

Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan: 2021 and 2022

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1. Message from the Manitoba Government Accessibility Champion



The Manitoba government is committed to improving accessibility across all facets of its work. As the Civil Service Commissioner, Associate Clerk for Public Service Transformation and Manitoba Government Accessibility Champion, I am proud to share the Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan for 2021 and 2022. This plan reviews our progress and shares the path forward.

During 2019 and 2020, Manitoba's plan identified more than 50 actions under six key themes that form the foundation of our renewed government accessibility plan. Over the last two years, we have adapted our approaches and methods of service delivery to meet the critical needs of specific populations and communities across Manitoba. Highlights of achievements and our progress over this period are identified in the appendix to the plan.

A key way government is demonstrating its commitment to accessibility is by fully implementing the requirements under the Customer Service and Employment Standards across all departments. Over this next two-year period, the government has set a goal of having all new and existing employees complete the mandatory Accessibility for Manitobans Act training. Educating our staff on accessibility makes it easier to implement accessible policies and processes into our public service and service delivery.

In this plan, we will also continue to increase the representation of persons with disabilities across Manitoba's public service. This supports our goal to reach a benchmark of nine per cent of our workforce who self-declare as having a disability. Strengthening accessible pre-employment recruitment and outreach and orientation processes for candidates and employees makes good business sense and helps government to maintain excellence as an employer.

As the Manitoba Government Accessibility Champion, I will encourage departments while implementing this plan. By enhancing accessibility, we are strengthening government performance and service delivery in all areas of our work, for the benefit of every Manitoban.

Sincerely,

Charlene Paquin

Accessibility Champion,
Civil Service Commissioner and Associate Clerk for Public Service Transformation

2. Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan

2.1 What is the Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan?

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) requires that all public sector organizations create an accessibility plan that must be updated every two years. The plan incorporates a review of accessibility policies, measures and practices, underpinned by the regulated standards of the AMA.

The Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan (MGAP) advances the work set out in the previous plan for the next two-year period, from January 2021 to December 2022.

This plan outlines six areas of accessibility:

- Policies, resources and employee training
- Accessible operations and practices
- Employment of persons with disabilities
- Manitoba government as an employer
- Information and communications actions
- Barrier-free universal design

Highlights of government's progress on accessibility have been provided in Appendix A which shares details of achievements made by departments in 2019 and 2020. This plan also includes a spotlight on COVID-19, examining how government has been taking into account the accessibility of programs and services during the pandemic.

This plan educates public servants on the government's accessibility agenda within their respective departments and across government at large. This means understanding how to address accessibility issues in their work and knowing what training and resources to call upon when needed.

This plan is a call to action for senior leadership and all departments. It identifies government-wide priorities to ensure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the public service and full implementation of the legislated accessibility standards.

Statement of Commitment

The Manitoba government is committed to ensuring that all Manitobans are full and effective participants in society. This means being a champion of inclusion and meeting the needs of people who face barriers in ways that maintain dignity and independence.

As a public body, the Manitoba government aims to fully implement AMA requirements, including existing standards affecting Customer Service and Employment and the future standards targeting Information and Communications, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces.

This plan is grounded in the principles of access, equality, equity, universal design and systemic responsibility. These principles guide the policies, programs, practices, services and actions identified for 2021 and 2022.

Who Needs to Follow the Plan?

All government departments, public servants, Special Operating Agencies, and government-appointed Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) are required to adhere to this plan.

Who Was Involved in Developing the Plan?

The Manitoba government's Accessibility Steering Committee provided overall direction on the plan's scope and format for 2021 and 2022.

Organizations and individuals with expertise in accessibility and experience with disability were invited to provide input to MGAP 2021 and 2022 through an online survey.

Respondents identified the need for government to improve compliance with current accessibility standards as a top priority for the next plan. Other priorities included consulting with persons with disabilities, increasing accessibility of government information and communications, and upgrading pre-employment processes, hiring and onboarding.

Overall, respondents supported a continued focus on improving accessibility as a priority of government. Most respondents had some awareness of the Manitoba government's efforts to improve accessibility. Respondents stressed the importance of government taking concrete action.

