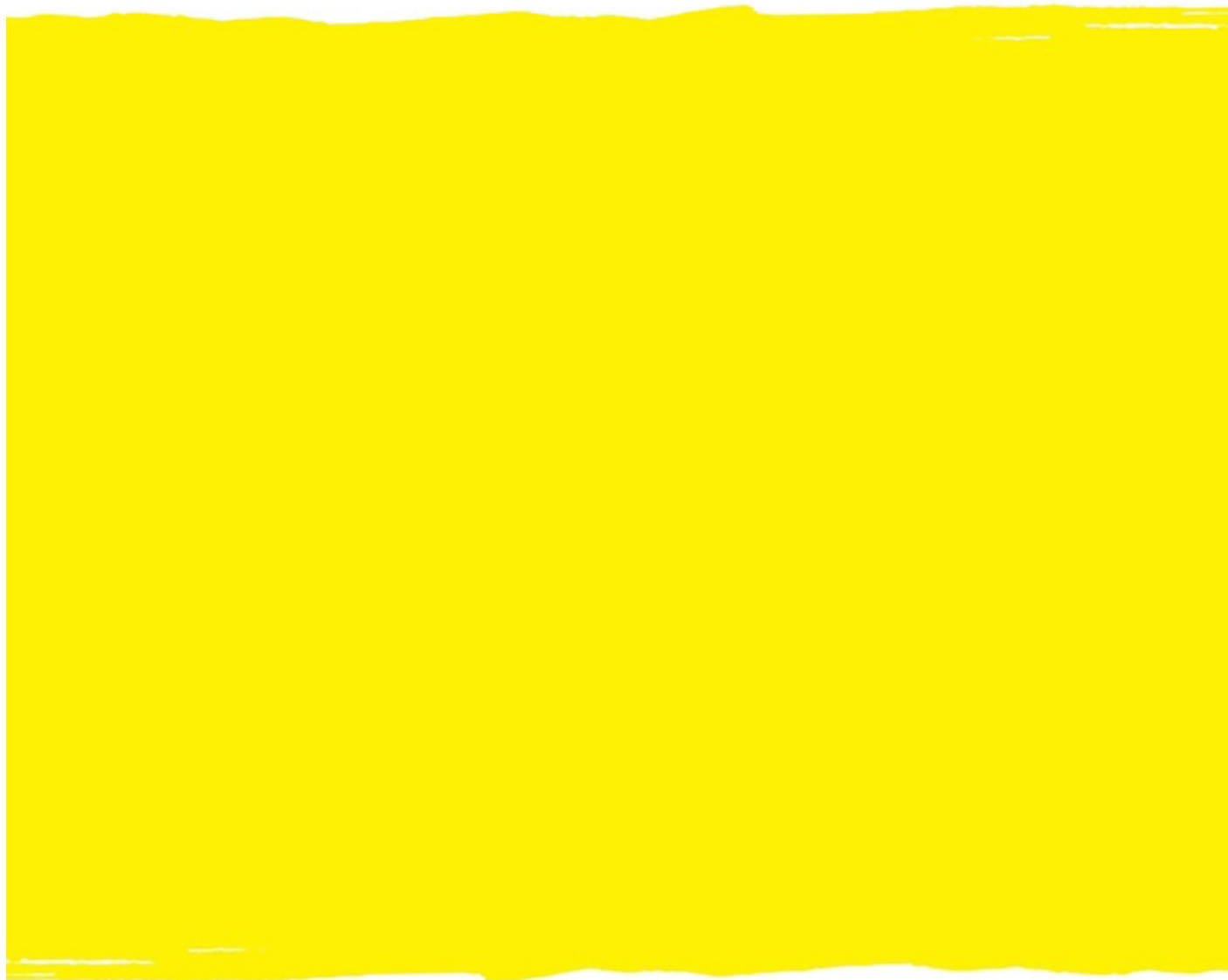


Government and Consumer Services

Know Your Rights – Legal Information Handbook



Disclaimer

This content is provided as general information and is not legal advice. If you need advice about a specific legal issue, contact a lawyer.

