

## Accessibility for Manitobans Act

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) became law in December 2013. Its main goals are:

- to identify, prevent and remove barriers for participation
- a long-term commitment to achieve significant progress by 2023 to make Manitoba more inclusive for everyone

By November 1, 2018, non-profit organizations with at least one employee must meet the Customer Service Standard.

## Definitions According to the Accessibility for Manitobans Act<sup>1</sup>

**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.

**Accommodations** – Arrangements made to allow persons with disabilities to participate or benefit equally.

**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.

## Customer Service Policy for the Manitoba Child Care Association – August 2018

The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

MCCA has reviewed current policies and measures of the organization, and will review new policies and measures to ensure these reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

MCCA has identified barriers that may interact with a disability in a way that affects any person's ability to participate in everyday life.

Identified barriers include:

- Attitude, including stereotypes and assumptions
- Physical barriers including stairs, doorknobs (v.s. levers) and cluttered pathways
- Communication barriers which prevent people from understanding information
- Technology barriers often relate to information and communication
- Systemic barriers are practice or policies that prevent many customer from accessing your services

MCCA is committed to removing these barriers so that all persons involved with the Association receive the same level of quality customer service. If a barrier cannot be removed, we will seek to provide alternate ways to access the good or service, without additional fees.

Our “customers” are our MCCA members to which we provide services to, as well as other professionals involved with the Association.

## Practices and procedures of MCCA’s Customer Service Policy

### 1. Communication and information

MCCA will communicate with people disabled by barriers in ways that take into account the nature of the barrier. If the barrier is unclear, we will ask the individual what method of communication works.

#### Practices:

- We will have signage displayed on our reception desk which will be displayed at all times which conveys the message “How can we help?”, this will also be verbally communicated to all customers as they enter into MCCA
- Staff/volunteers will demonstrate patience and find a quieter more private space to communicate with members, such as the resource library, if needed
- Signage and documents will use easy-to-read fonts (such as Calibri or Arial), in a larger text size and colour contrast (black on white)
- Paper and pens will be available at the reception desk
- MCCA’s publications will be made available in alternate formats upon request
- If requested, MCCA will make alternate communication methods available (i.e. ASL) for workshops or conference events -

### 2. Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities. In cases where the assistive device presents significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, we will attempt to use other measures to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.

#### Practices:

- MCCA staff/volunteers will not touch or move assistive devices without customer’s permission (such as a walker or cane)
- Staff will receive related training, including and regarding any assistive devices available on its premises

### 3. Support Persons

MCCA welcomes customers accompanied by a support person, who may remain with the customer at all times.

**Practices:**

- MCCA staff/volunteers will address the customer, unless requested to do otherwise
- There is no extra charge (i.e. workshop registration fee, meal at conference etc.) for the support persons, or,
- If there is a fee for a support person, we will notify the customer in advance

#### **4. Service Animals**

MCCA is committed to meeting the requirements of Manitoba's Human Rights Code and acknowledge the right of a customer to be accompanied in public places by a service animal "that has been trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability that related to that person's disability".

**Practices:**

- MCCA Staff/Volunteers will know how to identify a service animal by its harness or vest and by the assistance the animal is providing
- When it is not easy to identify if an animal is a service animal, staff may ask:
  - Is the animal assisting you?
  - What assistance has the animal been trained to provide related to your disability?
- Staff will treat a service animal as a working animal and not distract it from its job with petting, feeding, or playing, unless given permission to do so
- The handler must maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means. If the service animal is showing signs of not being controlled, the handler will receive a warning to control the animal and that if misbehaviour continues, the customer will be asked to leave.
- If another law prohibits service animals, we will explain why the animal is excluded and discuss with the customer another way of providing goods and services

#### **5. Maintain Barrier-Free Access**

MCCA is committed to maintaining barrier-free access to our goods and services and to ensuring that features of our business, there to assist barrier-free access (i.e. elevator, stairs, hallways, accessible washrooms, doorbell), are available for use as intended.

**Practices:**

- Hallways, the reception area, the resource library and the board room will be free of clutter, such as boxes or debris
- Entranceways will be cleared of snow and ice as soon as possible (responsibility of the Royal Bank)
- Space will be arranged to allow room for walkers, wheelchairs and scooters both on MCCA's premises as well as on off-site events (workshops, conferences)
- Standing signage will be placed in a corner where it is not a tripping hazard

#### **6. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of the features (accessible washrooms, elevator, stairs, automatic doors) that will affect access for customers disabled by barriers, MCCA

will promptly post notices when possible to announce the disruption and indicate when the issue will be rectified.

**Practices:**

- Staff will prepare a notice and/or announcement that includes the affected accessibility feature, the reason for the disruption, the anticipated length of time, and will identify a contact person or alternative access, if available
- Notice will be given in the following ways:
  - Posted on website, Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram
  - Posted at entrance
  - Via email to all MCCA members

## **7. Feedback Process**

MCCA welcomes feedback on customer experience with our efforts to ensure accessibility and any advice from our customers. Customer feedback will help us to identify and remove barriers and better respond to concerns.

**Practices:**

- Feedback may be provided via the following ways: visit us in person, phone, email, website (contact us)
- All feedback will be directed either directly or indirectly to the Executive Director, who will determine what action, if any, should occur
- If the feedback involves a request for follow-up, the individual will be notified that the feedback was received and will be informed of the timeline for review
- The Executive Director will ensure actions are documented, including timeline
- MCCA will communicate the response to the feedback in a manner that meets the communication needs of the individual who is inquiring

## **8. Staff/Volunteer Training**

MCCA will ensure that staff and volunteers will receive training on accessible customer service by November 2018. Ongoing training will be provided when there are updates to measures, policies and practices that affect barrier-free access to goods and services.

**Training Includes:**

- Overview of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act
- Overview of reasonable accommodation and definition of a service animal under the Human Rights Code (Manitoba)
- Overview of the Customer Service Standard and the organization's policies and actions to meet the standard's requirements
- How to interact and communicate with people disabled by barriers, including persons who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use any equipment or assistive devices available on the premises
- Staff/volunteers will sign a notice of understanding upon receiving the overview information

**9. Public Event Accessibility**

MCCA will take reasonable steps to ensure easy access for all persons at the Association’s meetings, workshops, conferences and any other public events. All events will be publicized in an accessible manner. We invite our customers to inform us of any requests for any relevant disability accommodations or supports.

For more information on this or any policies of the Manitoba Child Care Association, please contact the Executive Director at (204) 586-8587 Ext. 225 or email [jkehl@mccahouse.org](mailto:jkehl@mccahouse.org)

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<sup>1</sup> For a full listing of the glossary of terms, <http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/glossary.html>

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**Employee Signature**

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**Date**