

BARRIERS TO ACCESSIBILITY 2019

REPORT

Legal Aid Manitoba is an arms length statutory corporation that fulfills the obligation of the Attorney General to ensure fairness in the justice system by providing counsel to low income people in Manitoba. As a government agency providing services to the public Legal Aid Manitoba is subject to the service standards expected of all governmental service providers.

During the inaugural year under the mandate of the Accessibility Act Legal Aid Manitoba (LAM) published the Service Standard as set forth by the Department of Justice through whom Legal Aid Manitoba reports as an independent agency of government.

In accordance with the guidance provided in the Service Standard, our aspiration is to make services equally accessible to all persons, without any overt need for special accomodation of physical, mental,cultural, linguistic, or other differences.

Between November 2017 and November 2018 LAM provided six training sessions for staff with respect to the standard, and the obligations it places on staff respecting appropriate interaction and communication with Manitobans. At the conclusion of each session LAM sought input from all staff respecting the barriers apparent to them, the ways in which LAM fell short in meeting our aspirational goal. We also asked staff to provide suggestions for solutions to these barriers, and for providing services while we attempted to address issues that could not be immediately addressed.

The staff input from these sessions was reviewed by LAM's Executive Management Committee to develop a report and action plan to assess, and find ways to address as many of the issues as possible prior to preparation of LAM's Accessibility Report in November 2019. The following Action Plan is the outcome of that assessment and planning process. The first column records identified barriers, the second column records steps suggested as measures that can address those barriers, and the third column records the action plan to be fulfilled by EMC in time to report back for the November 2019 Accessibility Report. Each item in the plan has been assigned to a senior manager who is responsible to ensure it is properly addressed, in a timely manner.

A paper copy of this Report and Plan, and any other Accessibility related documents are available on request at any office of Legal Aid Manitoba, or by contacting the Accessibility Officer, Bruce Gammon at brgam@legalaid.mb.ca ; Phone (204) 985 – 5245 fax (204) 944 – 8582; or, c/o Legal Aid Manitoba 400 – 287 Broadway Winnipeg, MB R3C 0R9.

