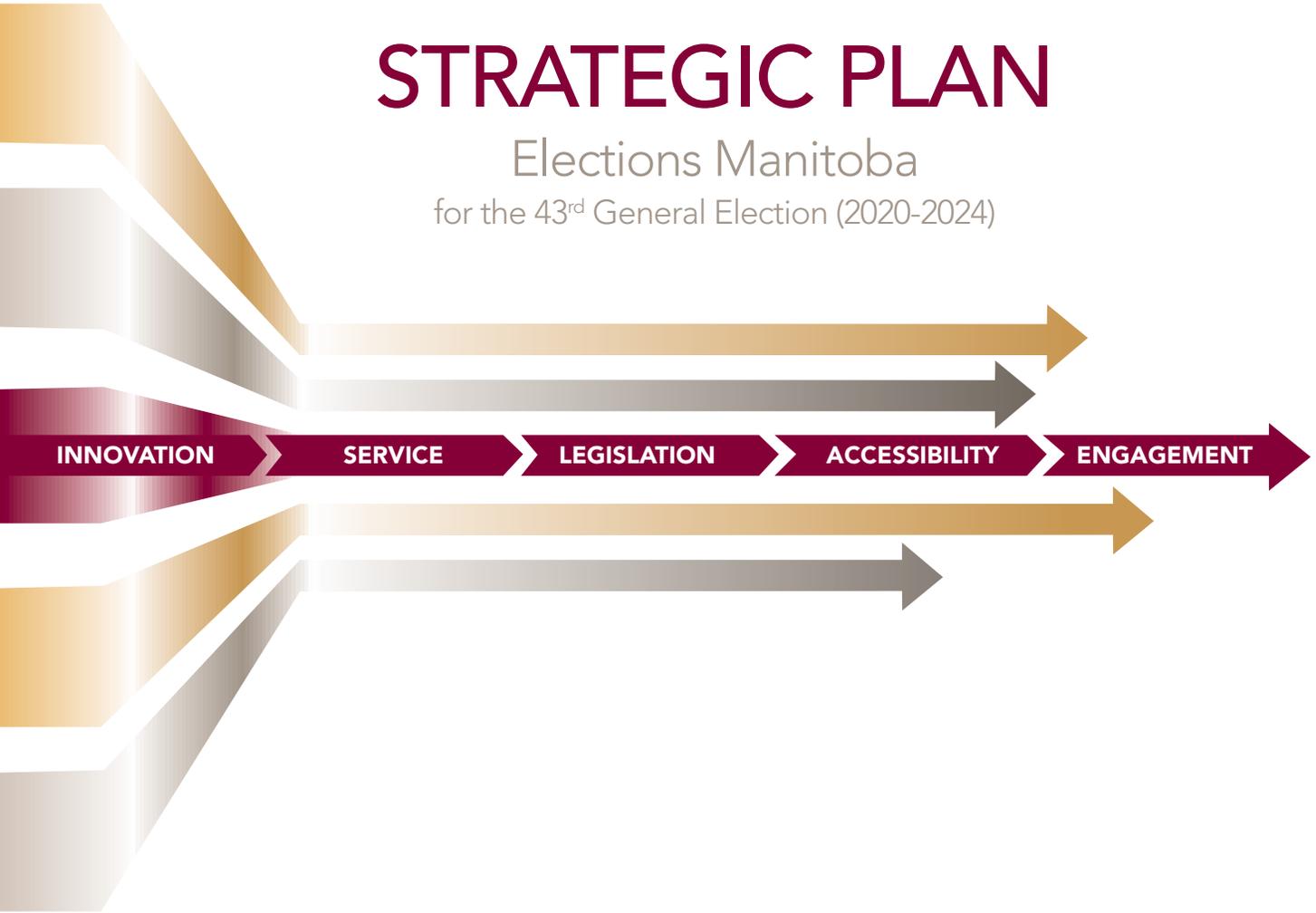
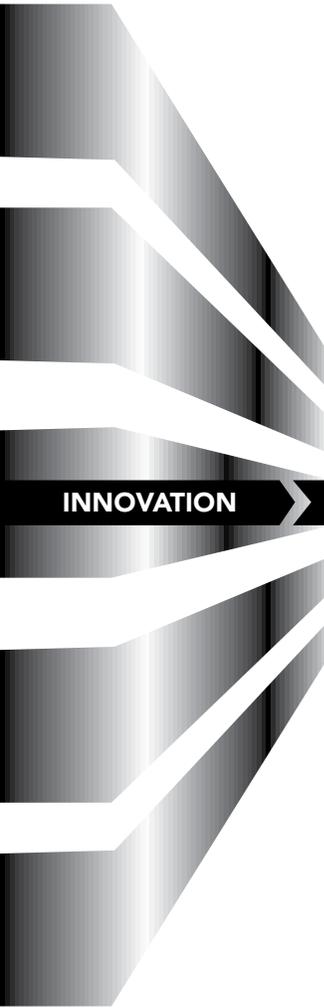