Acknowledgements

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To learn more about the Know Your Rights project, please visit cnib.ca/KnowYourRights

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My Legal Rights

Q: What legal rights do I have when it comes to government and consumer services in Manitoba?

A: Under Manitoba laws, people with disabilities have important legal rights when it comes to government and consumer services:

- You have the right to receive an equal level of service from government and consumer service providers as anyone else without discrimination because of your disability.
- You have the right to receive **accommodations** for your disability from government and consumer service providers up to the point of **undue hardship**.
- Your needs must be accommodated in a manner that respects your dignity and that recognizes your right to privacy, confidentiality, comfort, autonomy and self-esteem. The accommodation should maximize your ability to participate in society.
- You cannot be denied services or denied access to spaces that are normally available to the public because you are accompanied by a service animal, such as a guide or hearing dog.

Duty to Accommodate and Undue Hardship

A service provider's "**duty to accommodate**" means that they are legally required to provide you with the supports you need to receive the same level of service as anyone else.

However, the duty to accommodate has a limit and this limit is called "**undue hardship**." **Undue hardship** is a legal term. It means that if a service provider can show that it would be very difficult for them to provide you with a certain type of accommodation then they don't have to provide it.

It is important to note that it is not enough for a service provider to **simply claim** undue hardship. A service provider **must show clear evidence** of undue hardship. Such evidence can relate to the following factors:

- Whether the cost of the accommodation is so high that it would significantly interfere with the operation of the business.

- Whether the accommodation would create serious health and safety risks.
- Whether there have been past unsuccessful efforts to accommodate.
- The type of facility and the size of the organization.

Even if a service provider shows that a certain type of accommodation will create undue hardship for them, they still have a legal duty to provide you with the **next best** type of accommodation.

Q: Where do my legal rights come from?

A: In Manitoba, your legal rights with respect to government and consumer services come primarily from the following provincial laws:

- Manitoba's [Human Rights Code](#)
 - Applies to all services, benefits, and programs available to the public.
 - Prohibits discrimination based on physical or mental disability or related circumstances (such as using a service animal).
 - Requires reasonable accommodations to be made for people with disabilities.
- The [Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#)
 - The [Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#) requires the Government of Manitoba to create [Accessibility Standards](#) that focus on five key areas of daily living. The [Accessibility Standards](#) set out detailed minimum accessibility requirements in the following contexts:
 - Customer Service
 - Employment
 - Information and Communications
 - Design of Public Spaces
 - Transportation
 - The [Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#) addresses business practices and training requirements to provide better customer service to people with

disabilities. **This Accessibility Standard for Customer Service is now law.** This applies to all Manitoba organizations, including businesses, that have at least one employee.

- To meet the [Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#), organizations must:
 - Meet the communication needs of customers, clients, or members
 - Allow assistive devices
 - Welcome support people
 - Ensure accessibility is maintained as intended (including ramps, wide aisles, removal of clutter)
 - Let customers know when accessible features and services are not available
 - Invite customers to provide feedback
 - Train staff on accessible customer service, including reasonable accommodations under Manitoba's [Human Rights Code](#)
 - Large public sector organizations must make public events accessible
- Manitoba's [Consumer Protection Act](#)
 - Under the **Consumer Protection Act**, Manitoba consumers are provided with a forum for the hearing, investigating, and mediating of consumer complaints related to almost anything that concerns a consumer, except for the purchase of real property.

Q: Who must comply with laws related to government and consumer services?

A: The following people and organizations are required to comply with the above laws:

- Businesses and any other organization, including all employees that perform common consumer transactions in Manitoba
- Consumers (individuals who purchase products and services within Manitoba)
- The Manitoba government (including its ministries and agencies) and Manitoba municipalities

Q: What can I do to enforce my legal rights?

A: If you feel you have been discriminated against by a government or consumer service provider, there are things you can do challenge the discrimination.

In general, you should first try to resolve your concerns by speaking with the people who are directly involved in an informal and collaborative way.

