



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

December 2017

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INTRODUCTION: Why an accessibility plan for Elections Manitoba?

Elections Manitoba has a mandate to make voting accessible. As the organization responsible for ensuring all eligible Manitobans have the opportunity to participate in elections, Elections Manitoba is committed to identifying and removing barriers to full participation.

Current election law already provides many ways for Manitobans with disabilities to easily and independently cast a ballot. In December 2013, *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)* became law. Under the legislation, public sector organizations must create an accessibility plan in order to comply with the legislation. As Elections Manitoba works towards compliance with the legislation, we will build on our solid base of accessibility to the democratic process in Manitoba.

According to Statistics Canada, nearly 180,000 or one in six Manitobans has a disability. This number will grow as our population ages. Barriers to accessibility affect persons with disabilities, their family and friends, and their communities. An accessibility barrier is anything that limits or prevents a person from receiving information, goods and services, from accessing a space or from participating in an activity.

Barriers may be:

- Attitudinal
- Informational or communication-related
- Technological
- Systemic (policies and practices)
- Structural (physical or architectural)

The AMA provides an opportunity for us to examine our existing practices and processes, celebrate our achievements to date, and identify priorities for eliminating barriers in the future.



STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Accessibility is fundamental to ensuring free and fair elections. Elections Manitoba is committed to ensuring that all eligible voters can access their democratic right to cast a ballot. Accessibility is enshrined in Manitoba's electoral laws and is a primary consideration in our organization's practices and policies. Elections Manitoba has identified accessibility as an ongoing strategic priority. We will continue to strive towards eliminating barriers to full participation in the democratic process.

PART I. Elections Manitoba background

Elections Manitoba is the office of the chief electoral officer of Manitoba, the independent office of the Legislative Assembly that conducts provincial elections, byelections and referendums. The office is not part of government; we report to the Legislative Assembly as a whole, through the Speaker. We report annually and after each election and byelection.

Elections Manitoba's work is governed by two laws: *The Elections Act* (EA) sets out the way elections are run and *The Election Financing Act* (EFA) sets out the rules for political participants. These participants include registered parties, candidates, leadership contestants, constituency associations, third parties and contributors.

The main role of Elections Manitoba is to oversee the conduct of provincial elections and byelections in Manitoba. We are responsible for developing and implementing processes to ensure that electoral events are conducted in a free and fair manner while adhering to legislative requirements. When election legislation is amended, it is our job to put changes into effect in a timely and efficient way.

Election law also gives Elections Manitoba the authority to inform the public about the electoral process. More specifically, it allows us to create and run election education programs for those people and groups that are most likely to experience barriers to participation.

Political participants must follow many rules and regulations. As the administrator of election legislation, Elections Manitoba is the best source of accurate and impartial information to make the process as easy as possible. Elections Manitoba is dedicated to assisting all political participants and volunteers with comprehensive information to help them comply with all elections and financial reporting rules.

Financial statements of political participants must also be made available to the public. Statements are published on our website, and may also be viewed in person at our office, on request. Public disclosure ensures transparency and integrity in campaign financing.

STRUCTURE

Elections Manitoba has a core staff of 17 permanent employees. This number increases significantly during a general election. Headquarters staff grows to approximately 55. Also, the Chief Electoral Officer appoints 57 returning officers (ROs) and 57 assistant returning officers (AROs), one for each electoral division in the province. These officers are responsible for running the election within their own divisions, each opening the equivalent of a branch office. In turn, ROs and AROs appoint approximately 8,000 people across the province to work as office staff, registration agents, voting officers and in other positions within their own divisions.

ELECTION CYCLE

The work of Elections Manitoba takes place in a four-year cycle, as general elections are usually held once every four years. Manitoba has a set date for provincial general elections. The first set date election was October 4, 2011 with the following general election set to be held the first Tuesday of October 2015. However, due to the timing of the federal election, the provincial election was postponed to April 19, 2016.

In addition to the election itself, the first year of the election cycle includes wrap-up and closing of returning offices, as well as the return of materials to Elections Manitoba. This is followed by another intense period of activity, when financial statements are due from registered parties, candidates and third parties. At the same time, the organization holds debriefing sessions for returning officers and assistant returning officers and evaluates the conduct of the election. A statement of votes and report on the election are submitted to the Legislative Assembly.