STRATEGIC PLAN

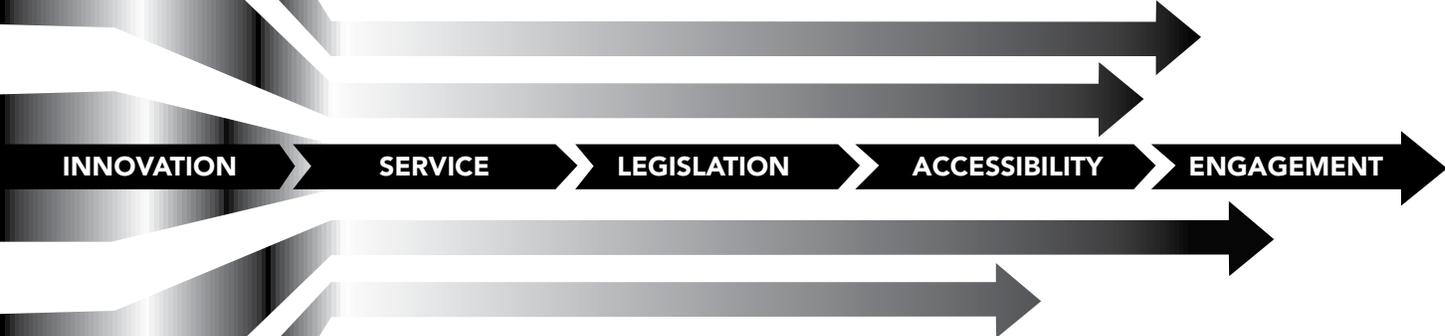
Elections Manitoba
for the 43rd General Election (2020-2024)





STRATEGIC PLAN

Elections Manitoba
for the 43rd General Election (2020-2024)



INNOVATION

SERVICE

LEGISLATION

ACCESSIBILITY

ENGAGEMENT

Table of Contents

Message from the Chief Electoral Officer	3
Our Organization	4
Our Mandate	5
Our Mission	5
Our Vision	5
Our Core Values	6
Our Stakeholders	7
Our Strategic Priorities	8
Our Environment	9
Performance Measures	10
High Level Plans 2020 – 2024	13

Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

2020 marks our 40th anniversary as an organization delivering free and fair elections for Manitobans. While this strategic plan looks forward to the next four years, it is also important to look back and acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments of serving voters and political participants.

Elections Manitoba successfully ran the 42nd general election on September 10, 2019 while implementing many new legislative and technological changes and improvements. The success of this election was due to the professional and skilled staff, both at headquarters and in the field; the participation of registered parties and candidates; the commitment of our stakeholders; the efforts of our suppliers; and of course the active effort of voters to make their voices heard by voting.

This election reflected our strategic priorities of innovation, service, legislation, accessibility and engagement. There was considerable change in the way we worked and delivered service. The 42nd general election focused heavily on implementation. We introduced our new permanent register of voters, made changes to our advance voting process after consulting with the standing committee and streamlined many of our forms and administrative processes to increase operational efficiency and deliver exceptional service. It was heartening to see these efforts proceed and improve the election process.

The 42nd general election was not a fixed date election and underlined the importance of our organization being election-ready on an ongoing basis. That perpetual state of readiness must also allow time to plan, test and implement service improvements to meet the expectations of the voters and political participants we serve.

As we go forward we will look at refining the changes we introduced and extending what worked well into other areas to support efficiency in our operations. Our analysis of this election leads us to the work we need to undertake for the next election and is captured by this strategic plan. This plan lays out a reasonable agenda to carry us into the next general election.