For example, if you are being discriminated against by an employee of a service provider, you might try speaking directly to the employee about correcting the issue, or you might ask to speak to their supervisor.

For more resources on self-advocacy, please visit the **Self-Advocacy** section of the [Know Your Rights website](#).

If your concerns can't be addressed through collaborative discussions, you can consider taking the following steps:

- Contact the government department overseeing the service provider
- You may wish to [contact the Consumer Protection Office](#), discuss the issue, and file a complaint.
 - The [Consumer Protection Office](#) administers consumer protection in Manitoba. The Office hears, mediates, and investigates consumer-related complaints. When the Office receives a complaint, it considers the rights and responsibilities of each party. In situations where an issue is not within the Office's jurisdiction, the Office offers an opportunity to resolve the problem through a voluntary process of dispute resolution/mediation.
- If the issue involves a government service provider, you may wish to contact and file a complaint with the [Manitoba Ombudsman](#).
- If the issue involves discrimination based on your disability, you may wish to contact and file a complaint with the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#).

While it may not be necessary to contact a lawyer to take the steps above, you may wish to receive independent legal advice about your specific circumstances to understand your legal options.

Common Scenarios

Even though there are laws to protect you from discrimination, people with disabilities still face barriers to receiving an equal level of service as anyone else from government and businesses.

This section describes barriers that are commonly experienced and suggests practical next steps. Keep in mind that, in most situations, you should first try to resolve your concerns by speaking with the people who are directly involved in an informal and collaborative way.

Government Websites and Forms

Q: Due to my sight loss, I'm having trouble navigating government websites and accessing online services. What can I do?

A: Consider contacting a customer service representative of the government organization by telephone.

For example, there is a [Manitoba Government Directory](#) available online and all [Service Canada locations](#) can also be found online. For help with municipal issues, you can contact your city clerk's office or your local municipality. Many cities and towns have a person responsible for accessibility who can assist you.

When you speak with a customer service representative, explain that you are having trouble navigating a government website or accessing an online service because of your sight loss. Explain what assistance you require in as much detail as possible. The more detail you provide, the better they will be able to accommodate you.

When you disclose your disability to a customer service representative, you trigger that government organization's legal duty to accommodate you to the point of undue hardship.

If the representative is reluctant or refuses to accommodate you, you can remind them that they have a duty to provide you with reasonable accommodations so you're able to experience an equal level of service as anyone else.

If this does not help, you can gradually escalate your complaint – for example, to a manager or supervisor and then to an official complaint process.

If the issue is not addressed:

- You may wish to [contact the Consumer Protection Office](#), discuss the issue, and file a complaint.
- You may wish to contact and file a complaint with the [Manitoba Ombudsman](#).
- You may wish to contact and file a complaint with the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#).

Q: When trying to complete a paper-based form at a government office, I asked a government employee for help. They said that “due to liability issues” they could not assist me. What can do I?

A: If an employee is not able to assist you in filling out a paper form, the government still has a duty to accommodate and provide necessary forms in an accessible format. You can ask the employee for the form in an accessible format, such as a larger print version, or in a digital format that can be filled out online.

Do your best to plan ahead. For example, if you need to renew a health card or passport, see if it's possible to complete the forms online. If not, contact the government organization ahead of time and request that the forms be sent to you in an accessible format.

For example, the [Canadian Revenue Agency provides copies of all its forms and publications in accessible formats on request](#).

If the form you need is not available in an accessible format, then speak with an employee or manager to determine how the government organization can accommodate you. If the employee or manager is reluctant or refuses to accommodate you, you can remind them that they have a duty to provide you with reasonable accommodations so you're able to experience an equal level of service as anyone else.

Q: When completing online forms, there is often a time limit imposed. If the form is not completed within the set time limit, then changes are discarded, and the user is required to start again. Due to my sight loss, I have difficulties completing the form within the set time limit. What can I do?

A: Under Manitoba's **Human Rights Code**, most service providers have a duty to accommodate you to the point of undue hardship.

