Arts AccessAbility Network Manitoba Accessibility Audit

During the summer of 2021, AANM met with over 40 individuals who identified as Deaf and or disabled, during three community consultations, to learn what the community needs to fully participate in the arts. These discussions examined not only accessibility for patrons, but for artists and arts administrators as well. While physical and sensory accessibility was discussed, the biggest concern was the lack of accessibility training of staff.

As a result of these discussions, AANM led by Peter Tonge, created an accessibility audit for arts venues. This audit is unique in that the entire process was disability-led and informed by those with lived experiences on disability.

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Accessibility Audit Venue Review

1. Customer Service	
A key concern of our community focus groups.	
Staff training.	Staff are well trained on serving people with disabilities, are knowledgeable about the accessibility features the venue can provide and can help connect people with disabilities available technology and resources.
Staff training.	Training on how to best assist patrons with guidance, navigation and spatial orientation.
Develop disability expertise.	Staff are well trained on serving people with disabilities, knowledgeable about the accessibility features available and can help connect people with disabilities with available technology.
MB Customer Service Standard.	To meet MB Customer Service Standards accessibility training : 1) Is mandatory 2) Includes an accessibility policy 3) Allows for notification of disruption in service 4) Seeks patron feedback.

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2. Arriving at the Venue

Item	Description
2.1 Parallel Transit Drop off / Pick up Area	
Sufficient dimensions.	
Close to accessible entrance.	
Sheltered.	
Well positioned	
Well-marked by signage.	
2.2 Public Transit	
Bus stop close to main entrance.	
Sheltered bus stop.	
Place to sit and rest.	A bench is provided at bus stop.
Space for someone in a mobility device.	Clear space within sheltered bus stop where a person with a disability can sit alongside someone without a disability.
Accessible path of travel.	Accessible, clear path of travel connecting bus stop to main entrance.
2.3 Parking	
Sufficient amount of disability parking.	1 out of every 25 stalls be made accessible.
Off Street Parking - Sufficient dimensions.	Disability parking spaces must be at least: 5.5m long; at least 4.0m wide.
Vertical Clearance to accommodate larger vehicles and side/rear lifts.	

Off Street – Accessible Parking Stalls.	
Van Accessible Parking Stalls – wider angled stalls that accommodate wider vans with side/rear lifts.	
Signage and smooth paved surface.	Painted symbol in parking space and sign on post.
2.4 Main Entrance	
Entrance is easy to find and well-marked for people with disabilities.	Intuitive Location, Good colour contrast with surroundings and signage, if glass doors, easy to see for someone with low vision.
Wide and spacious door opening and level threshold.	
Power Operated Doors.	Automatic Doors are best, an automatic door opener with a push button control is also good.
Call button for assistance.	A call button for assistance is provided if the door opener is not working or someone requires extra assistance.
Call button and door opener control are easy to find.	Well-marked by signage and located at wheelchair accessible heights.
2.5 Box Office	
Box office is easy to find.	Well-marked with intuitive location and excellent signage and good colour contrast with surroundings.
Wheelchair accessible counter.	Is the accessible counter offered as an option?

Communication/Hearing Loop.	Is there a pad available to communicate in writing? This is a type of sound system for people who are Hard of Hearing and use hearing aids. It would help someone with a hearing disability communicate with box office staff.
Access to information.	The venue has a brochure of accessibility features that they can share with visitors with disabilities. This should conform to large print standards.

3.Patron Areas

Item	Description
3.1 Coat Check	
Coat Check is easy to find.	Well-marked with intuitive location and excellent signage and good colour contrast with surroundings.
Wheelchair accessible counter.	There is a service counter positioned at wheelchair accessible height.
Is hearing assist technology available?	Signage advertises available technology. Technology is available to be signed out as needed and is well maintained.

Access to information.	The venue has a brochure of accessibility features that they can share with visitors with disabilities. It conforms to large print standards.
3.2 Concession Stands	
Concession stand is easy to find.	Well-marked with intuitive location and excellent signage and good colour contrast with surroundings.
Wheelchair accessible counter.	Counter provides clear knee space beneath the counter for someone using a wheelchair.
Accessible menu for people with low vision/ who are blind.	Provide handheld large print and Braille Menu.
Captioned Television Screens.	Provide captioning on television screens in the common areas to share important announcements to people who are deaf and hard of hearing.
Access to information.	The venue has a brochure of accessibility features.
Concession and/or Reception desk.	Maintain a clear area in front of reception desk. Is there a sightline to the seated patron?
3.3 Washrooms	
Washrooms are easy to find and locate.	There should be accessible washrooms on each floor that venue patrons frequent.