Since the creation of our office in 1980, Manitoba has marked many electoral accomplishments in the past 40 years, often leading the way on changes to the electoral process. These include:

- Providing more accessible voting opportunities by making voting places and returning offices accessible and offering special voting opportunities like eight days of advance voting, homebound voting and absentee voting.
- Delivering education and outreach programs for schools and those who face barriers to voting. Elections Manitoba has worked with schools for over 30 years to deliver information about the voting process as well as with shelters and community organizations to connect voters experiencing homelessness or facing other obstacles to voting.
- The establishment of a shared code of conduct for political participants. Manitoba is the first and only province to establish this type of code.

For the last 40 years we have had dedicated and committed staff and stakeholders actively participating in the election process and contributing to the ongoing development of a free, fair and accessible democratic process in our province. I commend the efforts of our staff from the first staff complement 40 years ago to the present, as well as the thousands of Manitobans who have run for office or worked to deliver free, fair and accessible elections over the past 40 years. I look forward to implementing this plan and the continued advancement of election practices in Manitoba.



Shipra Verma, CPA, CA

Our Organization

Overview of Elections Manitoba

Public confidence in the institutions of government rests directly on the capacity of the electoral system to perform efficiently, reliably, impartially and in a timely fashion. The integrity of the electoral system supports the legitimacy of representative government. In 1980, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (Elections Manitoba) was established as an independent office and made directly accountable to the Legislative Assembly.

For the past 40 years, the focus of Elections Manitoba has remained constant as set out in *The Elections Act* and *The Election Financing Act*. It is the responsibility of the office to conduct free, fair and accessible elections; to provide all eligible voters the opportunity to vote; to promote public awareness through education; outreach and advertising; and to ensure compliance with legislation. Elections Manitoba operates in a complex environment driven by several factors, including:

- Uncertainty of the timing of the general election:
 - Set general election date is subject to change based on the discretion of the Lieutenant Governor
 - Must be ready to conduct an election at any time
- Uncertainty of the timing of byelections
- Statutory deadlines for election activities
- Frequent and significant changes to electoral legislation
- New legislation for conducting referendums under various laws within the framework of the recently passed *Referendum Act* and uncertainty of the timing and exact processes for a referendum.
- Community outreach and ongoing education about the constitutional right to vote to diverse audiences

In addition, technology and public expectations drive and shape our work, and raise opportunities for business transformation.

Role of the Chief Electoral Officer

Manitoba's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and the staff of Elections Manitoba administer provincial elections ensuring they are fair and free of political influence. The CEO must be non-partisan and may not vote in any provincial election.

Elections Manitoba must be prepared at all times to conduct general elections, byelections and referendums. The CEO directs Elections Manitoba in facilitating participation in all aspects of provincial elections by:

- Offering a voting process that is straightforward, responsive and well-known to all voters
- Safeguarding fairness, impartiality and compliance by political entities and voters
- Providing assistance to political participants in fulfilling their legislative requirements
- Supporting and promoting democratic participation through province-wide public education and information programs

Our Mandate

To deliver free, fair and accessible elections in a fiscally responsible manner by providing eligible voters the opportunity to cast their ballot and supporting political participants in accessing their rights and meeting their responsibilities.

Our Mission

To foster the democratic rights of citizens through the conduct of free and fair elections, enhance public confidence and awareness of the electoral process, and assist political participants to comply with legislation.

Our Vision

To provide information, opportunities and resources to foster excellence, participation and fairness in the electoral process.