2.2. How is MGAP Governed?

The Honourable Heather Stefanson, Minister of Families, is responsible for accessibility. The minister's role is to oversee the administration of the AMA, which applies to the private, public, and non-profit sectors. The minister is also involved in developing accessibility standards through regulations, raising awareness about accessibility and promoting and encouraging the prevention and removal of barriers throughout the province.

Charlene Paquin is the Manitoba government's Accessibility Champion and the Civil Service Commissioner and Associate Clerk for Public Service Transformation. As accessibility champion, Charlene provides leadership and support to executive and senior managers in understanding and achieving accessibility, and engages employees by increasing awareness about providing accessible services. The champion encourages departments to achieve the goals of this plan.

The Manitoba Government Accessibility Steering Committee provides overall government direction on accessibility for the public service. Members for 2021 and 2022 include:

- David McLaughlin, Clerk of the Executive Council and Cabinet Secretary
- Charlene Paquin, Accessibility Champion, Civil Service Commissioner and Associate Clerk for Public Service Transformation
- Kathryn Gerrard, Deputy Minister, Families and Director under the AMA

Among other duties, the director under the AMA (currently the Deputy Minister of Families) is responsible for compliance under the act. The Accessibility Compliance Secretariat reports to and supports the director on AMA compliance activities. The secretariat implements Manitoba's accessibility compliance framework and monitors compliance requirements among various sectors.

With guidance from the Accessibility Champion and the Accessibility Steering Committee, senior leadership of the Civil Service Commission provides educational and networking opportunities for staff across government.

The Civil Service Commission coordinates the Department Accessibility Coordinator network, convenes regular meetings and provides input on shared initiatives.

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Senior Management

Departments are responsible for providing oversight, support, training and awareness-raising opportunities for staff so they can be equipped with the knowledge and resources required to implement accessibility standards and deliver accessible programs and services to all Manitobans.

Senior department leadership is responsible to:

- designate a staff member in the role of Department Accessibility Coordinator (DAC) and allocate time, responsibilities and resources for the role
- continue supporting a department Accessibility Working Group or as part of the broader Diversity and Inclusion Committee to create awareness about MGAP, track progress, monitor achievements, and respond to accessibility issues that arise
- identify departmental accessibility priorities
- support the regular review and update of policies, print and online documents, and web materials to ensure they meet accessibility standards

- provide regular communication to staff about training opportunities, and promote events that raise awareness about accessibility and employment for persons with disabilities

2.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Department Accessibility Coordinators

Each department has a designated employee acting in the role of Department Accessibility Coordinator (DAC). The DACs support management, enhance awareness of accessible services, and liaise with senior leadership to respond to accommodation requests. DACs participate in quarterly meetings as part of a network to discuss departmental achievements, priorities and ongoing barriers.

DACs are part of employee working groups that implement departmental accessibility goals and respond to accessibility issues that arise.

For most staff, the DAC is their lead point of contact for accessibility and accommodation-related requests from the public.

3. Spotlight on COVID-19

Since March 2020, government has introduced measures that are helping Manitobans with disabilities remain informed, supported and connected with others when they are seeking services:

- Adding COVID-19 related resources to [Manitoba's Accessibility Website](#), highlighting the provision of accessible customer service and employment to persons with disabilities.
- Providing American Sign Language interpretation at all COVID-19 briefings, including captions, and an interactive voice response system to access the [COVID-19 Screening Tool](#).
- Issuing \$200 in support to Employment and Income Assistance participants with disabilities to help with costs during the pandemic.
- Launching AbilitiCBT to help Manitobans experiencing mild to moderate anxiety due to COVID-19. This virtual program offers free online cognitive behavioural therapy to Manitobans ages 16 and over, including Manitoba Government employees.
- Establishing [Help Next Door Manitoba](#) to connect individuals requiring assistance with those who have agreed to help.

- Conducting wellness checks with participants in programs such as Community Living disABILITY Services and Manitoba Housing.
- Delivering training, conducting meetings and public engagements using virtual channels and software such as GoToMeeting and Microsoft Teams. Departments are responsible to ensure these sessions are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Circulating resources on accessibility and COVID-19 to staff.

Through AccessibilityMB.ca, the Manitoba government will continue to expand online resources on providing accessible customer service and accommodating the needs of employees with disabilities during COVID-19 as they work remotely and return to their offices.