You may wish to begin by contacting a customer service representative of the business or organization, and request accommodations for your sight loss. The more detailed you are in explaining what you need, the better they will be able to accommodate you.

You might request an electronic version of the form that you can submit via email, instead of the online form that is subject to the time limit.

If the customer service representative resists assisting you, you may wish to remind them that once they are made aware of your disability and need for accommodation, they have a duty to accommodate you.

If you continue to experience difficulty securing a reasonable accommodation, consider escalating the situation, first by speaking with a manager or supervisor; then, to an official complaint process.

If the issue is not addressed:

- You may wish to [contact the Consumer Protection Office](#), discuss the issue, and file a complaint.
- You may wish to contact and file a complaint with the [Manitoba Ombudsman](#).
- You may wish to contact and file a complaint with the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#).

Shopping

Q: Sometimes I'm asked by a business to provide a piece of valid, government-issued identification. I don't have a driver's licence and I don't want to carry around my passport. What can I do?

A: You may consider [applying](#) for a [Manitoba Identification Card](#). A Manitoba Identification Card is for Manitobans who do not have a driver's licence.

The Manitoba Identification Card provides proof of age, identity, and Manitoba residency. You can apply for a Manitoba Identification Card if you:

- Are a Manitoba resident
- Are entitled to be in Canada
- Do not already hold a driver's licence

People who are under the age of 18 may also apply for a Manitoba Identification Card, but their parents must co-sign the application.

When applying for a Manitoba Identification Card, you will need original [supporting documents](#) that prove your:

- birth date
- full legal name
- photograph
- Manitoba residency and permanent address.

The Manitoba Identification Card costs \$20, including the photograph; and the Card remains valid for five years.

You may also consider getting a [CNIB Card](#). Depending on your municipality, a CNIB Card can provide you with benefits and discounts, and services from governments, businesses, and community partners. In some cases, a CNIB Card can be used as proof of disability for government programs and tax benefits.

Q: When shopping, I often encounter queues that are inaccessible: for example, a “take-a-number” system or line-ups marked using posts that are connected by ropes or belts (these are often used in airports and called “stanchions”). What can I do?

A: If you encounter an inaccessible queue, you should approach an employee or manager for assistance. When you speak with an employee or manager, explain how the queue is inaccessible or unsafe for you and explain what kind of assistance you require in as much detail as possible. For example, ask an employee to notify you when your number is called or ask an employee to guide you through a queue.

Under the [Human Rights Code](#), a business providing goods or services must provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. When you inform the business of your needs, you trigger their duty to accommodate.

Under the [Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#), people and organizations providing goods or services have an obligation to identify barriers to people with disabilities and implement policies that remove them. By letting an employee or store owner know that a point-of-sale terminal is causing an accessibility issue for you, they are obligated to look into the issue and correct it.

If the employee or manager is reluctant or refuses to accommodate you, you can remind them that they have a duty to provide you with reasonable accommodations so you’re able to experience an equal level of service as anyone else.

If this does not help, you can gradually escalate your complaint – for example, to a manager or supervisor and then to an official complaint process.

If your concerns are still not addressed, you can consider consulting a lawyer to see what options you have, such as:

- [Contacting the Consumer Protection Office](#) to discuss the issue, and filing a complaint.
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Ombudsman](#).
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#).

Q: When shopping, I often have trouble trying to read labels and telling the difference between products. What can I do?

A: There are now many [technological tools](#) that can help people with shopping and using other consumer services. If these kinds of technological tools don't meet your needs, you should approach an employee or manager for assistance.

You might start by explaining that you are having trouble with certain tasks related to shopping because of your sight loss. Explain what assistance you require in as much detail as possible.

When you disclose your disability to an employee, you trigger their legal duty to accommodate you to the point of undue hardship. If the employee is reluctant or refuses to accommodate you, you can politely remind them that they have a duty to provide you with reasonable accommodations so you're able to experience an equal level of service as anyone else.

If this does not help, you can gradually escalate your complaint – for example, to a manager or supervisor and then to an official complaint process.