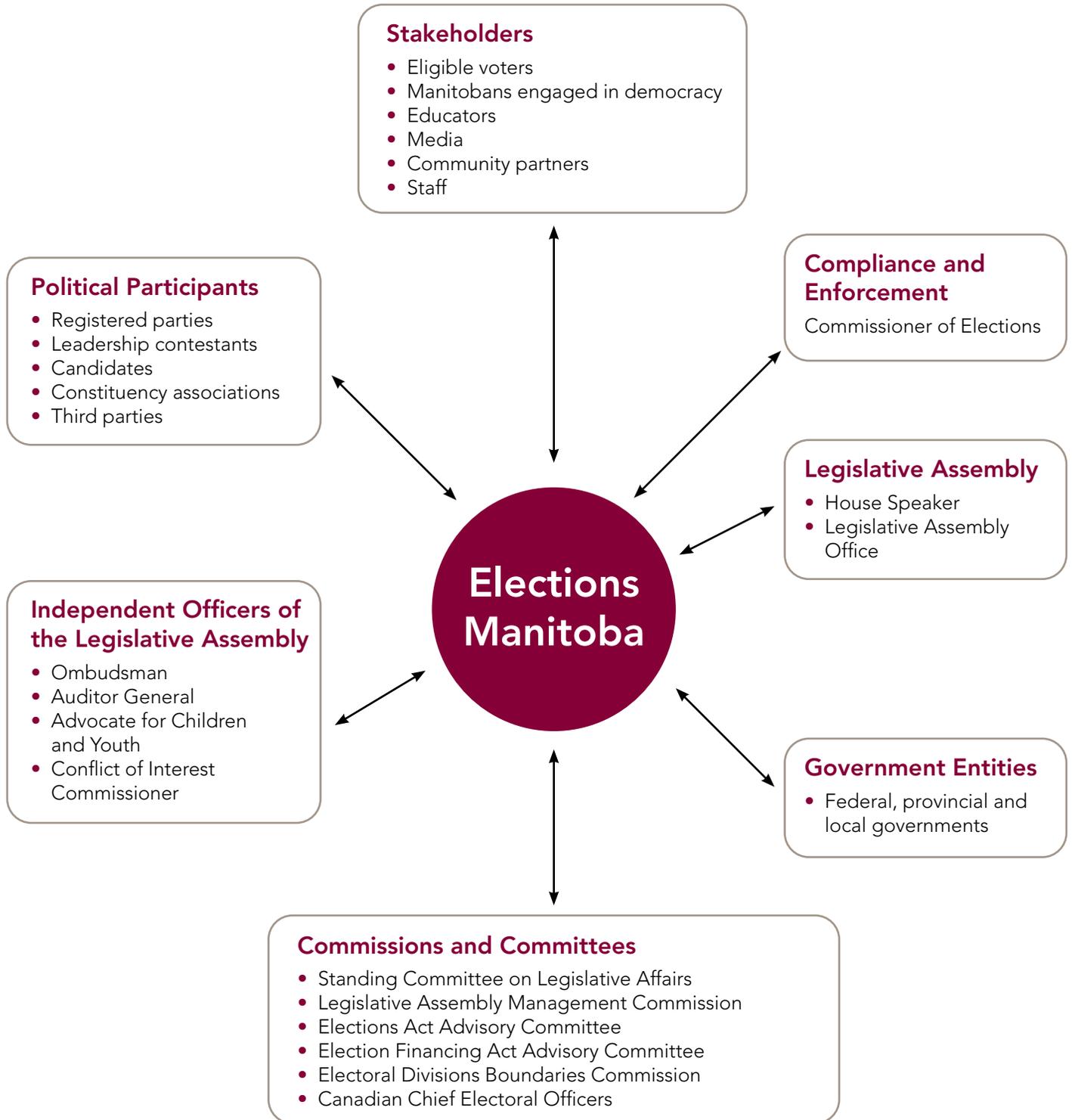
Our Core Values

Elections Manitoba has a set of core values that guide the organization to fulfill its mandate and achieve its strategic priorities. The activities and actions of staff and leadership of Elections Manitoba reinforce these core values as part of its culture.



Our Stakeholders

Elections Manitoba has a broad range of stakeholders. Stakeholders include all Manitoban citizens, eligible voters, candidates, political participants, community partners, as well as the media, the Legislative Assembly, service delivery partners and other electoral agencies:



Our Strategic Priorities

To achieve its mission and vision, Elections Manitoba has identified five strategic priorities, along with supporting actions for the next four years:

<p>Legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement legislative changes • Recommend legislative changes to improve administrative practices • Assist political participants and others to comply with legislation • Monitor overall compliance with legislation
<p>Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible voting opportunities to Manitobans • Leverage technology to enhance service delivery • Manage resources efficiently • Maintain effective budget controls and reporting • Provide assistance and training to stakeholders • Provide ongoing training and resources to staff
<p>Accessibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfill the legislated responsibilities within <i>The Elections Act</i> and <i>The Accessibility for Manitobans Act</i> to identify, remove and prevent barriers faced by persons with disabilities. • Build on activities and plans to make voting accessible to all Manitobans.
<p>Innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 conduct effective outreach to support democratic practices.

Our Environment

Elections Manitoba works in a dynamic and demanding environment that requires a small organization to be agile and responsive to achieve its legislative mandate. Significant amendments to both *The Elections Act* and *The Election Financing Act* in recent years have expanded the mandate of Elections Manitoba. *The Elections Act* was amended in 2017 to change the method of voter registration from full enumeration to a permanent voter register. Further changes to legislation are likely to occur as legislators and election officials work to ensure electoral processes are up-to-date and effectively serve Manitobans.