4. Accessibility Standards

Accessibility standards are building blocks for making real, measurable and effective changes to accessibility. Each standard focuses on a key area of daily living and outlines specific requirements and timelines for removing organizational barriers to be implemented by organizations, including the Manitoba government.

4.1 Customer Service

The [Customer Service accessibility standard](#) addresses business practices and training requirements to provide better customer service to persons with disabilities. By introducing policies addressing training and communication, the goal is to achieve respectful, barrier-free customer service in Manitoba organizations with at least one employee.

To meet the Customer Service standard, organizations must:

- meet the communication needs of customers, clients or members
- allow assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, walkers and oxygen tanks
- welcome support people, who are there to assist
- welcome people with service animals
- ensure accessibility is maintained as intended (ramps, wide aisles, removal of clutter)
- let customers know when accessible features and services are not available
- invite customers to provide feedback
- train staff on accessible customer service, including reasonable accommodations under [The Human Rights Code \(Manitoba\)](#)

- make public events accessible (large public sector organizations only)

Public and private sector organizations with more than 50 employees must document their customer service policy and provide notice that this policy is available on request. The Manitoba government was obligated to comply with this standard by Nov. 1, 2016.

4.2 Employment Standard

Enacted on May 1, 2019, Manitoba's Accessibility Standard for Employment is the second standard under the AMA. Its purpose is to remove and prevent barriers that affect current and potential members of Manitoba's labour force. The Accessibility Standard for Employment builds on existing requirements of Manitoba's Human Rights Code and includes the following requirements:

- offer reasonable accommodations when recruiting new employees
- inform applicants about workplace accommodation policies and practices when making an offer of employment
- consider workplace accommodations to remove barriers affecting an employee's performance
- consider workplace accommodations to remove barriers that may affect an employee's opportunities for training and advancement, and develop and implement individual accommodation plans for employees upon request
- let employees know about employment policies and practices and provide updates with information in accessible formats and with communication supports upon request
- follow a return-to-work policy for employees who have been off work due to a disability, and have a process to determine reasonable workplace accommodations
- provide individual emergency response information to keep employees with disabilities safe
- train management and staff with human resource responsibilities about accessible employment and related legislation
- ask employees who require assistance during an emergency for permission to share information with individuals who have agreed to help

Public and private sector organizations with more than 50 employees must document their accessible employment policy and provide notice that it is available on request. The Manitoba government was obligated to comply with this standard by May 1, 2020.

4.3 Information and Communications

The Information and Communications accessibility standard will address barriers to accessing information. This includes information provided in print, in person, on websites or in other formats.

4.4 Transportation

The Transportation accessibility standard will apply to public transportation to address barriers Manitobans might encounter while getting to work or school, shopping, socializing and other aspects of daily life.

4.5 Design of Public Spaces

The Design of Public Spaces accessibility standard will deal with access to those areas outside the jurisdiction of The Manitoba Building Code, such as sidewalks, pathways, parks and other aspects of the environment that we design and construct.

All departments are expected to monitor how they are meeting and exceeding the requirements of accessibility standards. Efforts and achievements are communicated by departments to staff and shared with the Accessibility Steering Committee at their meetings.

5. Continued efforts

Government has been working diligently to improve accessibility. Manitoba's public service will continue to collectively raise awareness and understanding of accessibility standards and their implementation. For 2021 and 2022, this plan will be building upon and strengthening the efforts underway through the following six priority areas:

5.1 Policies, resources, and employee training

- The Civil Service Commission will track and report on the completion of mandatory AMA training by all new and existing government employees.
- All departments will report on compliance and fulfillment of the Customer Service standard requirements.
- Department leadership will communicate with DACs to ensure that all staff provide an access offer of customer service (also known as active offer) and are equipped with regular opportunities for training on accessible services. An access offer may include:
 - placing the "Access Offer" sign on front reception counters and desks of staff who deliver customer service
 - asking "how can we help?" and letting customers know that department staff are taking steps to welcome individuals with disabilities
 - communicating that documents are available in alternate formats
 - providing online and print material to clients in alternate formats

