaurant gives Sarah a large print menu, she can read it and place her order independently and barrier-free.

The tables below show different types of barriers and possible solutions to remove them.

Attitudinal barriers may result in people with disabilities being treated differently than people without disabilities.

Attitudinal Barriers	Possible Solutions
Thinking that people with intellectual disabilities are not able to make decisions.	Do not assume what employees or customers with disabilities can or cannot do. Ask them.
Assuming that a person who has a speech impairment cannot understand you.	Train staff to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities.
Believing a person who has a mental health disability or someone who uses a wheelchair would not be a good employee.	Learn about ways you can accommodate employees with disabilities.
Assuming that a person with vision loss cannot enjoy movies, TV or concerts.	Learn about the different ways and available technologies that help people with vision loss enjoy movies, TV and concerts.
Avoiding a person with a disability for fear of saying the wrong word or offending them.	Train staff to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities.
Thinking that every person with a disability will need costly accommodation.	Learn about the types of accommodations for people with disabilities. Many are low cost.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions *Continued*

Informational and communication barriers arise when a person with a disability cannot easily convey what they want to communicate to another person or receive and understand information that is available to others.

Information and Communication Barriers	Possible Solutions
Print that is too small to be read by a person with impaired vision.	Make everyday documents, such as signs and menus, easy to read by making sure that the print is legible for most people.
A PowerPoint, video or slide deck used in a presentation is not accessible to those with low vision or who have a hearing loss.	Develop a template for slide decks and PowerPoint presentations using large fonts, high contrast colours and a clean layout. Provide a visual description and/or captioning.
Brochures, guides and advertisements are not clear or easily understood.	Use plain language in written materials. Use symbols and pictures to help get your message across. Use sans serif fonts and avoid italics.
Signs are complicated, busy or confusing.	Keep signs clean and clear. Make information available in another form, such as a chart or pictogram.
Seating arrangements make it difficult for people who have hearing loss to fully participate in meetings.	Arrange seating at a round table to facilitate lip reading. Use assistive listening or amplification devices as appropriate.
Marketing and communications materials are not inclusive. People with disabilities are not included in visuals, or considered as a potential target audience.	Ensure marketing and communications efforts reflect people with disabilities. Include people with disabilities of all generations in photos, testimonials and other communications. Ensure marketing materials, such as flyers, brochures, podcasts and YouTube videos, are accessible.
Service provider doesn't understand what a person with unclear speech is saying or how to communicate with someone.	Ask the person to show or tell you how they communicate, be patient, and move to a quiet area.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions *Continued*

Technological barriers occur when technology, or the way it is used, does not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Technological Barriers	Possible Solutions
Emails or other electronic communications are not accessible to people who use screen readers.	Make sure every email is accessible to people who use screen readers and offer alternative methods of communications.
Website graphics and charts do not have text descriptions.	Provide descriptions using alt tags for graphics and charts for people with vision loss.
There is only one way for your customers to reach you (Example: by telephone only).	Allow customers to contact you in a variety of ways, including telephone or email.
Accepting only online job applications.	Welcome job applications in a number of formats.
Asking clients to use online forms to register for programs	Offer clients alternative ways to register (Example: telephone).
A person who can't speak and can't communicate effectively over phone.	Ask the person if they would prefer to have a person to assist them over the phone, or to use email or text.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions *Continued*

Systemic barriers are policies, practices or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded.

Systemic Barriers	Possible Solutions
People with disabilities are excluded from events by not considering their needs at the event planning stage.	Make sure that accessibility is considered when making plans for events and invite attendees to tell you if they have specific accessibility needs, such as requiring on-line applications. Use accessibility checklists for events.
Not being aware of the different types of accommodations an employee might need when returning to work after an absence due to a disability	Learn about the types of accommodations available. Inquire about specific employee needs. Talking to employees about their specific needs is a good first step.
No leadership or accountability to address issues related to people with disabilities.	Designate a contact person to implement accessibility policies and procedures.
Hiring policies not encouraging applications from people with disabilities	Review current hiring processes to identify and remove barriers.
Procedures that may affect some employees, such as use of cleaning products that can cause allergic reactions	Implement a fragrance-free policy.