As an independent office of the Legislative Assembly, Elections Manitoba operates in an impartial and non-partisan manner within a highly partisan and political environment. Independence, in both fact and perception, is essential to meeting stakeholder expectations and integral to the way Elections Manitoba does business and deals with political participants.

Elections Manitoba strives to deliver free, fair and accessible elections and encourages participation among all stakeholders. While Manitobans may not necessarily know Elections Manitoba by name, they know their voting rights and are overwhelmingly satisfied with the voting process. Elections Manitoba has a legislative mandate to provide information to voters who may experience barriers in accessing their democratic rights. Carrying out this mandate effectively requires a balance between supporting voters less likely to participate and ensuring consistency in the information it provides to all voters.

In developing our strategic priorities for the next three to four years, Elections Manitoba considered many factors, including participation rates, evolving voting patterns, attitudes about voting, satisfaction with the voting process and the need to be responsive to change. Our strategic plan is shaped not only by our analysis of the recent general election but also the larger electoral environment, especially emerging trends across other Canadian jurisdictions. Fundamentally, however, Elections Manitoba's priorities must reflect the needs and expectations of Manitobans while being responsive to potential changes in the legislative framework.

Challenges Facing Elections Manitoba

With each election, Elections Manitoba faces a new set of challenges due to the constantly changing environment in which it operates. Over the next three to four years, the primary challenges are as follows:

- Maintaining and building on the accuracy, currency and completeness of the Manitoba Voter Register
- Improving the accuracy of addressing, and covering more addresses in Indigenous communities and rural areas
- Delivering effective, just-in-time training for election officials using a range of training options
- Refining the way technology is used in voting places, and reviewing and assessing the expansion of technology in the election process
- Integrating and maintaining election management technology systems
- Building on accessibility plans and practices and meeting new standards of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*
- Preparing to respond to a potential referendum as set out in *The Referendum Act* and in any regulations made under the Act, including developing forms and processes for public and internal use
- Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through transitioning to working from home and staggered return to the office while maintaining remote access, as well as contingency planning for alternatives to regular voting in case of public health and/or emergency orders in effect

Performance Measures

Elections Manitoba is committed to delivering free, fair and accessible elections. The following performance measures align with the organizational mandate, mission and vision.

Complete, Accurate and Current Voters List

The voters list is often referred to as the cornerstone of democracy. The introduction of the Manitoba Voter Register resulted in the development of a high quality voters list. A complete, current, and accurate voters list allows the voter to be processed more efficiently and makes the voting experience more positive for the voter and election official. Additionally, a high quality voters list ensures the successful mail delivery of voter information cards.

Elections Manitoba will continue to build on the quality of the voters list.

Complete, Accurate and Current Voters List

Performance Measure	Benchmark*	2019 Result	2023 Target
Completeness of voters list	90% +/- 5%	91%	95%
Accuracy of voters list	92% +/- 5%	95%	92%
Currency of voters list	90% +/- 5%	85%	90%

* Based on Permanent Voter List Study

Effective and Efficient Election Events

Elections Manitoba's primary responsibility is to deliver effective and efficient provincial elections that serve all eligible voters and political participants. The voting process must be accessible to voters and election staff must provide professional, non-partisan service.

Effective and Efficient Election Events

Performance Measure*	Benchmark	2019 Result	2023 Target
Overall voter satisfaction with voting experience –satisfied or very satisfied	94%	93%	95%
Satisfaction with amount of time it took to vote –satisfied or very satisfied	95%	93%	95%
Voting location is convenient for the voter – very convenient or somewhat convenient	97%	97%	98%
All voting locations and returning offices are accessible	99%	99%	98%
Advance voting stations established so that a population centre with more than 50 eligible voters did not have to travel more than 30 km to vote	100%	100%	100%

* Based on post-election surveys

Accurate Public Communication

Elections Manitoba will continue to focus on being a reliable source of information about the electoral process, and when, where and ways to vote.

Elections Manitoba will continue to implement a coordinated communications and outreach strategy to increase awareness of elections and particularly address the needs of voters who face barriers to voting.

The security and integrity of communication and information technology systems will also be maintained to support voter confidence in the electoral process.