- DACs will keep a written record of accessibility and training materials and policies, and let the public know these documents are available on request.
- Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) will work with the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat and the ABC Office to ensure that training on accessibility is achieved by appointees serving on ABCs.
- Departments will implement accessibility as one of the indicators on their departmental and divisional Balanced Score Card. For example, Economic Development and Training's Accessibility Work Group plans to develop a departmental accessibility plan and annual work plans with accessibility as a performance measure.
- The corporate accessibility toolkit and the AccessibilityMB.ca website will be two key resources used by the public service when planning and responding to accessibility issues across government.
- The Manitoba Accessibility Office will develop a new training platform to facilitate independent online learning to support the customer service and employment accessibility standards. This innovative and free training tool will be shared with all departments once it becomes available in early 2021.
- Staff are encouraged to participate in awareness-raising events, including Manitoba Access Awareness Week, June; Disability Employment Awareness Month, October; and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, December 3.
 - The Manitoba Accessibility Office often hosts events, and staff can sign up to receive a bi-monthly newsletter [Accessibility News](#). Other awareness events are organized throughout the year, including mental health awareness day.
- Starting in 2021, Manitoba will be recognizing Indigenous Disability Awareness Month each November.
- Leadership will promote awareness activities within departments on an ongoing basis.

5.2 Accessible operations and practices

- All departments are encouraged to establish and maintain an Accessibility Working Group with representation from all divisions. The working group may be part of a larger Diversity and Inclusion Committee. This group's functions include identifying departmental priorities and areas of action, communicating information about implementing accessibility standards, updating print and online resources, monitoring and tracking annual progress.
- All departments commit to applying a disability lens, alongside gender and equity lenses, when developing, implementing and assessing programs and services

delivered to Manitobans. This means promoting the [Gender and Diversity Analysis Tool](#) and incorporating this lens in program development guides and submissions seeking central government approval.

- Department leadership will work together to ensure that staff are equipped with resources and tools to assess projects, policies, programs and services using a disability lens.
- All departments are encouraged to advance efforts to incorporate accessibility criteria into procurement policies and practices, such as accessibility considerations in grant funding applications from external third-party service providers.
- Individuals and agencies working on behalf of government will be asked to demonstrate they have completed Manitoba Accessibility Office's online training.
- The Civil Service Commission will organize quarterly DAC network meetings to stay up-to-date on standard development and implementation, share departmental accessibility initiatives, resources, tools and training and discuss accessibility issues emerging within departments.
- Manitoba Government Inquiry (MGI) will continue to provide accessibility information to the public and track accessibility requests.
- The Civil Service Commission will continue to monitor and respond to the Accessibility mailbox (accessibility@gov.mb.ca), a channel for the public service and the general public to ask questions and/or raise concerns about the Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan or the accessibility of Manitoba's public service.

5.3 Employment of persons with disabilities

- All departments will continue to improve the accessibility of physical spaces, operations and processes to encourage respectful, barrier-free working environments for employees with disabilities.
 - The Civil Service Commission will continue to monitor and update the Principles and Policies for Managing Human Resources by departments, which includes the Reasonable Accommodation Policy and the Barrier-Free Recruitment Policy.
 - DACs will promote and refer staff to training opportunities about fulfilling requirements of the Employment Standard, including reasonable accommodations and developing individualized plans for employees.
 - The Civil Service Commission will collect workplace emergency response information, and policies and resources for individualized accommodation plans are developed and made available to all staff.

- The Manitoba government will monitor the completion of training on the employment accessibility standard.
- Supervisors and managers will work with employees requiring accommodations to develop and implement individualized accommodation and workplace emergency assistance plans.

5.4 The Manitoba government as an employer

- The Manitoba government is required under the Accessibility Standard for Employment to meet the accessibility needs of job seekers and employees during recruitment, screening, interviewing, hiring and retention to create more inclusive work environments across government. An additional focus is to continue to increase the representation of individuals hired as persons with disabilities across Manitoba's public service. This supports the goal to reach a benchmark of nine per cent of the workforce who self-declare as having a disability.
- Civil Service Commission will work with department leadership to strengthen and adapt pre-employment and orientation processes to reflect the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Civil Service Commission will continue outreach to disability-service organizations to promote jobs within the Manitoba government public service.
- Civil Service Commission will ensure all requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Employment are integrated into the human resource policies and practices it manages.
- The Civil Service Commission will post information about the fulfillment of the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Employment.