Appendix B

Barriers and Solutions *Continued*

Physical and architectural barriers in the environment prevent physical access for people with disabilities.

Physical/Architectural Barriers	Possible Solutions
Aisles are blocked by displays or merchandise making them too narrow for a person using a wheelchair or walker	Consider the paths that your employees and customers take when creating displays or storing merchandise.
Inaccessible event or meeting spaces	When selecting a venue think about potential barriers. Consider washrooms, parking, lighting and signage, not just an entrance ramp.
Accessibility features, such as automatic doors, are broken and not fixed promptly	Develop a maintenance plan. Ensure prompt response times when equipment is broken.
Poor snow clearance creating temporary barriers to building entrance or parking lot	Maintain clear paths and parking lots.

Appendix C

Disability Resource Information and Contacts

Manitoba's Disabilities Issues Office encourages the use of local services to improve accessibility and consultation with community disability organizations.

Disclaimer: the Disabilities Issues Office does not endorse the services, advice, opinions or recommendations of organizations outside of government.

Providers of Disability Accommodations

There are local services and organizations that may help you respond to common barriers to accessibility. The following are some examples.

American Sign Language Interpreter Services, Computerized Note taking Specialists / Interveners

Equality Communications Centre of Excellence (ECCOE)

200 – One Forks Market Road Winnipeg MB R3C 4L8

Contact Person: Candy Badger

Phone: 204-926-3271

Email: candy@eccoe.com

Need 2 to 4 weeks notice prior to a meeting, conference, forum or other type of event.

Communication Disabilities Access Canada

131 Barber Greene Road, Toronto, Ontario, M3C 3Y5

Phone: 1-416-444-9532

Website: www.cdacanada.com

Communication Access Now: www.communication-access.org

Communication Access to Justice: www.access-to-justice.org

Appendix C

Disability Resource Information and Contacts *Continued*

Real Time Captioning Services

Word for Word Company

Computerized Captioning Services

Contacts: Kristen Harris and Nicole Hacault

Phone: 204-995-0814

Email: wordforwordwinnipeg@shaw.ca

Braille and other alternate formats including audio format and e-text

T-Base Communications

19 Main Street Ottawa ON K1S 1A9

Contact: Jeff Jullion

Phone: 1-613-236-0866 ext. 2330

Email: jjullion@tbase.com

Braille Embossing Services

Vision Impaired Resource Network (VIRN)

320 Sherbrook Street, Main Floor, South Tower,
Winnipeg, MB

Phone: 204-975-9340 or 204-975-9341

Toll-Free: 1-888-851-VIRN (8476)

Email: info@virn.ca

Website: www.virn.ca

Twitter: [@virnca](https://twitter.com/virnca)

Appendix C

Disability Resource Information and Contacts *Continued*

Brailled Documentation Formats

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

Toronto ON

Contact: Anita Mullick Mahajan

Email: Anita.Mullick-Mahajan@cnib.ca

Three weeks required for Brailled items.

Shep Shell, Braille Consultant

Dynamic Dots

744 Lindsey Street Winnipeg MB R3N 1H7

Email: dynamic.dots@shaw.ca

Phone: 204-488-7048

Cell: 204-792-1800

Fax: 204-489-8900

Personal Care Attendant Bookings

Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC)

Portage Place Mall Suite 311A – 393 Portage Avenue Winnipeg MB R3B 3H6

Phone: 204-947-0194

Email: thecentre@ilrc.mb.ca

Website: www.ilrc.mb.ca

May need 2 to 4 weeks notice for bookings.