To begin the second year of the election cycle, we hold a strategic planning session where we identify priorities and schedule election preparation activities. Years two and three are focused on detailed planning and

implementation, with additional work required when new legislation calls for changes in administrative processes. In year four, the roll-out of election activities begin, including training of ROs and AROs, securing spaces and procuring materials, recruiting election staff and advertising.

In the current election cycle (May 2016 to October 2020), a review of the electoral division boundaries will be held. This review is required by law every 10 years. The review process is led by a commission made up of the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Justice of Manitoba and the presidents of the University of Manitoba, Brandon University and University College of the North. Elections Manitoba provides administrative support to the Electoral Divisions Boundaries Commission, and responds to or implements its recommendations. The work of the commission will be completed in 2018.

The next provincial election will be held October 6, 2020.



ENVIRONMENT

Elections Manitoba must always be prepared to conduct elections, byelections and referendums. The organization operates in a complex environment driven by several factors, the most significant of which are the uncertainty of the timing of elections and the continuous potential for legislative change.

Although there is a set election date, a general election may be called at any time, and Elections Manitoba must always be ready. When a vacancy occurs within an electoral division, a byelection must be held to fill the vacancy within six months.

Legislative changes happen frequently and with little or no advance notice. These changes can range from minor process adjustments to widespread procedural change.

A large staff component is required to carry out deadline-driven election activities in a very short timeframe. These deadlines are set by law. Most of the approximately 8,000 staff required to run elections are recruited to work for a very short period of time. Of this number, approximately 6,000 work for a single day, either as voting officers, information officers or registration officers. Approximately 1,000 registration agents visit homes in areas of growth and high mobility to add names of eligible voters to the voters list. Preparation of the preliminary, revised and final voters lists must be complete by legislated dates in the election calendar. Nomination forms are required from candidates by a specific date and must be reviewed and accepted or rejected by Elections Manitoba by the end of the day that nominations close, so that ballots can be printed in time for advance voting.

Another key challenge in an election is space: A location must be found in each of the 57 electoral divisions for a returning office. Over 1,500 voting

locations are needed for election day and advance voting. Voting locations must be supplied with materials to allow close to 742,000 voters to cast a ballot.

Finally, there is an ongoing potential need for Elections Manitoba to conduct referendums as required under various laws.

ELECTIONS MANITOBA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In the strategic planning for the 2020 general election, Elections Manitoba identified several priorities to guide our activities over the next four years:

Legislation

- Implement legislative changes
- Recommend legislative changes to improve administrative practices
- Assist political participants and others to comply with legislation
- Monitor overall compliance with legislation

Service

- Provide accessible voting opportunities to Manitobans
- Leverage technology innovations in service delivery
- Manage resources efficiently
- Maintain effective budget controls and reporting
- Provide assistance and training to stakeholders
- Provide ongoing training and resources to staff

Accessibility

- Develop and implement a plan to meet the standards under the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* to identify, remove and prevent barriers faced by persons with disabilities
- Build on plans to find ways to make voting accessible for all Manitobans



Innovation

- Review, assess and change organizational practices, where feasible, to deliver services effectively and efficiently
- Leverage technology to streamline organizational work
- Seek out new ways to improve performance