5.5 Information and communications actions

- Accessibility is a core pillar of the planning process of all government public engagement and consultation methods that occur through the platform of EngageMB.
- Departments will ensure that public events and engagements are accessible.
- Communication Services Manitoba and Business Transformation and Technology will be responsible for providing accessible communications across government.

- Information about the accessibility features of websites and an opportunity for feedback or requests for alternative formats are included at the bottom of each government webpage by pressing the link called “Accessibility”.
- All departments will make documents accessible to the public by providing alternate format versions upon request.
- Employees will be encouraged to take courses on how to produce accessible Word and PDF documents.
 - Senior leadership and managers will be encouraged to support the training of employees to build capacity for producing materials in accessible formats when requested.
 - DACs will work with department leadership to create lists of employees who can create accessible documents and can be called upon to assist when producing accessible materials.
- Departments will expand the use of online meeting tools to ensure they are accessible to individuals using assistive technology.
- Departments will continue participating in networks that acquire and distribute materials in accessible formats. One example is the Library Services Branch of Sport, Culture and Heritage participating in the National Network of Equitable Library Service.

5.6 Barrier-Free universal design

- The Manitoba government will adhere to the requirements of the Manitoba Building Code. Access should be provided in a manner that does not establish or perpetuate differences based on a person's disability.
- Integrating barrier-free Universal Design principles and work environment accessibility will continue to be considered when undertaking government projects for current and new buildings, leased spaces, upgrades and refreshes.

6. Advancing new initiatives

For the next two-year period, the Manitoba government will take action to improve accessibility in the following areas:

6.1 Implement new accessibility standards

In 2021 and 2022, Manitoba will be enacting three new accessibility standards addressing Information and Communications, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces. These standards have not yet come into force (see section 4).

- Government will implement the specific requirements under each new standard.
 - Senior leadership, managers, and DACs will work together to ensure the new standards and related requirements are communicated to all department staff, and training opportunities and resources are shared at regular intervals.
 - As the new accessibility standard affecting barrier-free public spaces takes effect, the Manitoba government will ensure it applies all requirements as they relate to sidewalks, pathways, parks and other aspects of the environment it designs and constructs.
- The Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations will ensure that community councils know the AMA and the new standards.

6.2 Increased participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making

- Encourage participation of individuals with disabilities on internal departmental and interdepartmental working groups, transformation initiatives and project teams.
- Include a representative from the employees with disabilities network on the Department Accessibility Coordinators Network.

7. Role of the Compliance Secretariat

As government's main role is to support accessibility across the province, this section provides details of the ongoing work beyond government to ensure compliance of the AMA and the implementation of accessibility standards.

This is not an action item within the MGAP plan, but it is important information for the public service given the many partnerships and connections with public sector bodies (i.e. school divisions, independent agencies, Regional Health Authorities, etc.), non-profit and business sectors.

Since 2019, the Accessibility Compliance Secretariat has supported Manitoba's director under the AMA, and worked with regulated bodies to promote compliance by conducting reviews, answering questions, sharing tools and resources, and providing information sessions upon request.

In March 2020, government released an [accessibility compliance framework](#), outlining the different steps of Manitoba's accessibility compliance process, such as reviews and inspections.

Manitoba's framework places a strong emphasis on supporting organizations to achieve compliance before sanctions are issued. This is done by engaging in targeted outreach, developing resources, delivering training and ensuring awareness-raising activities are undertaken well in advance of compliance deadlines. Sanctions, on the other hand, include orders, administrative monetary penalties and offences. To read a full copy of the framework, visit [Compliance Framework under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#).

8. Conclusion

MGAP 2021 and 2022 identifies new and continuing priority areas where government will be focusing its work for the next two-year period. This plan seeks to increase public servants' awareness and capacity to implement accessibility standards, address accessibility issues, and to leverage key partnerships and networks to remove barriers. This plan will build on many of the achievements and efforts undertaken by departments in 2019 and 2020.