Appendix C

Disability Resource Information and Contacts *Continued*

Universal Design Consultation

Design For All, Design Consultant

P. O. Box 68, Norwood Grove Winnipeg MB R2H 3B8

Phone: 204-794-8211

Fax: 204-237-3730

Email: design4all@shaw.ca

Website: www.universaldesignforall.ca

Manitoba Disability Organizations

For contact information for a broad range of organizations that represent or serve Manitobans with disabilities, please visit:

Manitoba's Community Services Directory website at

www.contactmb.org/bresults.asp

Alternatively, contact the Manitoba Community Services Directory at:

Phone: 204-287-8827

Toll free: 1-866-266-4636

Appendix D

Disability Accommodations Checklists

a. Communications Checklist

Consideration	Yes	Budget Impact	Comments
Write in plain language, which is easier for all readers to understand.			
Produce a master document in a text template (Example: WORD document, not a PDF) as the basis for all other formats. Include a text description of visuals or charts.		√	Budget will vary according to the needs of the users.
Keep a master document for future large print or text format requests. The resources section of this manual also has website links to suppliers.			
Include the “active offer” on all publications (Example: “Available in alternate formats upon request.”).			
Consult accessibility coordinator to learn about alternate formats and local suppliers for other formats requested.			
Ensure staff who interact with the public have information and training in how to communicate with people who have speech and language disabilities in face-to face and telephone interactions.			

Appendix D

Disability Accommodations Checklists *Continued*

b. Meeting and Event Planning Checklist

Consideration	Yes	Budget Impact	Comments
Facility Factors			
Consult disability organizations about what to consider when selecting accessible venues			
Facility entrance equipped with automatic door			
Accessible path to meeting room			
Public elevators with accessible control panel buttons and audio floor indicators			
Water fountain at accessible height			
Accessible eating facilities			
Braille or large print menus			
Public telephones at accessible height			
Dietary requirements can be met			
Meeting Rooms			
Space for note-takers, captioning equipment, ASL, interpreters			
Seating for hearing impaired people near the interpreters/captioners/computerized note-takers			
Low noise level in meeting rooms			
Infrared or looping system			
Visual alarm system			

Appendix D

Disability Accommodations Checklists *Continued*

b. Meeting and Event Planning Checklist *Continued*

Consideration	Yes	Budget Impact	Comments
Getting to the Event			
Accessible parking			
Accessible public transportation			
Funds to reimburse Handi-transit			
Alternate Formats Available			
Documents written in plain language			
Printed material available in Braille, large print, audiotape, DVD or CD (on request)			
Description of visual presentations			
Display the communication access symbol			
Event Promotion			
Printed publicity material includes disability icons			
Ask participants to identify specific accommodation and dietary needs			
Send out agenda ahead of time			

Appendix D

Disability Accommodations Checklists *Continued*

b. Meeting and Event Planning Checklist *Continued*

Consideration	Yes	Budget Impact	Comments
Accommodations (available on request)			
People to greet and help participants with disabilities at the event			
Signs or staff to direct participants to meeting room			
Infrared or looping system			
Computerized note-taking services			
Real-time captioning			
Attendant services (for personal needs, hygiene)			
Sign language interpretation			
Audio systems			
Assistive listening devices			
Intervener services			
Dietary Requirements			
Beverages served with bendable straws, lightweight cups			
Non-sugar beverages, juices and ice water			
Vegetarian meals or snacks available			

Appendix E

Accessibility Coordinator / Accessibility Working Group Duties

Some institutions, including the Manitoba government, have designated individuals to coordinate accessibility initiatives at the department or branch level. Adapt the following list of duties to fit your organization.

Accessibility Coordinator

Responsible for coordinating accessibility initiatives of an administrative body and must be familiar with its programs and priorities.

