

Accessibility for Manitobans: Everyone Benefits

Presented at Dementia Care

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Disabilities

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Manitoba 

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act



AMA became law in 2013

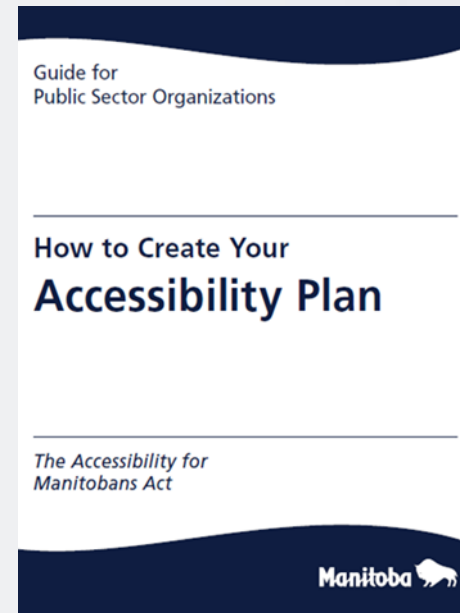
Main Goals:

- Identify, prevent, and remove barriers to participation.
- Make significant progress towards achieving accessibility by 2023

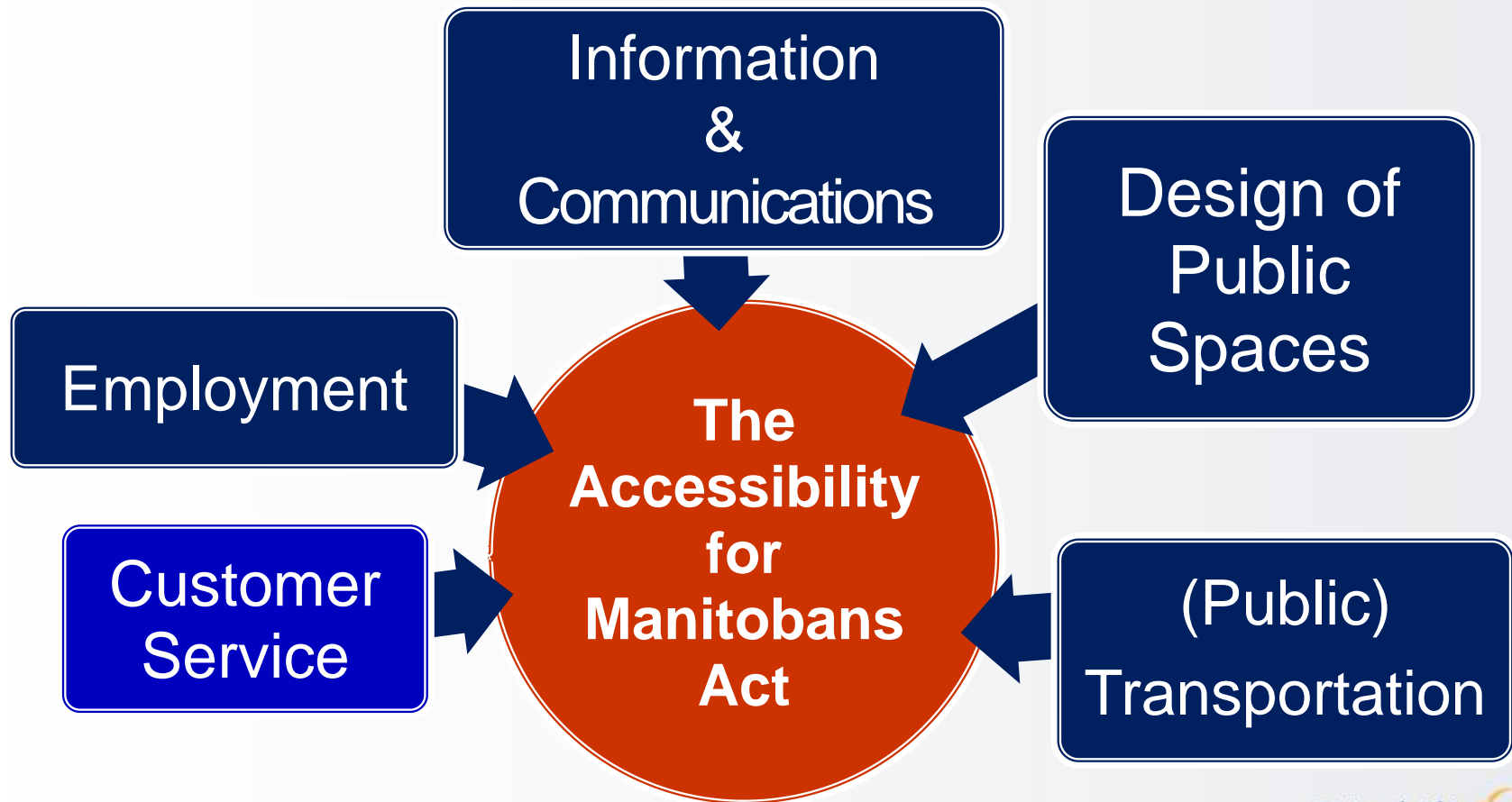
How does AMA do this?