The Manitoba government continues to improve accessibility across the public service by identifying, preventing and removing barriers to everyday living for Manitobans with visible and non-visible disabilities. It is our collective task as public servants to harness the talent of all Manitobans and to ensure we continue to focus on our clients by providing respectful, accessible services.

9. Appendix - Manitoba Government Accessibility Plan Achievements in 2019 and 2020

Manitoba's MGAP for 2019 and 2020 consists of more than 50 actions to improve accessibility and highlight the importance of inclusion as a key element of our work on behalf of Manitobans. This work is aligned with Manitoba's Transformation Strategy.

In these two years, the Steering Committee, department leadership, DACs, and the public service as a whole took steps to ensure the six priority areas identified in the plan increased our collective awareness and ability to address accessibility issues and accommodations. Our plan continued to leverage key partnerships and networks to remove barriers.

Key results for 2019 and 2020 included:

- The Manitoba public service reported 83.4 per cent completion of the mandatory AMA training in May 2020, an improvement from the December 2018 completion rate of 61 per cent.

- In 2019/20, 107 public servants completed the course on Creating Accessible Digital Office Documents using MS Word and Adobe Pro.
- Municipal Relations launched the Building Sustainable Communities Grant in 2019, which includes an accessibility component in community development and capital infrastructure projects. Municipal Relations has approved 95 projects under the grant program overall totalling \$3.6 million.
- In 2020, the Government of Manitoba received an award as “One of Canada’s Best Diversity Employers” for the ninth consecutive year.
- In 2019, the Manitoba Supported Employment Network commended the Civil Service Commission with a Diverse Workforce Award during Disability Employment Awareness Month.
- The Manitoba Accessibility Office (formerly Disabilities Issues Office) celebrated Manitoba Access Awareness Week and Disability Employment Awareness Month with webinars on return to work programs and the future of work. The former included the launch of a new video created with community partners: [“Accessibility in the Workplace: Good for Everyone, Law in Manitoba”](#).
- The representation of persons with disabilities across government reached 5.7 per cent in 2020. This continues to be an area of focus in MGAP 2021 and 2022.
- The Department of Central Services has designed and/or completed over 20 major renovations/additions and barrier removals in public schools, totalling \$22M since 2019.

Departments identified their 2019 and 2020 achievements in six key areas:

- Policies, Resources and Employee Training
- Accessible Operations and Practices, including customer service
- Employment of Persons with Disabilities
- The Manitoba Government as an Employer
- Information and Communications Actions.
- Barrier-Free Universal Design

1. Policies, Resources and Employee Training

- Government strengthened its policies under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Examples of specific actions included:
 - Updating the Civil Service Commission’s accessible customer service policies and making these available to the public under the link to “Accessibility” at the bottom of each government webpage.

- Updating the Civil Service Commission’s employment accommodation policies and developing new tools such as guides for managers and employees to assist in navigating the accommodation process.
- The Manitoba Accessibility Office created templates and a toolkit to assist employers to meet employee safety accessibility requirements. It also made suggestions on how to interpret these requirements during COVID-19.
- Government departments enhanced the number of accessible resources available to the public and staff by developing accessibility toolkits and repositories of information.
- All departments sent regular communications encouraging their staff to complete the mandatory AMA training course offered through Organization and Staff Development. The Civil Service Commission tracks and shares statistics on departmental completion rates.
- Departments encouraged staff to utilize tools developed by the Manitoba Accessibility Office.
- Examples of ways departments shared information and resources about accessibility included:
 - Agriculture and Resource Development promoted a new accessibility toolkit in its Lay of the Land Newsletter.
 - The Civil Service Commission continued the development of its accessibility and inclusion toolkit and updated training materials and resources, in light of the Accessibility Standard for Employment.
 - Manitoba Families developed a new [intranet site on Accessibility](#) as a learning tool to promote compliance with accessibility standards and policies.
 - Manitoba Families shared new tools to support compliance with the Accessibility Standard for Employment. Materials included the Toolkit to Keep Employees with Disabilities Safe ([PDF](#)) ([Word](#)), [Employers’ Handbook](#) and [Sample Accessible Employment Policy](#), as well as a Guide to Create an Individualized Accommodation Plan Process and Policy ([Word](#)), and a new training video focusing on workplace accommodations.
 - Manitoba Infrastructure conducted a review of their entire internet site and will be updating it with accessible formats.
 - The Legislative Library made its monthly government publications checklist compatible with the customer service standard.
 - Senior leadership of departments encouraged staff to use these tools and resource materials through general emails and blogs to all staff.
- Senior government leaders such as the Civil Service Commissioner and the Clerk of Executive Council distributed blogs and government-wide emails to promote

disability-related education and employee awareness. Messaging included specific actions that could be taken by public servants to advance accessibility.