Duties

- Help senior officials develop an Accessibility Plan and coordinate accessibility initiatives.
- Create and coordinate an accessibility working group.
- Ensure public information and events are accessible. Include the offer to provide information in alternate formats and disability accommodations (Example: “active offer”).
- Provide expertise to colleagues and clients to ensure accessibility.
- Include accessibility awareness in staff training and orientation.
- Monitor progress in implementing the Accessibility Plan and track costs related to disability accommodations.
- Use this information in your organization’s reports and when developing the next plan.
- When new policies or programs are introduced, consider accessibility needs and provide advice on removing barriers.
- Stay up-to-date on compliance requirements for new standards under the AMA as well as new technology and resources to help the organization maximize accessibility.

Appendix E

Accessibility Coordinator / Accessibility Working Group Duties

Continued

Accessibility Working Group

Members should represent various branches of the organization – from frontline workers to senior management – especially those who work directly with the public.

Duties

- Participate in developing and introducing the Accessibility Plan.
- Monitor its implementation.
- Provide expertise from the branch or function represented to ensure accessibility is integrated into policies and programs throughout the organization.
- Fulfill the duties of the accessibility coordinator related to information, training and accessible public interaction of the branch or function represented. Monitor progress.
- Integrate accessibility priorities into the operational plan and budget of the branch or function represented.

Senior Management

Managers to provide leadership in introducing and implementing initiatives, ideally acting as accessibility champions.

Duties

- Sign off on Accessibility Plan and reports related to accessibility.
- Include accessibility coordination duties on job descriptions and performance review.
- Integrate accessibility priorities into the organizational plan and budget.

Appendix F

Accessibility Plan – Sample

This sample plan features an organization with a narrow mandate. Actual organizations will vary significantly and will require broader analysis and more detailed actions.

Name of Organization: Organization X (Org.X)

Part 1. Baseline Report

A. Overview of Programs and Services

- provides supervised recreation activities for youth, adults and seniors
- provides equipment and craft supplies for independent activity
- promotes community engagement

B. Accessibility Achievements

- offers its recreation activities in wheelchair accessible venues
- trains instructors to speak clearly and to ask participants how they can help
- designs print materials and event advertising with large, easy to read fonts

C. Accessibility Barriers

- Registration forms are designed with 10 point font and are not offered in an alternate format, such as a large print version.
- Facilitators do not know how to modify activities to accommodate persons with disabilities.
- Human Resources has not considered how to create barrier-free hiring processes or on-the-job disability accommodations
- Groups representing persons with disabilities or seniors have not been consulted to determine how inclusion could be promoted.
- Website not accessible

Appendix F

Accessibility Plan – Sample *Continued*

Part 2. Accessibility Plan

A. Statement of Commitment

Organization X is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers. We will do this by identifying, removing and preventing barriers and by meeting the requirements of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)*.

B. Policies

- Org. X will review all programs, services and new initiatives to ensure accessibility.
- Org. X will make information available in an accessible format or provide communication supports to people with disabilities in a way that considers their disability.

C. Actions

See **Appendix G: Work Plan** for examples of actions with assigned responsibilities, budget implications and timelines.

Action 1 – Establish Accessibility Working Group	
Initiatives/Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• management to appoint an accessibility coordinator• management to establish an accessibility working group• accessibility coordinator develop draft terms of reference for the working group, including purpose, timelines and membership	Expected Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each area or division that serves the public is represented on the working group.• Other levels of the organization are represented.• Working group has detailed work plans, multi-year timelines.• Members participate in developing, implementing and updating the Accessibility Plan.

Appendix F

Accessibility Plan – Sample *Continued*

Action 2 – Offer and provide information in an accessible format on request	
Initiatives/Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accessibility working group to develop a process for responding to requests for accessible supports and services• accessibility coordinator to communicate process to all staff by email• HR to create on-line training on how to respond to requests• communications to promote the availability of alternate formats on request, by including the active offer on all new documents	Expected Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff are aware of alternate formats and how to make them available to the public.• All documents created from July 2015 onward advertise the availability of alternate formats.
Action 3 – Staff Awareness and Training	
Initiatives/Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• management to confirm the organization’s commitment to accessibility in writing, endorse the commitment at meetings and celebrate progress• HR to offer accessibility training/awareness presentations to managers, program and frontline staff• accessibility working group to send email and make presentations to managers re accessibility legislation, expectations and resources available to ensure AMA compliance• management to acknowledge accessibility achievements and share information with staff in organization newsletter and staff meetings	Expected Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff understands accessibility and supports implementation of the plan.• Information on progress on implementing Org. X’s Accessibility Plan is available to staff.