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Excellent signage directing people to washroom.	Signage directing people to the washrooms and signage on washroom doors with Braille/raised lettering.
Accessible entrance.	Power operated door, level threshold.
A universal accessible washroom is provided.	This is an accessible washroom that can be used by male, female, transgendered and is particularly useful if a person needs assistance from an opposite gender attendant.
Training.	Staff should be trained how to assist in an emergency.
Clear path of travel leading to accessible washroom stall.	The accessible washroom stall should be easy to reach for someone using a large mobility device during busy intermissions.
Space to maneuver within accessible washroom stall.	
Accessible toilet and transfer space.	
Stall door opens outwards and does not obstruct the washroom stall.	There is an interior door handle so that it is also easy for people with disabilities to grab onto the stall door and close it.
Grab bars are provided which allow someone to safely transfer.	Grab bar location should be located by the toilet on the non-transfer area side.

Toilet paper should be easy to reach.	Toilet paper should be positioned by grab bar so that a person can grasp onto bar for extra support when reaching.
Someone using a mobility device can easily use the sink area.	
Emergency Call Button for Assistance.	There is an emergency call button for assistance in accessible washroom stalls. It must be monitored.
Lights with Motion Sensors.	Install motion sensor switched lighting to minimize maneuvering. Ensure sensor is positioned so the lights stay on!
3.4 Wayfinding and Lighting	
Map directing people to different areas of the venue (including accessibility features.	Larger venue complexes can have Tactile/ Braille maps to help people orientate themselves.
Handheld Map showing the location of accessibility features.	The venue has a brochure of accessibility features that they can share with visitors with disabilities. This conforms to large print standards & includes a map of accessible washrooms.
Voice Guide Systems.	Some larger venue complexes are using voice guide systems (e.g., small transmitters give information to people on visual disabilities about the location of elevators.

Signage is easy to read for someone with low vision.	Large colour contrast between text and background colour (e.g., white lettering on a black background); Signs use accessible san-serif fonts, such as Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, or Calibri; The lettering is large enough: Internal direction signs – minimum height of 30 mm, Door signage – minimum height of 17 mm; Glare is minimized by using a non-reflective coating.
Signage is easy to read for someone with a cognitive disability and/ or lower levels of literacy.	The signs use simple and clear language that is easy to understand; Words are paired with clear and concise graphic symbols for people with low levels of literacy.
High colour contrast helps people with low vision navigate.	High colour contrast between floors and walls helps someone with low vision navigate. Similarly, high colour contrast between furniture and surroundings is also important. (Avoid clear/glass furniture).
Pathways are kept clear of clutter.	Potential obstacles such as garbage/recycling/ displays are located against wall so that they are easier to detect by cane.
The accessible pathway connecting different activity areas should be intuitive.	Ideally the accessible pathway connecting different activity areas is the same as the pathway that the general public uses. However, if a separate route is necessary because of stairs, the ramp/elevator should be located close by.

Areas are well lit.	Avoid fluorescent lighting and/or lighting that can inadvertently cause seizures (flashing lights most likely to cause seizures between 5 to 30 flashes per second (Hertz). Avoid lighting that causes glare or pools of lighting.
Emergency Signage.	Graphic for exit signs should be consistent throughout the building. Especially for accessible emergency exits.
Emergency Lighting.	Evacuation guide lights are provided that help to direct people to the emergency exits.
Emergency Fire Alarm.	Incorporates visual signals (blinking lights) for people who are Hard of Hearing/Deaf and are located in all activity areas and common areas (including washrooms).
Emergency Evacuation.	Designated refuge spots are required. Staff to remain with those who cannot evacuate independently.
Captioned Television Screens.	Provide captioning on television screens in the common areas to share important announcements to people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

3.5 Ramps	
Ramps are cane detectable for people with low vision.	There are tactile warning strips at the top and bottom of ramps that warn people with low vision about a change in elevation.
The ramp has an accessible non-skid surface and is wide enough.	
The ramp has a gradual slope.	A gradient of 1 in 20 is ideal.
Longer ramps have flat and level landing areas at regular intervals where people can rest.	
Avoid curved ramps.	
Provide safety barriers.	
Provide handrails.	
Provide handrails that are easy to grasp onto and that help guide people with visual disabilities.	
Provide handrails at accessible heights	
3.6 Elevators	
Large sized elevator,	Ideally in larger venues the elevator accommodates at least 2 mobility devices at once.
Accessible entrance and doors.	Doors are open for a minimum width of 910 mm; they remain open for 4 seconds and doors reopen upon meeting obstacle.

