

Manitoba Bar Association Accessibility Policy

Overview

The purpose of this policy is to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in obtaining, using and benefiting from the services offered by the Manitoba Bar Association.

A “barrier” is defined as anything that interacts with that disability in a way that may hinder the person’s full and effective participation in society on an equal basis.

The following are examples of barriers:

- a) A physical barrier;
- b) An architectural barrier;
- c) An information or communications barrier;
- d) An attitudinal barrier;
- e) A technological barrier;
- f) A barrier established or perpetuated by an enactment, a policy or practice.

This policy consists of six parts:

- Part 1 – Policy Scope
- Part 2 – Commitments to Accessibility
- Part 3 – Training
- Part 4 – Feedback
- Part 5 – Documentation
- Part 6 – Responsibility for the Policy

Part 1 – Policy Scope

1.1 The policy requires all MBA staff, individuals in a volunteer role with the MBA, and all third-party contractors providing goods and services on behalf of the MBA, to accept responsibility under the policy and be accountable for its successful implementation. The policy refers to these individuals as “service providers”.

1.2 The policy applies to any individual not mentioned in section 1.1, including MBA members, who has a disability and enters the MBA’s premises, or interacts with the MBA by telephone, over the internet, or through any other means of communication. The policy refers to these individuals as “service recipients”.

1.3 The policy does not override the MBA’s legal obligations to a service recipient as a result of any law including, for example, *The Human Rights Code* of Manitoba.

Part 2 – Commitments to Accessibility

2. The MBA will respect the dignity and independence of a service recipient and provide him or her with an equal opportunity to access, use and benefit from the services offered by the MBA.

2.1 The MBA will seek to identify and remove possible barriers of accessible customer service on an ongoing basis and will seek to prevent new barriers from being created.

Communications

2.2 For the purpose of the policy “communications” means a process of providing, sending, receiving, and understanding information.

2.3 Service providers will communicate with service recipients in a way that accommodates the service recipient’s disability. The service provider will make it a practice to ask “how can I help you?” and work with the service recipient to try to find the most accommodating means of providing the information, document, or service required by the service recipient.

Telephone Services

2.4 The MBA will provide an accessible telephone service to accommodate the needs of service recipients through the use of clear pronunciation, plain language and an appropriate pace. The MBA will offer to communicate with service recipients through alternate means of communication, such as e-mail, fax, or mail, where telephone communication is not suitable.

Assistive Devices

2.5 Service providers will accommodate service recipients in using personal assistive devices to access MBA’s services. MBA staff will be trained to be familiar with assistive devices, and on where they can secure the necessary support to assist service recipients in accessing MBA services.

Service Animals

2.6 Service providers will accommodate the use of service animals by service recipients, as allowed by law. In situations where the entry of a service animal is excluded by law, the service provider will work with the service recipient to make alternate arrangements to provide MBA’s services.

Support Persons

2.7 When a service recipient is accompanied by a support person, the service provider will ensure that both individuals may enter the premises, and that the service recipient has access to the support person at all times while on the premises.

Public Events

2.8 The MBA will take reasonable measures to ensure that MBA events are held in accessible meeting spaces and that notices of events will be given in an accessible manner. The MBA will also take reasonable measures to ensure that notice is given that persons disabled by a barrier may request that relevant supports be provided and take reasonable measures to ensure that such requests are met.

Notice of Service Disruption

2.9 When a disruption in a service or facility of the MBA intended to facilitate barrier-free access to the MBA's services is anticipated, the MBA will provide advance notice of the disruption by posting a notice in a conspicuous place near the affected service or facility, posting a notice on the MBA's website, as well as by any other method deemed reasonable under the circumstances. The notice will set out the reason for the disruption, a description of alternate facilities or services available, if any, and the expected time period for the disruption. In circumstances where the disruption occurs suddenly or unexpectedly, the MBA will provide the notice as soon as possible.

Fees

2.10 The MBA will ensure that any fee or charge relating to accommodating a person who is disabled by a barrier is imposed only if the MBA cannot otherwise reasonably accommodate the person.

2.11 When the MBA is charging an admission fee for an event, it will clarify in its advance publicity what fee, if any, applies to a support person.

Part 3 – Training

3.1 All service providers will receive training on accessible customer service. The MBA will provide ongoing training for new service providers and updated training when changes are made to its policies or procedures.

3.2 Training will include information on:

1. Instruction about:
 1. how to interact and communicate with persons disabled by a barrier;
 2. how to interact with persons who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a support person or service animal;
 3. how to use any equipment or assistive devices that may be available to assist persons disabled by a barrier; and
 4. What to do when a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the MBA's goods or services.
 5. Further information can be found at:
http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/pdf/tips_for_employees.pdf
2. The MBA's policies, procedures and practices relating to the provision of accessible customer service.

3. A review of *The Human Rights Code* of Manitoba (<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/h175e.php>), and *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and the Customer Service Regulation (<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/a001-7e.php>).

Part 4 – Feedback

4.1 The MBA will invite feedback on the accessibility of its goods and services by service recipients. Feedback may be provided:

1. by mail;
2. by telephone;
3. in person; and
4. by e-mail.

4.2 Feedback received will be forwarded to the appropriate personnel, and the response will be documented and tracked.

4.3 A person providing feedback to the MBA will receive a response from the MBA within 30 days from the date the MBA received the feedback. The response will be communicated in a manner that is appropriate in the circumstances and suitable for persons who are disabled by barriers.

4.4 Actions taken by the MBA resulting from feedback will be documented. That documentation will be made available upon request.

Part 5 – Documentation

5.1 The MBA will provide the following information on the MBA website, and will make it available in the appropriate formats to service recipients on request:

1. the policy; and
2. the process for providing feedback on the accessibility of MBA goods and services.

5.2 The MBA will post a notice in the reception area welcoming service recipients to use assistive devices and encouraging them to ask for support from MBA staff.

Part 6 – Responsibility for the Policy

6.1 The Executive Director:

1. Sets, implements and maintains corporate administrative policy and program direction.
2. Receives and reviews all feedback related to customer service accessibility and ensures appropriate follow up with those providing the feedback. Reviews and approves recommendations arising from the feedback.
3. Coordinates and administers training for employees on accessibility standards for customer service.
4. Coordinates assessments of the impact of the applicable legislation on MBA services and service delivery.

6.2 Council:

1. Oversee the consistent application of the policy.
2. Foster an environment that reflects and supports the purpose of the policy.
3. Work in compliance with the policy and related processes.

6.3 Service Providers – Employees, Volunteers and Third-Party Contractors:

1. Work in compliance with the policy and related processes.
2. Attend training and education sessions on accessible customer service when required.