Appendix F

Accessibility Plan – Sample *Continued*

Action 4 – Monitor Progress	
Initiatives/Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accessibility coordinator, with assistance of working group, to track progress on challenges, and requests fo accommodations with budgetary implications• accessibility coordinator to report quarterly to senior management• future plans and budgets to be integrated into operational plans• communications to include progress report and update on AMA in Org. X's annual report	Expected Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior management is aware of progress on AMA compliance and considers future plans.• Annual report includes a section highlighting progress on accessibility.• Accessibility Plan is posted on website and available in alternate formats.

Contact Person: _____

(accessibility coordinator)

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Senior manager's signature _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix G

Accessibility Plan – Template *Continued*

Accessibility Achievements
<p>Summarize the steps already taken by the organization to achieve accessibility. What, if any policies, promote accessibility of your organization by the public and by staff affected by accessibility barriers?</p>
Barriers to Accessibility
<p>List barriers Manitobans may face in accessing your programs, facilities and services. Highlight those that are most significant to your organizational mandate and to the public.</p> <p>What organizational policies may inadvertently create barriers? Are there any temporary barriers which may be created by renovations or computer software upgrades that could create accessibility barriers?</p>

Appendix G

Accessibility Plan – Template *Continued*

Part 2. Accessibility Plan

Statement of Commitment
Policies

Appendix G

Accessibility Plan – Template *Continued*

Actions

Action 1	
Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes

Action 2	
Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes

Appendix G

Accessibility Plan – Template *Continued*

Action 3	
Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes

Action 4	
Initiatives/Actions	Expected Outcomes

Contact Person: _____
(accessibility coordinator)

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Senior manager's signature _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix H

Sample Work Plan

This following work plan provides examples of the steps required for Action 2 – as identified in the Accessibility Plan Sample – see **Appendix F**.

Action 2: Provide information in an accessible format on request.

Actions	Responsibility	Budget	Estimated Time / Completion Date
Retain plain text version of new documents (Example: WORD format) for efficient conversion to alternate formats.	Communications and all relevant staff	Nil	Immediately
Develop procedure for responding to requests for documents in alternate formats.	Accessibility Coordinator with Accessibility Working Group, and management approval	Nil	1 month / September 1, 2015
Alert finance area that current year and future requests for contingency funding must include accessibility line item.	Accessibility Coordinator with management approval	Included in current contingency budget	2 hours / September 1, 2015
Create on-line training (PowerPoint) on how to respond to requests for alternate format and local service providers.	Accessibility Coordinator with Human Resources	\$100	2 months / October 1, 2015
Select existing forms to be converted (internally) to large print and CD.	Accessibility Coordinator with assistance from Admin. Staff	\$50	1 month / November 1, 2015

Appendix H

Sample Work Plan *Continued*

Actions	Responsibility	Budget	Estimated Time / Completion Date
Post a notice on website, Facebook, and on print documents, that information is available in alternate formats on request.	Webmaster and Accessibility Coordinator	Nil	1 week / November 1, 2015
Outsource Braille conversion for agenda and budget for annual meeting, if requested.	Accessibility Coordinator	\$100	2 weeks / December 1, 2015

Notes

Notes

For more information go to

www.AccessibilityMB.ca

or contact

Disabilities Issues Office

630 – 240 Graham Avenue

Winnipeg MB R3C 0J7

Phone: **204-945-7613** in Winnipeg

Toll free: **1-800-282-8069**, Ext. **7613**

Fax: **204-948-2896**

Email: **dio@gov.mb.ca**

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