ACTION PLAN

| BARRIERS | INTERIM SOLUTIONS | ACTION PLAN 2018/2019 |
|--|---|--|
| Transportation | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting to court/office without bus tickets - Not able to get around (rural) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get as much done when you see clients in court - Schedule appointments with clients around their availability | Add a section to the Case Conduct Manual to provide these and other "Tips" |
| Language | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clients do not speak English - Not able to understand clients with accents - Language over the phone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calling or bring a family member/friend to assist (App Centre) - Arrange for a translator (Available) - Requests be sent via letter or email | <p>Determine feasibility of providing tablets with translation apps for short interactions with clients at reception.</p> <p>Remind all staff of the availability of CanTalk</p> |
| Communication | | |
| <p>Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clients cannot read and/or write <p>Impairment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited vision or hearing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read documents to clients -ASL interpreter in house or on call | <p>Monitor the volume of requests/need and determine if volume merits placing a document reader at reception</p> |
| Childcare | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clients not always have a way to make appointments - Clients may not always make it to court | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schedule appointments with clients around their availability - Use phone appointments more | Add a section to the Case Conduct Manual Requiring development/recording of an individualized plan to address needs on the client file. |
| Physical Barriers | | |
| <p>Mobility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wheelchair access - Heavy Front doors/No opener/Blind sensors? - Washroom (too small) access/Wheelchair access for washroom - Ramp Access/Repair -Stairs 2nd Floor/No elevator (Rural) - Little space for offices/boardrooms (wheelchair/walker) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open doors when observed - Push/start buttons to open doors for reception - Meet at CLC/Court - Allow use of office washrooms. - Use office visits wisely-prepare minimize appointments Staff needs to attend to CLO office when needed. - Move furniture around in the office - Asking/making a note on the file re: needs and alert staff to | <p>Provide automatic door openers and building access ramps/repairs as a fiscal priority for 2018/19.</p> <p>Survey accessible washrooms post maps in reception areas.</p> <p>Consider feasibility of a LD limited public phone line in reception areas.</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Phone/Internet - No public phones (reception) - No wifi to offer or share information without data use</p> <p>Knowledge - Not knowing the client's accessibility needs</p> <p>Child Care Client difficulties attending IV or Court – no sitter</p> <p>- No change tables in washrooms for mothers and fathers with young ones</p> <p>Payments - There are no payments by credit card</p> | <p>prepare when appt is happening - Allow phone use if not busy - Arrange for private calls within the institution or in-person meetings - Allowing clients to send information at a later time when access to internet is available</p> <p>-OSD Being more attune to the client's accessibility needs</p> <p>Minimize appointments and schedule around client availability Use phone/video appointments</p> <p>- Allow credit card payments</p> | <p>Monitor need for wireless access (LAM related) and report determine if guest account is justifiable.</p> <p>Add a section to the AD Manual requiring record of limitations on each client file</p> <p>Add section to Case Conduct Manual with “Tips”</p> <p>Request building managers put infant change tables in washrooms</p> <p>Monitor need for Credit Card POS and report.</p> |
| Information | | |
| <p>- Clients have trouble understanding court process and/or how to apply for Legal Aid</p> <p>- Not sure where to direct clients</p> <p>- Clients do not understand “Charge on Land”/AATP</p> <p>-Limited Services, especially in the North.</p> <p>- There are no drop-ins</p> | <p>- Direct clients on how to apply and who is qualified - Considering which methods of communication works for each client's</p> <p>Referrall list. Give info and numbers to resources that may help</p> <p>- Explaining to the client what is financially eligible for Legal Aid or refer to Payment Program to get detailed information</p> <p>- Provide other ways to apply for</p> | <p>Use In The Loop to encourage OSD courses that focus on strategies for plain language communication.</p> <p>Update & make more visible on Intranet/Internet pages</p> <p>Develop Plain language FAQ on topics of common misunderstanding.</p> <p>Develop long term plan goals to encourage counsel to practice in North</p> <p>Survey need for morning</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>during the morning</p> <p>“Word”/Cannot open documents in OpenOffice/PDF Docs</p> <p>Staff don't know client accessibility needs</p> | <p>LA. Get “Word” for reception</p> <p>Being more attune to needs</p> | <p>drop ins and report back</p> <p>Ensure all docs are exported in universal format (PDF)</p> <p>Add a section to the AD Manual requiring record of needs on client file</p> |
| Cultural | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different outlooks/ way of thinking - Staff can be afraid to discuss certain things with clients if they are worried about offending them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural awareness - Cultural training (learning how to ask questions and become comfortable interacting with people from traditional cultures) | <p>Continue Cultural competence training</p> |
| Poverty | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affects their ability to comply with court orders - No home phone or active phone number - Clients have no way of getting to court or making appointments/court orders - No/limited internet access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be more sensitive to poverty issues - Scheduling around the client's availability, Use an alternative method of communication - Provide assistance irt what the client needs - Providing bus fare or tickets for clients that have no means of transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage effective office visits (plan to get all info needed in 1 or 2 meetings). Use court meetings more thoughtfully and waive unnnecessary appearances if possible. Add section to Case Conduct Manual with “Tips” |
| Impairments | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited or no vision at all - Limited or no hearing at all - Not physically able to get around | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASL interpreter - Reading documents out loud - Appointments over the phone - Writing out conversation on paper | <p>Add a section to the Case Conduct Manual requiring development/recording of an individualized plan for communication on each client file where issues exist.</p> |
| Access to Information/File | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family members not able to have to access to a client's information or file - Client's have no access to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informing them about FIPPA | <p>Advertise attendance at 1 FIPPA session within 3 months of hire and every 2nd year after in “In the Loop”.</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| the documents they have previously provided from a file | | |
| Mental Health Crisis | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erratic behaviour/Social stigma - Not knowing how to handle certain situations on both sides - Mental Health/Cognitive concerns - Unable to follow through because of depression or a great deal of difficulty attending hearings/appointments because of social anxiety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refer to services for management of MH - Non-violent Crisis Intervention Training - Work with counsellor/community supports (if available) - Provide clear explanations of what to expect and to offer to meet by phone or telephone hearings - Individualize plan to assist and mark in client file - M.H. training available | <p>Continue / enhance MH training and non violent crisis intervention training.</p> <p>Add a section to the Case Conduct Manual requiring development/recording of an individualized plan for communication on each client file where issues exist.</p> |
| Youth | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relying on CFS workers for meeting with lawyer - Parents do not have access to their child's information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping information up to date as much as possible - Informing them of FIPPA | <p>FAQ for Parents on information and direction of YCJA cases (what the law requires).</p> |
| Attitudinal | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clients will not always agree to "Charge on Land" or Agreement to Pay - Clients have trouble understanding these Agreements - Staff Bias Poverty/Disability - Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explaining to the client the way Legal Aid works to them. Knowing clearly. - Directing clients to the appropriate person to give a more detailed explanation | <p>Update FAQ on These issues and make themn easier to find on the web page</p> |
| Accessibility for Staff | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistants do not have Microsoft Word. Provide clients that need Word documents for accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide Microsoft Word - Take courses when available/offered | <p>Mandate Universal format for documents sent electronically (PDF, etc.)</p> |