Engagement

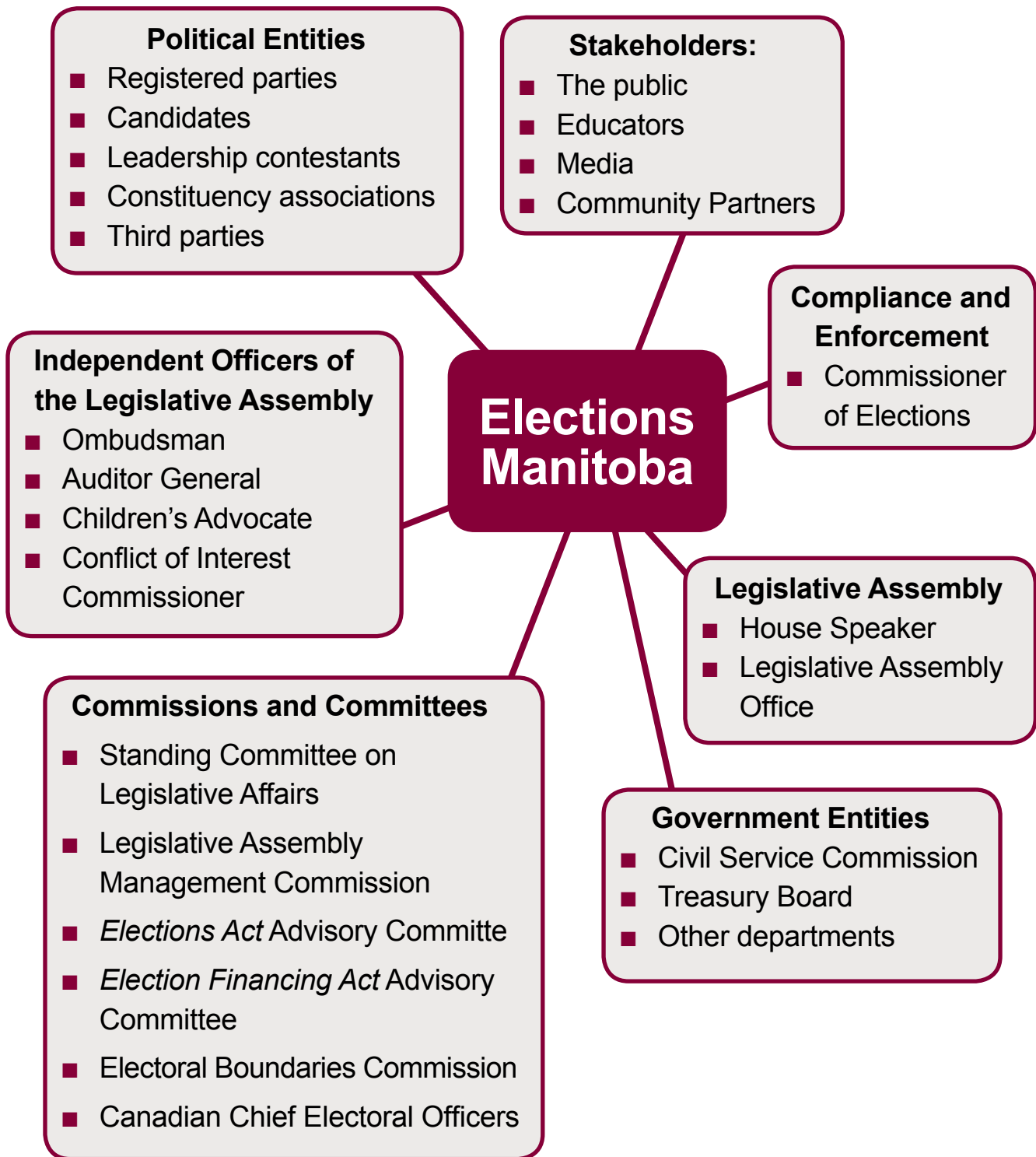
- Maintain and strengthen existing partnerships with organizations, vendors and other stakeholders
- Continue to reach out to existing and future stakeholders, including youth and those disconnected from the voting process
- Identify new approaches to establishing partnerships and conducting effective outreach to support democratic practices

PART II. Programs and Services of Elections Manitoba

- Conduct elections and byelections
- Conduct referendums
- Education program
- Community outreach program
- Post-secondary outreach program
- Registration of political participants
- Financial compliance assistance



PART III. Stakeholders/Clients



Our primary stakeholders are eligible Manitoba voters. As per *The Elections Act*, this group includes all Manitobans who are:

- 18 years of age or older
- Canadian citizens
- Residents of Manitoba for six months immediately before election day

Based on an estimate from 2016, there were 903,577 eligible voters at the time of the general election. This is by far the largest stakeholder group of Elections Manitoba.

As citizens become eligible, whether by reaching the age of 18, attaining Canadian citizenship, or living in the province for six months, the primary stakeholder group expands. In this way, our secondary stakeholder group feeds into the primary one.

