

Why Make Your Print & Digital Documents Accessible?

August 2022

This information is available in alternate formats on request. Please contact the Manitoba Accessibility Office at MAO@gov.mb.ca or 204-945-7613 or toll free at 1-800-282-8069, ext. 7613.

It's Good for Everyone.

Nearly every Manitoban has a disability, knows someone with a disability, or will have a disability in the coming years.

Accessible documents benefit all audiences by making information clear, direct, easy to understand, and most importantly, usable by a wide audience, including people with disabilities and those who use a variety of devices, software and hardware. Providing accessible documents is important to ensure that all people have equal access to your information.

Examples include:

- People who have no vision or low vision may use screen readers or large print programs such as the ZoomText Magnifier/Reader.
- People with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, may need the document in an audio format.
- People with dexterity disabilities who use tools other than a keyboard to use a computer. Examples include people who use voice recognition software or a tracking ball and mouse.
- People who are Deaf or hard of hearing may request information in American Sign Language (ASL).
- Providing documents in plain language helps a wide range of people understand the information, including people with cognitive or intellectual disabilities.
- Creating accessible documents also ensures they are easier to edit and use. For example, it is important to remove accessibility barriers in Microsoft Word documents so that your information can reach a broad audience. For example, people who are blind and use screen readers that read aloud information on the screen such as text or image descriptions provided through alternative text (“alt text”) which describe graphics, pictures or images.

If you plan, format, and structure your information in an accessible way from the beginning, it will ensure the document is accessible and can be converted into a variety of different alternate formats (e.g. PDF, Rich Text Format or braille) while keeping its accessibility features.

If the accessible document you provided does not work for the person, remember to ask them what format or support would work best for them and provide it in that way.

It's the Law

[The Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#) (AMA), passed in 2013, requires organizations to comply with standards to create an inclusive and accessible Manitoba. Two standards apply to providing accessible documents and making information accessible for people with disabilities.

- [Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#) (2015), which requires all organizations with one or more employees to reasonably accommodate their customers. For example, organizations must meet communication needs by offering to communicate in different ways, such as writing things down, reading things out loud, and taking extra time to explain things.
- [Accessible Information and Communication Standard](#) (enacted May 1, 2022), which requires all organizations to offer materials in accessible formats or through a communication support such as American Sign Language or captioning.

Some sectors have more time to comply with the Accessible Information and Communication Standard. Sector-specific deadlines include:

✓ **May 1, 2023: Manitoba government**

✓ **May 1, 2024: Public sector organizations, large municipalities, libraries and educational institutions**

- Public sector organizations include Crown corporations, regional health authorities, Manitoba's 10 largest municipalities and government agencies, boards and commissions.
- Libraries include municipal, regional and City of Winnipeg libraries. Libraries also include libraries within educational institutions.
- Educational institutions include colleges, universities, adult learning centres, private vocational institutions, private and public schools.

✓ **May 1, 2025 - Private sector and non-profit organizations, and small municipalities**

- Private sector organizations includes businesses and organizations with one or more employees, such as shops, restaurants and professional services, as well as non-profit organizations.
- Non-profit organizations include charities, churches, community organizations and member associations.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or require this information in an alternate format, please contact the Manitoba Accessibility Office.

Manitoba Accessibility Office
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For questions about compliance, please contact:

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