- A number of departments provided internal accessibility training to their employees, including employees without computer access. Examples included:
 - The Civil Service Commission provided training to human resources professionals on the Accessibility Standard for Employment and continued offering the training on Inclusion and Diversity in the Workplace.
 - In partnership with the Manitoba Museum for Human Rights in December 2019, 95 public servants participated in a presentation on Accessibility and Inclusive Digital Experience Design. This was in celebration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
 - Conservation and Climate and the Civil Service Commission presented a joint webinar on navigating accessibility accommodations.
 - Manitoba Education organized and hosted two Accessible Customer Service training sessions.
- Manitoba Families held three targeted learning sessions on accessible customer service with reception staff and individuals interacting with clients on a regular basis.
- Manitoba Families connected with areas engaging in consultations during 2019 and 2020 to offer advice and assistance on making engagement sessions accessible. This included offering alternate formats on all materials used, whether online or in-person, offering accommodations to participants in advance, and selecting accessible venues.

2. Accessible Operations and Practices

- The Civil Service Commission created the accessibility@gov.mb.ca mailbox to enable the public to raise issues about the accessibility of government services. In 2019/20 the mailbox received less than twenty emails. Information referrals were provided as the majority were information requests beyond the scope of services delivered by the provincial public service.
- The Civil Service Commission took the lead in scheduling and coordinating meetings with government DACs to discuss accessibility issues, share tools, resources and training and set direction and goals for this plan.
- Manitoba Justice installed video and sound bars with built-in video cameras in five board rooms.

- Family law services were consolidated in one universally designed online hub to reduce the need for in-person service and offer a single point of entry to all family law clients through telephone, web, or in-person where appropriate.
- The Department of Municipal Relations established a Website Content Coordinating Committee in 2020 to develop and conduct a web monitoring program. An audit of public web content was completed to ensure web content adheres to government accessibility standards. This work will continue in 2021 and 2022.

3. Employment of Persons with Disabilities

- All departments reflect employment equity and diversity policies in recruiting, hiring and retaining employees, and strive to accommodate the individualized needs of employees with disabilities.
- The Manitoba government proclaims one week in June as Manitoba Access Awareness Week and October as Disability Employment Awareness Month.
- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee from the Department of Finance raised awareness of mental health issues by inviting a speaker from the Canadian Mental Health Association to address the creation of psychologically healthy workplaces.
- To promote awareness of accessible library services, the Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage staff engaged with the National Network for Equitable Library Services in a provincial/territorial project. This project employed persons with print disabilities to research and test eBook platforms, reading systems and develop tools to support accessible publishing in Canada

4. The Manitoba Government as an Employer

- Efforts to create awareness and promote accessibility include government-wide notices from the Civil Service Commissioner and blogs from Deputy Ministers. Posters promoting accessibility and infographics promoting employment have been posted on the corridor walls throughout government buildings.
- All management and staff with human resource responsibilities received training on accessible employment. The Organization and Staff Development and the Manitoba Accessibility Office are developing online training to register and monitor staff training completion.
- The Civil Service Commission is responsible for development of government-wide accommodation strategies. During this two-year period, the Civil Service Commission updated the diversity and inclusion language in all Manitoba government job advertisements to include a statement related to offering accommodations during the selection process and held a series of sessions on workplace accommodations during recruitment, hiring and onboarding.