With eligible voters constituting almost 70% of Manitoba's population, it is likely that our stakeholder group has the same proportion of people with disabilities as the overall population.

Election staff also constitutes a significant stakeholder group. The majority of staff are themselves eligible voters and, in working for Elections Manitoba, they play a key role in the democratic process.



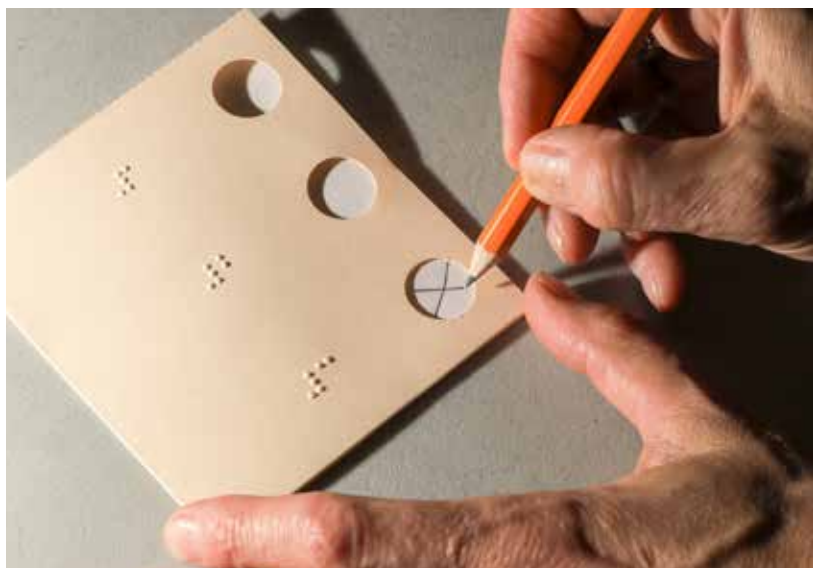
PART IV. Achievements to date

a. Legislation:

Many potential barriers are addressed and removed through current election legislation. From the selection of accessible locations for returning offices and voting places, to the variety of voting options available for people with disabilities, Elections Manitoba can meet the needs of almost every eligible voter.

The following are specific accessibility provisions in the EA and the EFA:

- Voting places must be accessible to people with physical disabilities. This includes election day voting places and advance voting places. Because each returning office is also a voting place, the office itself must be accessible. (EA sec. 103(3), 125(6))
- Voting with a Braille ballot template: Elections Manitoba prints Braille ballot templates and Braille lists of candidates for all voting places. This allows people who are blind to vote with a regular ballot and without assistance. (EA sec. 118(1) and (2))
- Voter requiring assistance: A voter may bring someone with them to help them mark the ballot. The person must be at least 18 years old and must take an oath. Alternately, the voting officer may help the voter. (EA sec. 119(1))
- Moving ballot box (curbside voting): If a voter can't enter a voting station because of a disability, the voting officer can bring the ballot box outside to them. (EA sec. 121(1))



- Homebound voting: If a voter can't leave his or her home because of a disability, he or she can apply to vote at home. The voter's caregiver may also vote this way. For homebound voters, a voting officer brings the ballot to the voter's home. (EA sec. 151(1))
- Separate voting area for multiple residence of fewer than 100 units: The returning officer may establish a separate voting area for an apartment, condominium or other multiple residence with fewer than 100 units, where the majority of residents are seniors or persons with disabilities. This allows the residents to vote without leaving the building. (EA sec. 64 (5.1))
- Institutional Voting: The returning officer must set up voting stations for patients and residents of health care facilities. (EA sec. 137(1))
- Co-located facilities: A returning officer may extend an institutional voting station in a health care facility to include an adjoining facility or residence where seniors or persons with disabilities live. (EA sec. 137(1.1))
- Candidates with a disability:
 - Any reasonable disability-related expenses incurred by a candidate to allow him or her to campaign in an election are not considered election expenses. In other words, they are not counted towards the candidate's election spending limit. (EFA sec. 50 (3.6))
 - Candidates are reimbursed for all reasonable disability-related expenses incurred during an election period, as long as the candidate receives 10% or more of the valid votes in his or her electoral division. The expenses must be over and above any expenses he or she would normally incur. (EFA sec. 74 (2))
- Plain language:
 - *The Elections Act* was re-written in plain language in 2008.
 - *The Election Financing Act* was re-organized and re-written in plain language in 2013.

