



## Accessible Customer Service Policy

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

The 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 people with disabilities. 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 following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service and apply to all employees including management, volunteers and patrons.

### Accessibility Standard Requirement #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. To be able to do this, we:
  - 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 *sans serif* fonts and colour contrast and ensuring messages are not printed on images.
- We write signs and documents in plain language.

### Accessibility Standard Requirement #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 the assistive devices of patrons, volunteers and/or employees without permission.

### Accessibility Standard Requirement #3: Welcome support persons

Policy Statement:

***We welcome support persons at the Winnipeg Folk Festival.***

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 share information about support persons with the public:
  - On our website
  - Through employees, management or volunteers in person or by phone at our office or at the festival site

### Accessibility Standard Requirement #4: Allow service animals

Policy Statement:

***We allow service animals on our premises.***

Practices and Measures:

- We do not inquire about the disability.
- We treat a service animal as a working animal.
- We 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.
- We know how to identify a 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 person with a disability-related need.
- We expect the person who is handling the service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means.
- If the 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 service animal continues to misbehave, we may ask the handler to leave.

### Accessibility Standard Requirement #5: Maintain accessibility features for our facilities.

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. This said, 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 areas and meeting rooms clear of clutter.
- 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.
- Our building management keeps our office entrance area clear of ice and snow.

Practices and Measures at venues for year-round events:

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

Accessibility Standard Requirement #6: Let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is unavailable.

Policy Statement:

***We let the public know when a service at the festival 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 and 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 help to find other ways to provide goods and services.

Accessibility Standard Requirement #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:
  - In person by visiting our reception or service desk

- By phone at 204-231-0096
- Email [accessibility@winnipegfolkfestival.ca](mailto:accessibility@winnipegfolkfestival.ca)
- Survey/feedback forms (to be sent out after the summer festival to all patrons on our accessibility pass list)
- All feedback is directed to the WFF Communications team who determines what action, if any, should occur.
- If the feedback requires 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.

Accessibility Standard Requirement #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.***

Practices and Measures:

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