If your concerns are still not addressed, you can consider consulting a lawyer to see what options you have, such as:

- [Contacting the Consumer Protection Office](#) to discuss the issue, and filing a complaint.
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Ombudsman](#).
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#).

Q: When shopping or dining out, I often encounter an inaccessible point of sale terminal. What can I do?

A: Do your best to plan ahead. Consider using cash to reduce the risk of an error in payment and to help keep your pin numbers confidential. If you're going to a store or restaurant for the first time, try to contact that business by telephone or email in advance to see if they have an accessible point of sale terminal.

That being said, under the [Human Rights Code](#), a business providing goods or services must provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. When you inform the business of your needs, you trigger their duty to accommodate.

Under the [Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#), people and organizations providing goods or services have an obligation to identify barriers to people with disabilities and implement policies that remove them.

By letting an employee or store owner know that a point-of-sale terminal is causing an accessibility issue for you, they are obligated to look into the issue and correct it.

Did you know CNIB is working with Moneris to develop a more accessible payment terminal?

[Learn more.](#)

Q: I sometimes get disoriented when visiting new stores, service centres, or other public places. What can I do?

A: There are now many [technological tools](#) that can help people with orientation and navigation through stores, malls, and other public spaces. If these kinds of technological tools don't meet your needs, you may wish to approach or contact an employee or manager of the building for assistance. When you speak with an employee or manager, explain that you are having trouble with navigation or orientation inside the building because of your sight loss. Explain what assistance you require in as much detail as possible.

When you disclose your disability to an employee, you trigger their legal duty under the [Human Rights Code](#) to accommodate you to the point of undue hardship. If the employee or manager is reluctant or refuses to accommodate you, you may wish to remind them that they have a duty to provide you with reasonable accommodations so you're able to experience an equal level of service as anyone else.

If this does not help, you can gradually escalate your complaint – for example, through an official complaint process or to the management team. Government organizations and large private companies may have a designated person responsible for accessibility who can assist you.

If your concerns are still not addressed, you can consider consulting a lawyer to see what options you have, such as:

- [Contacting the Consumer Protection Office](#) to discuss the issue and filing a complaint.
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Ombudsman](#).
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#).

Additionally, the accessibility barriers may be the result of a Building Code violation. You may also consider contacting the city clerk's office or your local city or town to report the accessibility issue.

Q: I'd like to be able to use apps that allow people to shop online, purchase groceries, etc., however, they are often inaccessible. What can I do?

A: The laws of Manitoba do not currently require apps to be accessible. That being said, the [Accessibility for Manitoban's Act](#) requires the government of Manitoba to create an [Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications](#), which will address barriers to accessing information that is provided in print, in person, on websites, and in other formats. At the time of writing, this Accessibility Standard is under development. [Recommendations for an Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications](#) have been produced.

Section 7.1 of the Recommendations report identifies the following regarding mobile applications:

“Obligated organizations must create accessibility to the content and functionality of their websites and mobile applications that run from a website or run as a standalone device, but rely on the internet for function, by applying the following principles of the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG):

- **Perceivable:** Available to the senses (vision and hearing primarily) either through the browser or through assistive technologies (e.g. screen readers, screen enlargers, etc.).
- **Operable:** Users can interact with all controls and interactive elements using either the mouse, keyboard, or an assistive device.
- **Understandable:** Content provides a message clearly, in plain language, helps users avoid making mistakes.
- **Robust:** A wide range of technologies (including old and new user agents and assistive technologies) can access the content.

Until the Accessibility Standard becomes law, you might consider contacting the company or organization providing the app, and explain that their app is inaccessible. It is possible that they have overlooked accessibility in their design, and your feedback could push them to make future versions of the app more accessible.