b. Policies/Practices of Elections Manitoba arising from the legislation or developed to enhance accessibility:

- Accessibility checklist: As part of their election preparation, all returning officers must complete an accessibility checklist for every voting place in their electoral division. For the 2016 general election, all but one of 1,507 voting locations met the accessibility requirements.
- In addition to the Braille ballot templates, Elections Manitoba provides large print lists of candidates to voters with low vision.
- Elections Manitoba makes arrangements for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to assist voters with registration and voting. This service is provided at no cost to the voter.
- Returning officer training includes a module on assisting voters with a disability. The module provides advice on how best to assist voters with specific types of disabilities, while emphasizing respect and the need to safeguard the rights of all voters.
- Employment equity policy and procedure are in place for recruitment of returning officers and assistant returning officers.
- Elections Manitoba complies with government employment equity policy and procedure for recruitment of all permanent staff.
- Question & Answer Book prepared for election period includes sections on accessibility options for voters. This book is used by all headquarters and returning office staff to easily access information on specific topics.
- Elections Manitoba website includes a section on accessibility options for voters.
- Print advertising during an election includes information about the homebound voting option. The information is also publicized in our media relations campaign, through social media and in information provided to voters during an election.

- Election legislation is written in plain language. Elections Manitoba is reviewing all existing public materials to ensure they are also in plain language. Any new documents created for the public will be written in plain language.
- Lowered front counter in reception area, accessible washrooms and meeting rooms at Elections Manitoba's headquarters
- The font on write-in ballots has been enlarged and changed to make them easier to read.

c. Outreach/consultation for the 2016 general election:

- Consulted with disability organizations to receive feedback on our informational materials and to assist them in providing information to members of the community on accessibility voting options. Information was also provided on the enumeration process and how eligible voters with intellectual disabilities living in group homes could be added to the voters list through enumeration.
- Consulted with the Disabilities Issues Office on our accessibility checklist for voting places and our public accessibility information materials.
- Participated in several events held by the Disabilities Issues Office to on *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*, including:
 - Awareness and Training Event on the legislation
 - Consultation on Customer Service Standard
 - Workshop on developing an accessibility plan
 - Training on advancing accessibility



- Created and distributed a brochure and e-newsletter to disabilities organizations with information on accessible voting options.
- Presented election information workshops at two organizations supporting individuals with disabilities:
 - Independent Living Resource Centre, Wpg
 - Community Living Selkirk

PART V. Accessibility consultation, May 31, 2017

Elections Manitoba hosted a consultation for disabilities organizations to share an early stage of this plan and seek their feedback. Participants were asked for their comments and ideas on three specific areas:

- Accessible customer service
- Accessible information and communications
- Accessible voting opportunities

Thank you to the following community agencies and individuals for your valuable input:

- Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre: Noella Gentes
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)/Vision Loss Rehabilitation Manitoba: Leonard Furber, Joanne Fabian, Cliff Diakiw
- Deaf Centre Manitoba: Sheila Montney, Doug Momotiuk
- Disabilities Issues Office: Colleen Watters
- E-Quality Communication Centre of Excellence: Shaina Dumont, Brenda Rutherford
- MNP: Jason Ducharme, Caroline Quinn

- Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society of Canada, Manitoba Division: Ken Schachtay
- Inclusion Winnipeg: Janet Forbes
- Society for Manitobans with Disabilities: Heather Hiscock

The consultation was a positive, open and constructive dialogue. Participants advised Elections Manitoba, in developing our plan, it is important to consider a wide range of disabilities resulting in unique needs. They also stressed the importance of increasing awareness of the many voting opportunities already available to eliminate barriers to voting. Comments and observations can be grouped into several key themes or recommendations:



INCREASED AND MORE EFFECTIVE TRAINING OF FRONTLINE STAFF

Participants in the consultation said there was a need for front-line staff to have a better understanding of the types of accessibility barriers and the importance of respect, patience, listening and dignity. Suggestions included asking, “Do you need assistance with anything?” and then listening attentively to the response as an effective way to support voters with disabilities. They also stressed that it was important that staff be aware of the wide variety and range of disabilities, including less obvious disabilities, like “unseen” cognitive disabilities, in addition to the more obvious physical disabilities. Participants also emphasized the importance of ensuring that customer service training is delivered by individuals/ organizations with expertise.

