



Accessible Customer Service Policy

The Winnipeg Folk Festival (WFF) is committed to complying with the accessibility standard for customer service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Our policies, practices and measures reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for disabled people.

If a barrier to accessing our goods or services cannot be removed, we seek to provide alternate ways to access the goods or services.

The WFF is a year-round arts organization that presents one of North America's premier outdoor music festivals each July.

The following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and management.

1: Meet communication needs.

Policy statement: We meet the communication needs of our patrons, volunteers and employees.

Practices and measures:

- To meet communication needs, when appropriate we offer to communicate in different ways, such as writing things down, reading things out loud and taking extra time to explain things:
 - keep paper and pens available to write things down (at the festival site and in the office)
 - offer a chair when longer conversations are needed (at the festival site and in the office)
 - offer a quieter space to sit down to engage with someone using a wheelchair (at the festival site where possible and in the office)
- We use signs and documents that are easy to read, including using larger fonts and colour contrast, and ensuring messages are not printed on images.
- We write signs and documents in plain language.

2: Accommodate the use of assistive devices.

Policy statement: We accommodate the use of assistive devices when patrons, volunteers and employees are accessing our goods, services or facilities.

Practices and measures:

- We do not touch or move patrons, volunteers and/or employees' assistive devices without permission.

3: Welcome support persons.

Policy statement: We welcome support persons and we let the public know in advance if support persons must pay admission or service fees.

Practices and measures:

- We address the patron, volunteer and/or employee not the support person, unless requested by the patron, volunteer and/or employee to do otherwise.
 - We make space for support persons on-site and ensure the patron, volunteer and/or employee always have access to their support persons.
- We waive admission or service fees for support persons at the festival.
- We let the public know upon request if admission or service fees cannot be waived or reduced for year-round concerts and programs.
- We share information about fees for support persons with the public in the following ways:
 - posted on website, social media, and/or in newsletters
 - through employees, volunteers or management (in person, by phone or through recorded greetings)

4: Allow trained service animals.

Policy statement: We allow trained service animals on our premises.

Practices and measures:

- We:
 - treat a trained service animal as a working animal
 - do not distract a service animal from its job by petting, feeding or playing with it, unless given permission by the person with the service animal to do so know how to identify a trained service animal by its harness or vest and by the assistance the animal is providing
- If we have concerns, we may ask if the animal has been trained to help a disabled person's related need.
- We do not inquire about the disability.
 - We expect the person who is handling the trained service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means.
 - If the trained service animal is showing signs of not being controlled (i.e., by barking, whining or wandering), we may provide a warning to the handler to control the animal.

- If the trained service animal continues to misbehave, we may ask the handler to leave.

5: Maintain accessibility features.

Policy statement: To ensure barrier-free access to our goods, services or facilities, we maintain our accessibility features, so they can be used as intended.

Practices and measures: **at the festival site**

- Our accessible seating area at the festival accommodates people of varying sizes and abilities.
- We ensure paths leading to the public areas of the festival are wide and without steps or barriers. The ground may be uneven and patrons with limited mobility or wheelchair users may require assistance.
- We use both audio and visual cues to inform customers it is their turn to be served.

Practices and measures: **in the office**

- We organize our office space so that there is room for people with wheelchairs, electric scooters and walkers.
- Our seating in the office accommodates people of varying sizes and abilities.
- We keep hallways, aisles, entrance and reception areas, waiting rooms and meeting rooms clear of clutter.
- We keep our office entrance area clear of ice and snow.
- We place standing signs out of the way to avoid tripping hazards.
- We use both audio and visual cues to inform customers it is their turn to be served.

Practices and measures: **venues for year-round events**

- We are committed to booking accessible venues for our year-round events.

6. Let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is unavailable.

Policy statement: We let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is temporarily unavailable, how long it will be unavailable, and other ways to access our goods and services.

Practices and measures:

- If one of our accessibility features becomes temporarily unavailable, we prepare and post a notice and/or announcement about the disruption, the reason for the disruption, how long it will last, and whether there are other ways we can provide access to our goods and services (e.g., by using an alternate entrance).
- If requested, we work with the customer to find other ways to provide goods and services.
- We let the public know about disruptions in the following ways:

- posted on website, social media, and/or in newsletters
- posted at our building entrance, ticket counter or service reception desk and/or in high-traffic areas
- included in posters, brochures, pamphlets and/or advertisements
- through employees, volunteers or management (in person, by phone or through recorded greetings)

7. Welcome and respond promptly to feedback.

Policy statements: We welcome and respond promptly to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our goods and services. We document the actions we take to respond to the feedback we receive, and that information is available on request in a format that meets the individual's communication needs.

Practices and measures:

- We invite feedback in the following ways:
 - Visit our reception or service desk in person.
 - contact us by phone 204-231-0096.
 - email accessibility@winnipegfolkfestival.ca
 - Survey/feedback form will be sent out to everyone on our accessibility pass list.
- All feedback is directed to the WFF management team who determines what action, if any, should occur.
- If the feedback requires us to follow-up, the patron, volunteer and/or employee is notified that the request is being reviewed and when they can expect a response.
 - We let the patron, volunteer and/or employee know what action we will take to address their feedback, if any.
- We respond to feedback in a way that meets the communication needs of the individual.

8: Provide the required training to employees, volunteers and management.

Policy statements: We provide the required training on accessible customer service to employees, volunteers and management. We are trained on:

- How to interact and communicate with people who face barriers to accessing goods and services, use assistive devices, are assisted by a support person and/or are assisted by a service animal.
- How to use any equipment or assistive devices that are available on-site.
- An overview of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, The Human Rights Code (Manitoba) and the Customer Service Standard.
- Our organizational policies, practices and measures, including updates or changes.

Practices and measures:

- We train new employees, volunteers and management annually at crew meetings in June.