Accessibility Plans –

- Public sector bodies* must address the identification, prevention and removal of barriers that disable people in their policies, programs, practices and services.
- Updated every 2 years.
- ▶ *Not a requirement of the private and non-profit sector



Five Accessibility Standards



Why accessibility legislation?

- **1 in 4**

Manitobans face
barriers to accessibility

= more than **300,000**
Manitobans with a
range of abilities



- Barriers come at an enormous cost, to persons with disabilities, to their family and friends, to their communities and also to business.

Accessibility Legislation in North America

- The Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990
- The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- The Accessibility Act (of Nova Scotia), 2017
- British Columbia tabled BC Accessibility Act, Spring 2018
- Canada federal accessibility legislation
1st reading in the Senate, November 2018



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It's the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do.

- 3.8 million Canadians identify as having a disability.
- Canadians with disabilities have annual spending power of \$55.4 billion.
- Removing barriers to access often costs little or nothing.



The Manitoba Human Rights Code remains the most important law in addressing discrimination

- Manitoba's Human Rights Code protects all of us from discrimination and ensures that we are treated with dignity and respect.
- Over 40% of complaints of discrimination in Manitoba are based on disability, including mental health issues.
- The AMA complements the Human Rights Code and offers proactive ways to ensure accessibility for everyone, regardless of their abilities.

Manitoba Human Rights Code

- **Reasonable accommodation** means adjusting a rule, policy, practice or a physical space to allow changes to the ways we usually do things.
 - In most cases, providing reasonable accommodation in customer service is simple, free and affordable.

THE MANITOBA
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION



LA COMMISSION DES
DROITS DE LA PERSONNE
DU MANITOBA

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Human Rights Code (...continued)

- The Human Rights Code says that the duty to accommodate should not create **undue hardship**.
For example:
 - ▶ significant health and safety risks
 - ▶ financial hardship (with significant impact)
- Inconvenience, preferences or some costs do not usually qualify as undue hardship.
- Collaborate with the person making the request to find another way to provide customer service.

Understanding Barriers



For people with disabilities, a barrier is **anything that interacts with their disability** in a way that may **impact, or even prevent, their full and affective participation.**

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Barriers to Participation

... may be **structural**

... may affect **information & communication**

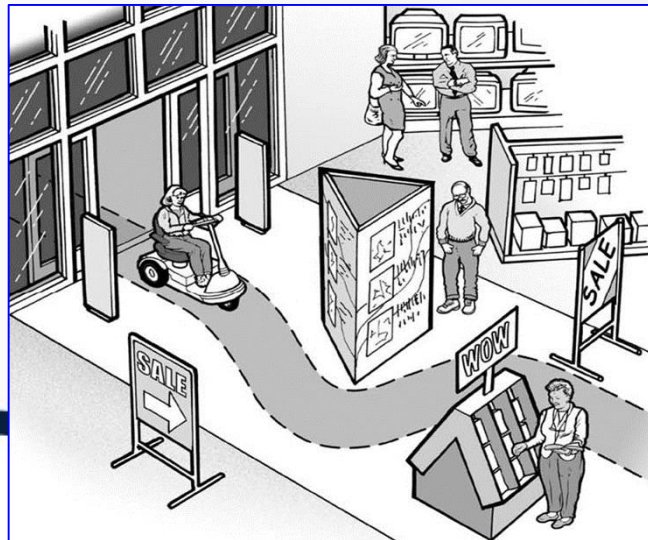
... may be affected by **technology**

... may be **systemic** when they are a result of policies and common practices

Attitudes can be the greatest barrier of all

Barrier Example

- ▶ Sarah has low vision. She is given a brochure with a font that she cannot read.
- ▶ Sarah's low vision is not the barrier. It is the small print. If Sarah had larger print she could read the material.



Focus on barriers, not disabilities

Some disabilities look like this



Some look like this



Accessibility Standard for Customer Service

- Must developing policies, practices and measures on how your organization will provide services to customers with disabilities.
- **Accessibility** requires you to put the **customer** first:
 - clients, service recipients, members
 - people who seek your goods, services or facilities.



Who has to comply?

- ▶ the government of Manitoba had until **November 2016** to comply
- ▶ **public sector organizations** – such as universities, colleges, health authorities, large municipalities, school divisions – had until **November 2017**



Who has to comply?