BETTER PROMOTION AND AWARENESS OF EXISTING SERVICES

Many participants shared that they were not aware of the full range of services currently offered by Elections Manitoba to reduce barriers. They also suggested that disabilities organizations could be effective partners in spreading awareness of voting opportunities and services provided by Elections Manitoba. All participants expressed their willingness to help communicate to their own communities. They also offered to provide resources, research and additional feedback to Elections Manitoba on specific disabilities and how to reduce barriers.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS

Participants shared information on existing technologies that could easily enhance the accessibility of elections, including video calling, texting and screen readers. We were made aware of a new service developed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), called Video Relay Service (VRS), which enables people with hearing or speech disabilities who use sign language to communicate with voice telephone users using Internet-based videoconferencing.

Others commented on the need to make many different options available for communication, noting, for example, that people with similar disabilities may not use the same communication methods. Many noted the importance of clear directional and informational signage that uses a combination of verbal and pictorial messages, as well as staff positioned at entry points and along the way to a voting place.

The responses and comments provided by participants have been carefully considered and many have been incorporated into this plan.

PART VI. Existing Barriers

ATTITUDINAL

- Lack of knowledge/awareness among staff of range of barriers that exist and how to support accommodations
- Lack of knowledge/awareness among some staff about accessibility legislation and regulations

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Most forms and publications not readily available in multiple formats
- Some forms not written in plain language
- Not all staff aware of appropriate communication methods and accessible customer service practices for people with disabilities

TECHNOLOGICAL

- Website is not accessible to all. Does not meet WCAG 2.0 standards for web accessibility.

SYSTEMIC

- Lack of knowledge among staff on the options available for voting
- Lack of policy to ensure training addresses needs of persons with disabilities

PHYSICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL

- Not every voting location is fully physically accessible; however, as was noted at the consultation, it's important to balance physical accessibility with convenience for the larger population, especially in smaller communities where the most central location may not have complete accessibility.

PART VII. Priority Areas

- a. Ensure accessibility for all voters to participate in the democratic process in a manner that is fair and respectful.
- b. Ensure staff have an understanding of all options that are available to voters with a disability
- c. Ensure staff are aware of the range of barriers and how to support accommodations, within existing election legislation
- c. Ensure staff are aware of how to communicate appropriately with and assist people with disabilities
- d. Ensuring staff have the training they need to provide service in a manner that is fair and respectful to people with disabilities.
- e. Ensure policies are in place to support the above priorities
- f. Ensure all policies and training are documented

PART VIII. Policies

Elections Manitoba is guided by many of the same policies developed by the Civil Service Commission and in use throughout the Manitoba Government. These include:

- Manitoba Policy on Access to Government Publications, Events and Services
- Reasonable Accommodation Policy
- Employment Equity Policy

Elections Manitoba's mandate is to ensure free, fair and accessible elections so all eligible voters in Manitoba have the opportunity to cast their ballot. The legislative framework for the operations of Elections Manitoba comes from two key pieces of legislation: *The Elections Act* (EA) and *The Election Financing Act* (EFA). Other pieces of legislation that ensure accessibility to elections in Manitoba include:

- The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* which guarantees that every eligible voter has the right to vote
- *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*, which provides that individuals should have barrier-free access to place and events that are generally available in the community, as well as to those things that will give them equality of opportunity and outcome

Many policies, practices and measures already in place at Elections Manitoba respond to the requirements outlined in the customer service regulation. The following accessible customer service policy has been developed and will be in effect in the coming months and leading up to the next general election. The policy addresses voting opportunities, interactions with voters and general communications with voters.