- Various departments noted ongoing efforts to implement workplace accommodation policies and emergency evacuation procedures for staff requiring assistance during emergencies.
- The Civil Service Commission continued to partner with SCE LifeWorks through Project SEARCH to provide employability skills and development opportunities for high school students with intellectual disabilities.
- The Civil Service Commission hosted outreach sessions to potential pools of candidates and engagement with community agencies, professional organizations, and educational institutions providing services to persons with disabilities. These included information sessions on applying for Manitoba government jobs, distribution of job postings and job and career fairs, including EmployABILITY Expo.
- The Civil Service Commission supported and coordinated the Civil Servants with Abilities Network, a volunteer network of employees with disabilities and allies interested in supporting and mentoring their career goals, professional development and social inclusion in the workplace.
- The Civil Service Commission has a dedicated Supported Employment Services unit, which assists employees and managers with navigating workplace accommodations and return-to-work plans.
- The Department of Economic Development and Training actively monitors employment equity reports and continues to encourage staff to self-declare, so department numbers accurately reflect the staff working in the department.

5. Information and Communications Actions

- All departments made available the “Access Offer” sign of accessible customer service in prominent locations where the public has access. Many also provided alternative methods of service delivery to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Communications Services Manitoba ensured information and communications on government publications was accessible.
- All government publications include a notice indicating that documents are available in alternate formats upon request.
- Municipal Relations established a Website Content Coordination Committee in 2020 to audit sites available to the public for accessibility.
- Sport, Culture and Heritage ensured that their grant application forms were accessible.

- Through the National Network of Equitable Library Services, Sport, Culture and Heritage supported the national Accessible Publishing Summit, accessible publishing research projects and the development of resources for publishers to create accessible content.
- Sport, Culture and Heritage improved the accessibility of the Provincial Interlibrary Loan Program and the Provincial Archives, including a new process by Archives of Manitoba to make alternative format materials available upon request.
- Manitoba Status of Women continued to collaborate with women with disabilities to ensure prevention and intervention initiatives are inclusive.

6. Barrier-free Universal Design

- Manitoba Housing (Department of Families) promoted visitable and accessible housing in new housing developments and in upgraded public housing rental units. Specific projects include:
 - Gimli: Developing 40 seniors housing units with a basic accessibility component. Construction is expected to be completed by winter 2020-21.
 - Bridgwater Trails: 1,000 units of rental housing units built to visitable standards, or 50 per cent of single-family lots. Construction is ongoing.
 - Bridgwater Forest: Approximately 40 single-family homes (or 50 per cent of the total) and over 200 multifamily housing units, built to visitable design standards.
- Departments have made upgrades and improvements to improve accessibility and add accessible features within government buildings, including:
 - Manitoba Justice is working on completing renovations to the front entrance and public counter of the Winnipeg Law Courts building and courthouse improvements in Thompson and Dauphin.
 - Agriculture and Resource Development upgraded the ramp and renovated washrooms on all floors of its Winnipeg location.
 - Central Services upgraded several government properties and offices to improve physical accessibility, including washroom and elevator upgrades, adding power door buttons to entryways, and revising physical layouts.
 - The Taxation Division of Manitoba Finance equipped secure work areas with doors accommodating key card access to increase accessibility for persons with disabilities.

- The Parks Branch of Conservation and Climate completed significant renovations to enhance accessibility at parks across the province, including:
 - Introducing mats that allow easy access across the beach and into the water for people with mobility disabilities, as launched at Birds Hill Park.
 - Renovating washrooms and showers at Grand Beach Provincial Park.
 - Completing a boardwalk, stair access path and in-grade trails to make viewing platform near the falls more accessible at Pissew Falls Park.
 - Completing construction on new camp ground offices at Spruce Woods and Asessippi Provincial Parks to enhance accessibility.
 - Installing pedestrian lighting along the seawall at Winnipeg Beach Provincial Park.
 - Completing construction on a new accessible washroom/shower building at Big Whiteshell Lake Camp Ground in Whiteshell Provincial Park and Paint Lake Provincial Park.
 - Beginning construction on the development of Duff Roblin Provincial Park, including an accessible viewing tower.
 - Installing an accessible dock in the North Whiteshell at Big Creek.
- Sport, Culture and Heritage introduced the Military Memorial Conservation Grant in November 2019. This grant includes a funding category for improving accessibility to memorials (e.g. by paving/improving paths to the memorial).
- Sport, Culture and Heritage staff promoted the barrier-free universal design of Manitoba library systems.