All Manitoba organizations that have one or more employees, including:

- **Businesses** – shops, restaurants and hotels, and legal, healthcare and other professional services.
- **Non-profit organizations** – charities, unions, places of worship, community organizations and member associations.



Accessible Customer Service Requires Policies



- 1. Communication:** Communicate in a way that best meets your customers' needs.
- 2. Assistive devices:** Accommodate the use of assistive devices.
- 3. Support persons:** Welcome support persons to enter and remain with customer.
- 4. Service animals:** Right of access to areas where the public is allowed.

Accessible Customer Service Requirements ...(continued)

5. Maintain accessibility features so they can be used as intended. Includes elevators, ramps etc.

6. Disruption of Accessibility Services: Alert customers and find alternatives

7. Feedback Process

8. Training



2. Assistive Devices

Assistive devices, like canes or hearing aids, enable people with disabilities to complete everyday tasks and activities.



Assistive technologies for people affected by dementia include clocks to help with orientation, automated medicine dispensers and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices.

- Please do not touch or move customers' assistive devices without permission.
- Staff are trained in how to use the assistive devices that are provided, including (list).

3. Welcome Support Persons

A support person assists with mobility, personal care, medical needs or with specific tasks, like banking.

- Address your customer, not the support person, unless requested by the customer to do otherwise.
- Make space for support persons on-site and ensure customers have access to their support persons at all times.



8. Required Training

Training on accessible customer service to employees, volunteers and management must include:

- **How to interact and communicate** with people who face barriers to accessing goods and services, use assistive devices, or are assisted by a support person or service animal.
- How to use any equipment or **assistive devices that are available** on-site.
- An overview of AMA, Manitoba Human Rights Code and the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.
- Our organization's policies, practices and measures, including updates or changes.

Additional Requirements

9. Documentation:

Organizations with **20 or more employees** must write down these policies and make them available to the public (i.e. website).



- **Public sector organizations** must have **accessible public events**: accessible notice, venue and offer accommodations and supports if requested.

Sample Accessible Customer Service Policy

Sample Accessible Customer Service Policy [Business/Organization Name]

Instructions:

This sample Accessible Customer Service Policy provides examples of policy statements, practices and measures for each requirement under the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. It is intended to help you create an Accessible Customer Service Policy for your business or organization.

Read and select from the examples provided. While all of the examples can be edited so that they apply to your organization, [anything written in brackets] needs to be tailored to meet your specific needs. Item 9 only applies to businesses or organizations with 20 or more employees.

Add, edit or remove practices and measures to fit your organization. Use this template, or copy the options below and paste them into a format that works for you.

Please review the [Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#) to understand your obligations. For more information, please see the [Employers' Handbook](#).

Creating Accessibility

Great customer service begins with the question:

How can I help?

How can we help?

We can offer service in different ways.



Comment pouvons-nous aider?

Nous pouvons vous fournir des services de différentes manières.

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Considerations:

- ✓ Respect – Speak to the customer, not the person with them, unless otherwise directed.
- ✓ Support – Customers with dementia may need accessible information and supports.
- ≠ **Stigma** – Focus on abilities rather than barriers.
- ✓ Patience – Your customer may need more time to express themselves or to move about.

Disabilities Issues Office: Here to Help!

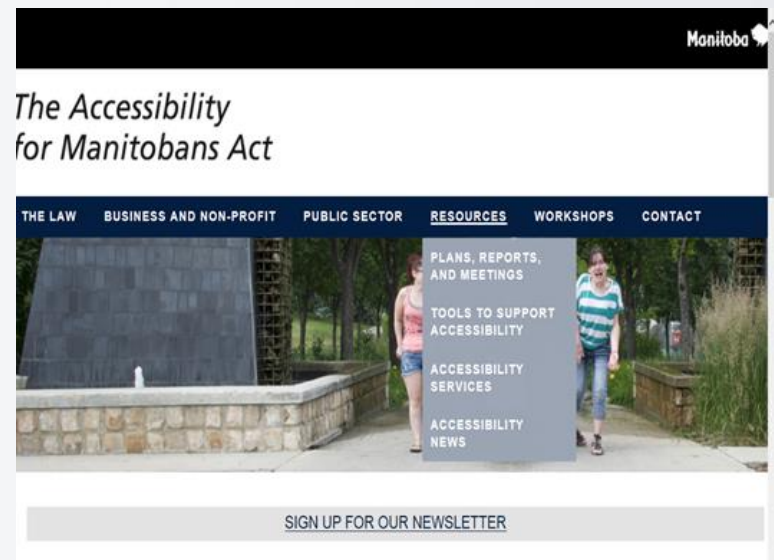
Questions?

If you have any questions,
please call

204-945-7613 or visit

AccessibilityMB.ca

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