- 1. Communications:** Communication with persons with disabilities must be done in a manner that takes barriers into account:
 - Advertising and other informational materials are produced in a variety of formats, incorporating the principles of plain language use and design that enhances clarity of the message.
 - Election information is conveyed using a variety of methods, e.g. print, radio, television, online, etc. to ensure that minimize barriers to communication.
 - Elections Manitoba provides, on request, ASL interpretation for the purposes of adding a voter to the voters list or casting a ballot
 - Elections Manitoba promotes accessible voting opportunities in its advertising and communications campaigns as well as in collaboration with disabilities organizations.
 - Elections Manitoba makes reasonable efforts to ensure that, when communicating with a person who self-identifies as being disabled by a barrier, that the communication is done in a manner that takes into account the barrier.
- 2. Assistive Devices:** Individuals who use assistive devices and other supports, including personal mobile devices, may use them inside voting places and behind the voting screen, and at any other location where Elections Manitoba business is conducted, where permitted by law. Voters are advised that care should be taken to preserve the secrecy of the vote, as per sec. 123(1) of the EA.
- 3. Support persons:** Individuals who are accompanied by a support person may have access to that person when casting their ballot, after the support person signs an oath. This is guaranteed under sec. 118 of the EA.
- 4. Service animals:** Individuals who use service animals are allowed to be accompanied by the service animal into voting places and behind the voting screen and at any other location where Elections Manitoba business is conducted.

5. **Built environment:** Voting places must be accessible with clear and unobstructed hallways and accessible features, such as automatic entrances, doors and ramps, where available. Ramps may be supplied by Elections Manitoba to eliminate a potential barrier in a voting place.
6. **Feedback process:** Members of the public may provide feedback on accessible customer service through a variety of methods: in person, by phone or email. Feedback provided to a returning office will be forwarded to headquarters by returning office staff. An initial response is provided within one week, with any follow-up provided within a reasonable period of time. Any resulting actions are documented.
7. **Information about accessible customer service policies, processes and practices:** Returning offices and voting places will display information about accessible voting opportunities and options. Information will direct members of the public to the Elections Manitoba website for information on customer service policies, processes and practices.
8. **Training:** Elections Manitoba provides accessible customer service training to election officials, returning office staff and permanent staff. Election officials receive training prior to taking on their responsibilities and returning office and permanent staff receive training within a reasonable time of taking on their responsibilities with Elections Manitoba.



- 9. Public events:** Any public event held by Elections Manitoba is to be accessible by ensuring the following:
- Notice of the event is to be provided in a manner that is accessible to persons with disabilities.
 - Events are to be held in a location that is accessible, or where this is not possible, other methods must be in place to ensure participation.
 - Reasonable accommodation will be provided on request for those wishing to participate.
 - Notice will be given that people with disabilities may request supports or accommodation.

PART IX. Identifying Initiatives and Actions

| 1. GENERAL | | |
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| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes | Status |
| Provide training to all HQ staff on the <i>Accessibility for Manitobans Act</i> , including customer service standard regulation and other standards to be developed | Increased awareness among staff to ensure understanding of EM's requirements under the legislation | Ongoing |
| Review manuals and training materials to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ensure all field staff are aware of accessibility options for voting b. incorporate customer service standard c. increase awareness of how to communicate with/assist voters with disabilities | Better accessibility and service for voters in future elections and byelections | In progress; to be in place for 2020 general election |
| Continue to document processes that ensure voting is accessible and make those processes available to the public in plain language | Increased public awareness of accessibility measures in place to facilitate voting for people with disabilities | Ongoing |

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE

| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes | Status |
|--|---|--|
| Review voting place accessibility checklist to ensure criteria are up to date. Continue to seek feedback from disabilities organizations on the criteria. ¹ | Remaining current with evolving accessibility needs of the public to ensure best possible accessibility to voting | First review to be complete for 2020 general election and ongoing as required |
| Use accessibility checklist when preparing for Boundaries Commission public consultation | An accessible consultation process | Public consultation to be held in 2018 |
| Ensure election staff receive customer service training that creates awareness of the range of disabilities, the unique needs that result, and the importance of awareness, respect, listening and dignity | A more positive voting experience for people with disabilities | To be completed for permanent staff in 2017 and to be in place for 2020 general election staff |
| Review customer feedback process to ensure there is a mechanism to let customers know that feedback has been received and is being considered | Transparency and accountability in customer relations | To be in place for 2020 general election |