You may also want to explore the accessibility settings of your phone or device, as their may be features built in that would make use of the app more manageable. To this end, you may find the following CNIB resources to be helpful:

- [Technology Training](#)
 - Join CNIB tech leads from across the country for programming that highlights the suite of programs, apps, products and services that will help empower you to achieve your personal and professional goals.
- [CNIB SmartLife](#)
 - CNIB SmartLife is an interactive retail experience that gives people with disabilities hands-on access to the latest breakthroughs in assistive technologies, as well as tried-and-true favourites.
 - SmartLife's goal is not necessarily to sell products but is to give customers the skills and confidence they need to make the most out of assistive tools that can help them lead better lives.

Guide Dogs

Q: I have been denied access to a restaurant or a store because I am accompanied by my guide dog. What can I do?

A: The [Human Rights Code](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of a person's disability, and recognizes that discrimination can be directed towards an individual who uses a service animal. Services providers are prohibited from treating a person differently because they use a service animal, unless it is reasonable to do so.

Specifically, the [Human Rights Code](#) prohibits discrimination with respect to accessing any service or facility that is commonly available or accessible to the public. Discrimination in services against persons with disabilities who use service animals typically involves denying access to a person wholly or in part, because they use a service animal. This form of discrimination is commonly encountered in restaurants, when restaurant staff refuse to allow a person with a service animal access to the restaurant.

A person who uses a service animal has the right to access any area that is generally accessible to the public. If a restaurant staff member denies you access, ask to speak to a manager of the business immediately. If the manager refuses you access, you may wish to escalate the complaint to the business owner, in writing.

If the business says they were justified in refusing you access, consider consulting a lawyer to discuss the options that are available to you, such as:

- [Contacting the Consumer Protection Office](#) to discuss the issue, and filing a complaint.
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Ombudsman](#).
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#).

Q: Can an employee or business owner ask me to show them official identification for my guide dog before serving me?

A: The [Human Rights Code](#) defines a service animal as “an animal that has been trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability that relates to that person’s disability.”

There is no standardized identification or certification of service animals in Manitoba; however, service animals are typically easy to identify when they are working, as they usually wear a special harness or vest and are under the care and control of their owner, with a leash or tether.

If it is not clear that an animal is a service animal, an employee or business owner is entitled to ask whether or not the animal is trained to provide assistance to the person with a disability, and to ask for information to identify or clarify the disability-related need.

While it may be appropriate to ask for information to substantiate that the animal is required because of a disability, which may include information from medical or paramedical providers or evidence of the animal’s participation in a training or certification program, it is **not appropriate** to ask for information about your diagnosis. It is **not appropriate** to ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the tasks for which it is trained. Questions should always be asked with respect and understanding.

A service provider **should be cautious** not to ask for information or require a person to substantiate the need to rely on the animal, if it is obvious.

A person who uses a service animal has the right to access any area that is generally accessible to the public. If the service provider persists in asking you inappropriate questions about your service animal or disability, please consider consulting a lawyer to determine the most appropriate course of action, such as:

- [Contacting the Consumer Protection Office](#) to discuss the issue, and filing a complaint.
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Ombudsman](#).
- Contacting and filing a complaint with the [Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#).

Resources

Legal Resources

[Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#)

The **Manitoba Human Rights Commission** is an independent office of the Government of Manitoba that is responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of discrimination to determine if the [Human Rights Code](#) has been contravened.

For information on **filing a complaint** with the Commission, the Commission's website provides direction on [how to start the process](#) and a [Guide to Filing a Complaint](#).

The Commission also educates the public about human rights through seminars and workshops; and, prepares and distributes [guidelines](#) and [fact sheets](#) to assist the public in understanding the [Code](#).

[The Law Society of Manitoba](#)

The **Law Society of Manitoba** oversees the legal professional in Manitoba. The Law Society is the only body that is authorized to determine who may become a lawyer in the province, and is responsible for responding to [complaints](#) about lawyers. The Law Society also has a [Lawyer Lookup](#) tool that enables the public to search for lawyers.

Infojustice

Infojustice is a legal information centre committed to promoting access to justice in French. By providing information, support and referral services, Infojustice helps French-speaking individuals understand and respond to the various legal situations they face in their everyday lives.