Control Panel is accessible.	Centre line for panel which incorporates Braille and raised lettering.
Elevator provides auditory signals for people who are blind or have low vision.	The elevator verbally announces the floor level and beeps at each floor.
Elevator provides visual signals for people who are deaf/Hard of Hearing.	Floor numbers light up when the elevator reaches a floor level or a digital screen displays the floor number.
Handrails are provided for extra stability and support.	Handrails are provided along all non-access walls and are located between 800-920 mm from the floor.
Emergency Preparedness.	Include a text number to call if a person who is deaf and/or hard of hearing is stuck in an elevator.
3.7 Seating Options	
Provide choice in wheelchair seating options.	Try to provide choice to people with disabilities around seating options – in the front row, middle of the venue, back of the venue, gallery.
Provide Equitable Sightlines.	Views from designated seats should be similar to those of other patrons.
Provide enough wheelchair seating to accommodate productions that are targeted at people with disabilities.	

Provide seating options that allow people with disabilities to sit beside friends and family members.	Wheelchair seating should not be segregated – there should be removable seats in wheelchair seating areas for friends/family/companions.
Provide ample multifunctional space that can serve as additional wheelchair seating.	Create a wheelchair seating area/videography area at the front of the venue (Note: both wheelchairs and film crews using tripods are challenging to position because they take up more vertical space). Provide a multifunctional space at the back of the Orchestra that can be used either as wheelchair seating and/or technician control point.
Explore the feasibility of removable seats and/or hydraulic seating systems. Consider the needs of larger bodied people when selecting seats.	Some venues can remove their front row of seating and open their side exits to create more wheelchair accessible seating. Provide seating that can accommodate people with who have larger bodies.
3.8 Adaptive Technology	

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Assisted Listening System.	Provide an Assisted Listening System for people who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. There are three main types of Assisted Listening Systems: 1) Induction loop systems, 2) Infrared (or IR) Systems, 3) FM Systems If the system relies on receivers, ensure that these devices are on hand at all times and available. Provide staff with training on how to maintain and use these devices so that they can properly assist patrons with disabilities.
American Sign Language Interpretation.	Provide space with adequate lighting at the front of the venue for an American Sign Language Interpreter. Reserve some seats for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing that have a good sightline of both the interpreter and the stage (for lip reading). Provide ushers with training on appropriate non-verbal gestures (sign language) to guide people who are deaf/ hard of hearing.
Audio Description.	Work with local groups to offer their live audio description service at shows.
Low Impact/Relaxed performances.	These types of shows are autism friendly and usually involve the following characteristics – reduced sounds, brighter lights, an opportunity to learn about the show in advance, a non- judgmental environment where the audience is encouraged to move around and make noise.
Low Sensory Rooms.	A sound proof enclosed room overlooking the performance stage that has audio piped in. Include seating and/or a couch for resting.

Access to the stage.	Venues with raised stages may need to install temporary ramps or use an indirect route outside of the venue.
Address environmental sensitivities.	Have a scent free policy. Include regular cleaning routines to address mould or dampness.

4. Exhibit Areas

Item	Description
4.1 The space	
Signage.	Well-marked large signage and good colour contrast with surroundings.
The art is hung low enough for those patrons to view the art correctly.	Mount small items (to center line) at no higher than 1015 mm above the floor.
Table displays at correct height for wheelchair users.	Construct the top of a case at a maximum of 915 mm above the finished floor for items that are mounted flat on a pedestal or deck. For larger items, maintain the minimum case height possible.
Make background simple.	Objects mounted against complex backgrounds are difficult to see.
The exhibit includes tactile elements.	
Adequate seating throughout the art gallery for those that need to rest.	

Seating is the appropriate height. Low to the ground seating is difficult to use.	The standard height for a seat is typically 450mm. Some seats should be provided with a seat height between 450mm and 475mm as these tend to be more comfortable for people with mobility difficulties.
A virtual version of the exhibit.	The exhibit can be visited online.
4.2 Communication	
ASL interpretation available.	For openings, talks and guided tours.
Facilitators for people who are blind or have low vision.	For openings, talks and guided tours.
Assistive devices are available.	A hearing loop, audio description.
Materials are available in alternative formats.	Braille, large type, screen reader friendly.