¹ Considerations mentioned in the consultation included:

- Voting places on bus routes
- Sidewalks, parking lots and voting place clear of snow and other debris
- Clear signage for wheelchair accessible entrance
- Accessible signage, pictorial plus verbal
- Good lighting
- Ample seating available

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| With the assistance of Manitoba disabilities organizations, develop and conduct a post-election survey of their clients' experience during the election | Better understanding of needs and experiences of voters with disabilities | After the 2020 general election |
| Investigate the possibility of offering a live chat option during the election period as an additional method to provide feedback and ask questions about the election | Additional method of customer feedback | To be in place for 2020 general election |
| Following a general election, review customer service feedback received to inform future planning for prevention and removal of barriers | Effective use of resources to prevent and remove barriers for greatest customer service impact | Ongoing |
| Continue to register and provide information to voters at homeless shelters | Reduction of barriers to voting for marginalized | Ongoing |
| Make large/easy-grip pencils available at voting places for voters to mark their ballots | Greater ease for voters to mark their ballot | To be in place for 2020 general election |

3. VOTING OPPORTUNITIES

| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes | Status |
|--|---|---|
| Examine the feasibility of having (a) designated voting station(s) with specialized help for those with disabilities | More convenience and access to voters with a wide variety of disabilities | Long term – after 2020 general election |
| Introduce a recommendation to extend the absentee/ write-in ballot opportunity to people with disabilities who are unable to go to a voting place ² | | By the 2020 general election |

4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes | Status |
|--|---|---------|
| Continue to review communications materials to ensure they are written in plain language | Increased understanding of election processes, requirements and voting opportunities for all stakeholders | Ongoing |
| Review directional and way-finding signage at voting locations to ensure it is clear and easy to understand. Continue to place staff at entrances to voting places so they can direct voters in the building | Improved access to voting place. | Ongoing |

² A legislative amendment may be required to bring this into effect.

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| Include close captioning in election TV commercials for 2020 and any other widely viewed public videos produced by EM | Better awareness of voting opportunities and election information | To be in place for 2020 general election |
| Circulate information to all staff on creating accessible documents | More pro-active approach to developing documents that are accessible, rather than responding to requests for a document in an alternate format | Ongoing |
| Ensure WCAG compliance for voting opportunities sections of the Elections Manitoba website | Better user experience for people with disabilities; better access to information for voters with disabilities | To be in place for 2020 general election |
| Partner with disabilities organizations to inform disabilities communities about accessibility services and voting opportunities | More voters with disabilities can vote more easily | Ongoing |
| Keep registered parties and candidates informed about Elections Manitoba's efforts to increase accessibility, e.g. provide accessibility plan to them, and encourage them to make their materials and events more accessible | Better accessibility in all aspects of the democratic/political process | Ongoing |

| | | |
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| Develop policy to allow for voters with disabilities to use their mobile devices to assist them with voting | Allow more voters to cast their votes independently, without the assistance of friend or voting officer | Ongoing |
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5. EMPLOYMENT

| Initiatives/Actions | Expected Outcomes | Status |
|--|---|--|
| Investigate training for staff on reasonable accommodation and how it can remove barriers in the workplace | 1. Ensure preparation for upcoming employment standard | To be in place for 2020 general election |
| Review current HR policies and practices to identify how accessibility is addressed | 2. Begin to build a culture that supports awareness of barriers faced by employees in the workplace and accommodates employees who face barriers. | Ongoing |
| Explore opportunities to increase diversity in hiring election staff where appropriate, including people with disabilities | | Ongoing |

For more information, contact:

ELECTIONS MANITOBA

Phone: 204-945-3225

Toll-free in Manitoba 1-866-628-6837

Email: election@elections.mb.ca

Web: electionsmanitoba.ca



***Elections Manitoba** is the non-partisan office
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running all provincial elections.*