Infojustice provides the following services:

1. consultations via telephone and email, or in person if appropriate,
2. courthouse or tribunal accompaniment,
3. referrals to relevant organizations and resources, and
4. referrals to French-speaking lawyers.

For contact information, [visit the Infojustice website](#).

Community Legal Education Association

The **Community Legal Education Association (CLEA)** is a not-for-profit organization that provides legal information and education to Manitobans. CLEA develops programs and resources to help individuals better understand Manitoba's legal system, and how to resolve their legal issues.

CLEA can help members of the public by providing general legal information, suggesting resources, and telling people about different options for obtaining legal advice.

CLEA also operates the [Law Phone-In and Lawyer Referrals Program](#). Through this program, individuals can receive:

- legal information and advice,
- referrals to law-related agencies, and
- referrals to lawyers, when appropriate.

The Law Phone-In and Lawyer Referral Program allows Manitobans to call or email with legal questions, and staff lawyers will attempt to provide information, or connect them to a lawyer who can.

If you are referred to a lawyer through this program, your first consultation, up to half an hour will be free. This service is free and available to **all** Manitobans.

Legal Aid Manitoba

Legal Aid Manitoba provides legal services to low-income Manitobans. To qualify for services from Legal Aid Manitoba:

- You must meet their [financial eligibility criteria](#); and
- Your case must have merit. To learn more about how Legal Aid Manitoba determines whether a case has merit, please refer to their [qualification criteria](#).

Public Interest Law Centre

The **Public Interest Law Centre (PILC)** is an independent office of Legal Aid Manitoba. PILC represents clients at all levels of the court system; and, before boards, administrative tribunals and legislative committees.

PILC selects cases on the basis of social significance, legal merit and the availability of resources. Applications for public interest law cases will only be approved if:

- Funding is available to pursue the matter throughout the proceedings.
- There is a reasonable likelihood of success.
- The matter will impact a systemic issue in the law, or will impact a segment of the population of Manitoba.
- Clients meet Legal Aid Manitoba's financial eligibility criteria.

The University of Manitoba Community Law Centre

The **University of Manitoba Community Law Centre** primarily handles [summary conviction criminal offences](#), but may also assist with Highway Traffic Act offences, small claims cases involving consumer problems, and Manitoba Public Insurance disputes.

[Legal Help Centre](#)

The **Legal Help Centre (LHC)** provides legal information and assists self-represented litigants with certain non-urgent legal matters. LHC operates the following clinics:

- Drop-In Clinics
- Family Law Clinics
- Consumer Protection Clinics

To qualify:

- You must not be eligible for Legal Aid
- You must not already have a lawyer assisting you
- You must meet LHC's [financial eligibility guidelines](#)

[Accessibility for Manitobans Act Website](#)

The **Accessibility for Manitobans Act website** offers a helpful overview of the Accessibility for Manitoba Act and Accessibility Standards.

[Manitoba Courts](#)

The **Manitoba Courts** website provides general information about how Courts in Manitoba operate, and what to expect if you are attending Court. There is also a helpful resource on attending Court as a [self-represented person](#).

[Manitoba Law Reform Commission](#)

The **Manitoba Law Reform Commission** is an independent law reform agency. Its role is to improve, modernize and reform the law and administration of justice in Manitoba.

Projects of law reform are initiated in response to the public, the legal profession, and Manitoba's Minister of Justice and Attorney General. The Commission carries out research and consultation and makes formal recommendations for law reform to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

[Publications](#) produced by the Commission, and Information about the [Commission's current projects](#), are available online.

Essential Non-Legal Resources

[The Consumer Protection Office](#)

The **Consumer Protection Office** administers consumer protection in Manitoba. The Office hears, mediates, and investigates consumer-related complaints. When the Office receives a complaint, it considers the rights and responsibilities of each party.

In situations where an issue is not within the Office's jurisdiction, the Office offers an opportunity to resolve the problem through a voluntary process of dispute resolution/mediation.