5.Backstage

Item	Description
5.1 Entrance	
Provide a separate backstage entrance for performers/technicians with disabilities.	An accessible path to the front entrance should also be provided.
Backstage entrance is easy to find and well-marked for people with disabilities.	Backstage entrance is well marked, but not confused as main entrance by patrons.
Wide and spacious door opening and level entrance.	

Power Operated Door.	Automatic doors are best, an automatic door opener with push button provides a high level of accessibility.
Call button for assistance.	Provide a call button for assistance in case the door opener is not working or if someone requires extra assistance.
5.2 Wayfinding	
Locate dressing room, stage, backstage accessible washroom on the same level for performers with disabilities.	
Provide wide spacious pathways.	Pathways need to be wide enough for mobility devices to pass one another back stage.
Provide gradual ramps if needed.	Provide gradual ramps (see ramp specifications).
Provide spacious wings.	The wings should be wide enough so that two people using mobility devices can pass each other.
Incorporate safety features on front of stage.	The front of the stage should be well marked by soft LED lighting or a raised lip.
Provide cue lights.	Cue lights at stage entrances can help direct performers who are deaf/hard of hearing.

Performers with disabilities have access to all the same backstage areas as performers without disabilities.	Access should be provided to all of the key activity areas such as dressing room, washrooms, green room, and rehearsal space. If these are located on multiple floors, an elevator should be provided.
5.3 Dressing rooms	
Accessible entrance.	Power operated door, level threshold.
Wide spacious dressing rooms.	There should be wide spacious dressing rooms that provide enough spaces for large mobility devices to maneuver – larger devices require a 1700 mm by 1700 mm turning radius).
Visual paging system.	Incorporate a visual paging system in dressing rooms for performers who are Hard of Hearing and/or deaf. Use simple language.
Provide a ceiling lift system.	Provide a ceiling lift system to help people transfer in and out of their chairs.
A universal accessible washroom is provided.	This is an accessible washroom that can be used by male, female, transgendered and is particularly useful if a person needs assistance from an opposite gender attendant.
Provide roll in shower.	
Space to maneuver within accessible washroom stall.	

Accessible toilet and transfer space.	
Stall door opens outwards and does not obstruct the washroom stall.	There is an indoor door handle so that it is also easy for people with disabilities to grab onto the stall door and close it.
Grab bars are provided which allow someone to safely transfer.	Grab bar location should be located by the toilet on the non-transfer area side.
Toilet paper should be easy to reach.	Toilet paper should be positioned by grab bar so that a person can grasp onto for extra support when reaching.
Someone using a mobility device can easily use the sink area.	
Emergency Call Button for Assistance.	There is an emergency call button for assistance in accessible washroom stalls.
Lights with motion sensors.	Install motion sensor switched lighting in washrooms.
Rest area.	Provide separate room adjacent to dressing rooms large enough for bed.
Accessible furniture.	Make-up counter and sink with knee space. Provide lower height coat rack in each dressing room. Lockers should have tactile labels to be easily identifiable by people with vision impairment.

6.Technical Areas

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Item	Description
6.1 Accessible Pathways	
Provide accessible pathways connecting all the main activity areas.	There should be accessible pathways leading to the fly rail, suspension grid, technician control booths and other areas used by technicians.
Provide wide spacious pathways.	Pathways need to be at least 1500 mm wide in order for mobility devices to pass one another back stage. (Note: Spacious backstage areas are also better for moving heavy venue equipment).
Provide gradual ramps if needed.	Provide gradual ramps that allow technicians with disabilities to use the ramps safely and independently.
Provide an elevator backstage.	Elevators are useful in backstage areas for moving heavy technical equipment, providing access to back office administrative spaces and providing access for performers and technicians with disabilities.
Provide access to Tech Control Booth.	If the tech booth is only going to be slightly raised, provide an accessible ramp and entrance leading to the tech control booth. In a larger venue explore having the gallery seating and tech booth located on the same level so that they can share an elevator.

Install a suspension grid.	Instead of using a catwalk system, install a wheelchair accessible suspension grid system – this also reduces health and safety risks of individuals without disabilities falling below.
Have fly systems/ line systems.	Bars for hanging lights, scenery, etc. should have the ability to lower to the floor level for adjustment at floor level.
6.2 Control Booth	
Entrance is wheelchair accessible.	
Enough room for larger mobility devices to maneuver.	Check to ensure work areas are free of loose wires and cables.
Control window and controls are located at wheelchair accessible heights.	
If a desk is provided, it is wheelchair accessible.	Clear knee space is provided underneath the desk.
Provide additional flex space for additional workstations.	Provide additional flex space for additional work stations – can create extra space for audio visual description – and can also be used to provide more space for mobility devices to maneuver.