Accurate Public Communication			
Performance Measure	Benchmark*	2019 Result	2023 Target
Website information is accurate and updated to the election phase (prewrit, registration, revision, advance, election, post-election)	New measure	Most information updated to election phase	100%
Social Media			
Twitter followers	New measure	1,397	2,000
Facebook followers		700	1,500
Instagram followers		127	400
Schools provided with Your Power to Choose (YPTC) sessions	165 annual workshops	184 workshops	195 sessions (dependent on public health orders in effect)
Outreach information and activities are provided to: 1. New Canadians 2. Disabilities organizations 3. Post-secondary institutions 4. Manitobans of no fixed address		Information provided to 100% of these four targeted communities	100%
Implementation of Indigenous Peoples Outreach and Engagement strategy – work with local leadership to recruit Indigenous staff	New measure	N/A	100% of communities
Information, resources made available to political participants (candidates official agents and auditors, registered parties, constituency associations, leadership contestants, third parties)	100%	100%	100%
Complete and pass a security audit prior to a general election	New measure	100%	100%
Satisfaction with online experience – satisfied or very satisfied	New measure	83%	85%

* Based on data from last two general elections

Fiscal Responsibility

Elections Manitoba is committed to being a responsible steward of public funds and providing cost effective and efficient services.

Fiscal Responsibility			
Performance Measure	Benchmark*	2019 Result	2023 Target
Budget implementation	Spending within 5% of allocated budget	Spending within 5% of allocated budget	Spending within 5% of allocated budget
Independent audit of Elections Manitoba operations and elections budget	100%	100%	100% compliant

* Based on data from last two general elections

Compliance

Financial reporting, disclosure, compliance, and monitoring contributions support fair electoral processes and ensure a level playing field for all political participants. Elections Manitoba works with political participants to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.

Compliance			
Performance Measure	Benchmark*	2019 Target	2023 Target
Compliance review – candidate, party and constituency association compliance reviews completed within three months of the filing deadline	75%	in process	75%
Conduct review of returns in compliance with legislation and assist political participants in meeting their requirements	100%	100%	100%

* Based on data from last two general elections

High Level Plans 2020–2024

The following chart outlines the high-level work Elections Manitoba will undertake over the next four years. Activities fall into one of two categories: Those that are specific to this election cycle and those that must be carried out by the organization each year. All activities are guided by Elections Manitoba’s strategic priorities.

Strategic Priorities	2020-2024 Election Cycle Activities	Annual Activities
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop recommendations for legislative amendments to make changes to voting processes, as approved and demonstrated in general election for advance voting and voting books • Prepare recommendations for legislative amendments to support administrative efficiencies • Apply consistent information collection practices for voter information (registration, certificate envelopes) • Provide for consistent voter list content and format • Consider expanding leave for staff to support voter registration • Allow for electronic signatures for certain forms • Build more flexibility to update and maintain accuracy of final voters list • Consider allowing for more staffing flexibility at voting stations • Prepare for <i>Referendum Act</i> regulations by developing materials such as forms and web information • Monitor for legislative changes, particularly to the <i>Election Financing Act</i> (EFA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Advisory Committees as per <i>Election Act</i> and <i>Election Financing Act</i> • Update list of acceptable identification • Provide annual voters list to registered parties (unless within six months of a general election) • Prepare and distribute annual report and appear before Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs • Update tariff • Update contribution limits • Conduct annual review of returns from registered parties and constituency associations • Conduct annual contribution review • Track and report on outstanding loans and deficits
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update HR processes, forms and job descriptions • Assess major operational activities such as purchasing and warehousing • Review forms • Review and update procurement plans and processes • Develop a data management strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and report on operational and statutory budgets • Commission independent audits of annual and election-related budgets • Maintain and update payroll systems
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a plan for the new accessibility employment standard • Explore telephone voting to enhance voting opportunities • Review website and update as needed to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update internal plan in consultation with community groups representing people with disabilities

Strategic Priorities	2020-2024 Election Cycle Activities	Annual Activities
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update internal election management system with a particular emphasis on integration with other systems and reports • Upgrade recordkeeping system for candidates • Replace legacy financial review system • Expand and improve use of webinars for training and information sharing • Review and assess support system within HQ and field • Review web and phone infrastructure for HQ and field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate and maintain election databases • Maintain Manitoba Voter Register, including data updates, and undertake voting pattern analysis
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement Indigenous outreach strategy in consultation with communities, particularly looking at voting, mapping, registration, and employment • Expand Vote Pop-Up program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update training and manuals for field staff • Deliver Your Power to Choose (YPTC) programs for schools and adult learning centres • Review and update as needed plans to reach out to those facing barriers to voting

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