[The Manitoba Ombudsman](#)

The **Manitoba Ombudsman** is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. The Ombudsman conducts independent, impartial and non-partisan investigations of complaints regarding the following issues:

- access to information and privacy matters,
- the fairness of government actions or decisions, and
- serious "wrongdoings" by the government.

Complaints may be related to any act, decision, recommendation, or omission relating to a matter of administration by any department or agency of the provincial or a municipal government.

For information on filing a complaint with the Manitoba Ombudsman, please refer to the information and [guidelines outlined on the Ombudsman's website](#).

Manitoba 211

Manitoba 211 is a free, confidential service that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It exists to connect individuals to government, health and social services that are available across Manitoba. The service helps Manitobans who are looking to find the right community or social resource, but do not know where to start.

In addition to searching on the 211 Manitoba website, there are various ways for people to [contact](#) Manitoba 211, including calling 2-1-1 to talk with trained professionals to help identify the services that they need.

Services are grouped together into the following categories:

- [Emergency Resources](#)
- [Covid-19 Information](#)
- Food and Clothing
- Housing and Homelessness
- Health
- Mental Health
- Employment
- Newcomers
- Children and Parenting
- Youth

CNIB Services

We're here to help – contact CNIB for more programs, support, and resources. Some ways we can assist include:

- [CNIB Virtual Programs](#)
 - CNIB offers a range of free virtual programs for children, youth, adults and families.
 - You can access a list of CNIB's virtual program offerings on [CNIB's website](#).

- You can access a list and schedule of CNIB Manitoba's program offerings on [CNIB – Manitoba's website](#).
- [**Technology Training**](#)
 - Join CNIB tech leads from across the country for programming that highlights the suite of programs, apps, products and services that will help empower you to achieve your personal and professional goals.
- [**Virtual Vision Mate**](#)
 - The Virtual Vision Mate program exists to address the feelings of isolation that many people with sight loss experience. Through the Virtual Vision Mate program, people who are blind or partially sighted are connected with sighted volunteers to engage in virtual, weekly conversation.
- [**CNIB SmartLife**](#)
 - CNIB SmartLife is an interactive retail experience that gives people with disabilities hands-on access to the latest breakthroughs in assistive technologies, as well as tried-and-true favourites.
 - SmartLife's goal is not necessarily to sell products but is to give customers the skills and confidence they need to make the most out of assistive tools that can help them lead better lives.
- [**CNIB Advocacy Team**](#)
 - The CNIB Advocacy Team can assist participants with advocating for themselves and understanding their rights. You can contact us at advocacy@cnib.ca if you have questions.
- [**CNIB Guide Dogs**](#)
 - CNIB Guide Dogs can assist guide dog handlers with advocating for themselves and understanding their rights. This program also provides public education to organizations about the rights of guide dog users.

Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada

Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada (“VLRC”) is a not-for-profit national healthcare organization and the leading provider of rehabilitation therapy and healthcare services for individuals with sight loss. VLRC’s services are tailored to the unique needs and goals of each person they assist. Specifically, VLRC certified specialists provide a range of services that help individuals with sight loss lead more independent, active lives.

Contact information for VLRC’s Manitoba offices is available in the [**“Locations” section of the VLRC website**](#).

Wayfinding

Wayfinding refers to technological tools that assist people who are blind, partially sighted or Deafblind with navigation and orientation. Such tools include:

- [**BlindSquare**](#): a GPS-app developed for people with sight loss that describes the environment and announces points of interest and street intersections.
- [**Key 2 Access**](#): a pedestrian mobility app that allows users to wirelessly request crossing at intersections without having to locate the button on the pole. It also allows users to wirelessly open doors and obtain information about indoor spaces.
- [**Access Now**](#): a map application that shares accessibility information for locations based on users' feedback.
- [**Be My Eyes**](#): a volunteer-based app that connects people with sight loss to sighted volunteers, who can assist with tasks such as checking expiry dates, distinguishing colors, reading instructions or navigating new surroundings.
- The [**American Foundation for the Blind**](#) provides an overview of some of the apps that are available to assist consumers with reading items such as product labels and menus.

