

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU) is committed to improving the lives of its diverse membership and all Manitobans, including persons with disabilities. The MGEU is leading the way in "putting people first" by forming an ad hoc Working Group to ensure equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face barriers to accessibility. We will do this by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers and by meeting the requirements of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA).

GENERAL POLICIES FOR PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The MGEU is committed to the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and complying with its accessibility standards, including the Customer Service Standard.

For a person who has a physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory disability, a barrier is anything that prevents or makes things more challenging for people with disabilities to participate and engage fully as a member of the MGEU. At the MGEU, our members are our customers. We are committed to excellence in serving all members, including persons disabled by barriers.

Our accessibility policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, and equality of opportunity for persons disabled by barriers. Any policies of the MGEU that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, inclusion, and equal opportunity for persons disabled by barriers will be modified or removed.

Communication

We will communicate with members disabled by barriers in ways that take into account the nature of the barrier. This may include the following:

- Documents use easy to read fonts and plain language.
- Paper and pen available at reception/whiteboard.
- Staff speak at a normal pace and ensure there is a clear view of face and mouth.
- All publications will include the active offer: Available in alternate formats upon request.
- Use language that is considerate and respectful of persons disabled by barriers.

We will work with the member to determine the barrier and what method of communication works best for them.

Assistive Devices

Members disabled by barriers may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, other measures will be used to ensure the member can access our services or facilities.

Support Persons

We welcome persons disabled by barriers and their accompanying support person. Members with disabilities may participate in union activities accompanied by a support person and may have access to that support person at all times.

A support person is someone who accompanies a member disabled by a barrier to assist the member in removing barriers to union activities.

Consent from the member with a disability is required when communicating private issues related to the member with a disability, in the presence of a support person. The support person must agree to keep information obtained at member-only meetings confidential.

If not already covered by a third-party, reasonable expenses for the support person will be covered, as outlined with the terms provided for in the MGEU Policy and Procedures Manual.

Service Animals

We welcome persons disabled by barriers and their service animals. Service animals are allowed while visiting our offices and/or taking part in union activities. It is the responsibility of the member with a service animal to keep the animal with them and in control at all times.

When it is not easy to identify that an animal is a service animal, if appropriate, staff may ask the member:

- 1) Is the animal assisting you?
- 2) What assistance has the animal been trained to provide related to your disability?

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will explain why the animal is excluded and discuss with the member another way of accessing our services.

Maintain Barrier-free Access

We will maintain barrier-free access by ensuring areas accessible to members are free of obstacles and barriers that may impede access.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of services or facilities for members disabled by barriers, the MGEU will take reasonable steps to promptly post notices and, when possible, staff will explain the disruption. A clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. We may not be able to give advance notice in an emergency disruption.

The notice will be made publicly available in the following ways:

- Posted on the website and social media.
- Posted at entrances.
- Immediately explained by staff, including the Resource Centre.

Feedback Process

We welcome feedback on how we provide accessible services to our members. Member feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. Members can provide feedback by contacting the Resource Centre.

All feedback, including complaints, will be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator.

We will investigate, document, and respond to all complaints relating to such services in a timely, thorough and objective manner. Members can expect to hear back within three (3) business days.

We will make sure our feedback process is accessible to members disabled by barriers by providing accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Training

MGEU will make accessible member service training available to:

- All staff.
- The Board of Directors.
- Our Activists.

All staff will be trained on accessible member service within a reasonable timeframe after being hired. Re-training will occur as policies are update.

Training will include:

- Background and purpose of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and The Human Rights Code (Manitoba).
- Requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard and explanation of all policies relating to the Accessible Customer Service Standard.
- How to interact and communicate with members disabled by barriers.
- How to interact with members with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- How to help a member disabled by barriers if they are having difficulty accessing our services or facilities.

Events

We are committed to ensuring members disabled by barriers are able to participate fully in union activities.

Organizers of all MGEU meetings, conferences, schools, and conventions will make arrangements based on members' requests to ensure these events are accessible to all members and provide necessary services to accommodate members disabled by barriers.

MGEU will make events accessible by:

- Announcing events in a manner that is accessible, including active offer.
- Holding events in accessible meeting places.
- Inviting requests for reasonable disability accommodations in advance.

Documentation

MGEU will document all required policies, practices, and procedures for providing accessible service to members in the MGEU Policy and Procedures Manual. MGEU will inform members that these documents are available on the website or by request through the Resource Centre. (Board of Directors June 2018)