7.0 Administration

Item	Description
The back-office areas are accessible for people using mobility devices.	If the back office is located on another level, there is either elevator access or a gradual ramp leading to the office.
There are accessible work stations.	Work stations can be easily adapted for people using wheelchairs and employees with disabilities would have access to adapted technology for employees who are deaf/Hard of Hearing and/or blind.
There is an accessible washroom.	See earlier sections on washrooms.
Employees.	Are there disabled employees in your organization?
Community.	Do you have a disability advisor or other community connections?
Employment	Employment of persons with disabilities should be encouraged and supported across the organization

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Item	Technical Requirement
1. Parking	
Off Street Parking - Sufficient dimensions.	Disability parking spaces must be at least: 5.5m long; at least 4.0m wide.
Vertical Clearance to accommodate larger vehicles and side/rear lifts.	Vancouver Bylaw Requires vertical clearance of at least 2.3m.
Off Street – Accessible Parking Stalls.	Width of 3.7 m (including access aisle) Two adjacent parking stalls can share 1.2 m access aisle.
Van Accessible Parking Stalls – wider stalls that accommodate wider vans with side/rear lifts. Angled parking is preferred for larger vehicles.	The combined width of a van accessible parking stall is 4.9m including the 3.4m wide parking stall and 1.5m access aisle. Two adjacent van accessible parking stalls with a shared access aisle would take up 8.3m
2. Doors	
Wide and spacious door opening and level threshold.	915 mm wide and level threshold (door threshold should be a maximum of 13 mm high and be beveled).
3. Counters	
Wheelchair accessible counter.	There is a service counter positioned at wheelchair accessible height (between 760 and 865 mm high).
4.0 Washrooms	

Accessible entrance.	Power operated door, level threshold, doorway is 915 mm wide.
Space to maneuver within accessible washroom stall.	Accessible washroom stall should be a minimum of 1500mm by 1500mm, For larger mobility devices such as scooters, the dimensions of 1700mm by 2440mm are preferred.
Accessible toilet and transfer space.	Toilet seat height -- Approximately 475 mm; Transfer space by toilet -min width 1020 mm.
Grab bars are provided which allow someone to safely transfer.	Grab bar location should be located by the toilet on the non-transfer area side. Grab bars that angle up from mid-point are preferable. Mounted horizontally between 840 mm and 920 mm above floor. Midpoint in line with the front edge of water closet, mid-point angles up not more than 60^{o}. Grab bar diameter (30 mm – 40 mm); grab bar clearance from wall (35 – 45 mm) (Grab bar length at least 900 mm long). Grab bars have a nonslip finish.

Someone using a mobility device can easily use the sink area.	The sink is no higher than 865 mm above the finished floor; there is knee space (at least 250 mm high) underneath the sink. The mirror is mounted 1000 mm from the floor.
5.0 Ramps	
The ramp has an accessible non-skid surface and is wide enough.	Ramp is a minimum width of 915 mm. 1500 mm is ideal, allowing devices to pass.
The ramp has a gradual slope which allows people to use the ramp safely and independently.	The more gradual the gradient the better – a gradient of 1 in 20 is ideal; however, other gradients can be used for shorter ramps Ramp of maximum length of 6 m (gradient of 1 in 12) Ramp of maximum length of 9 m (gradient 1 in 16) Ramp of maximum length of 12 m (gradient of 1 in 20).
Longer ramps have flat and level landing areas at regular intervals where people can rest.	The dimensions are 1500 mm long by the width of the ramp (located at bottom and top of ramp and at abrupt changes in direction.

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6.0 Exhibits	
The art is hung low enough for those patrons to view the art correctly.	Mount small items (to center line) at no higher than 1015 mm above the floor.
Table displays at correct height for wheelchair users.	Construct the top of a case at a maximum of 915 mm above the finished floor for items that are mounted flat on a pedestal or deck. For larger items, maintain the minimum case height possible.
Seating is the appropriate height. Low to the ground seating is difficult to use.	The standard height for a seat is typically 450mm. Some seats should be provided with a seat height between 450mm and 475mm as these tend to be more comfortable for people with mobility difficulties.