



ASSOCIATION OF
MANITOBA
MUNICIPALITIES

**Meeting with the Honourable Heather Stefanson
Minister of Families**

2019

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Introduction

- The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Heather Stefanson and representatives of Manitoba Families.
- The AMM encourages the Province of Manitoba to consider municipal concerns as well as the effects of funding decisions on local communities throughout the budget process.
- This document outlines the AMM's position and recommendations on a number of important municipal issues relevant to the Families portfolio.

Priority Issues

1) Accessibility Legislation and Standards

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ ***Provide financial and resource support to municipalities to help identify, prevent, and remove barriers to accessibility within local communities; and***
 - ❖ ***Reduce the administrative and financial burdens on municipalities by implementing relevant recommendations of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act Review*.***
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- The AMM supports greater accessibility for all Manitobans.
 - However, since 2011 the AMM has repeatedly voiced concerns over the lack of provincial funding to municipalities to support the effective implementation of accessibility standards.
 - The current approach taken by the Province of Manitoba stands in contrast to the federal government's Enabling Accessibility Fund that provides funding support to municipalities.
 - These concerns were most recently reiterated in the AMM's official submission regarding the proposed accessibility employment standard regulation in January 2018.
 - It is essential that costs are not downloaded and regulatory changes do not negatively impact municipalities, financially or otherwise.
 - Municipalities should not have to shoulder these priorities alone.
 - Meanwhile, it is essential that the Accessibility Advisory Council (AAC) be mindful of the implications of its recommendations on stakeholders, including municipalities, and the Manitoba Disabilities Issues Office (DIO) provide resources responsive to the needs of local communities.
 - The AMM urges Manitoba Families to reduce the administrative and financial burdens on municipalities by implementing relevant recommendations of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act Review*.

2) Housing in Manitoba

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ ***Continue to facilitate partnerships between municipalities, the federal government, and private sector to enhance housing options across Manitoba; and***
 - ❖ ***Consult with the AMM on the new provincial housing strategy.***
- The AMM urges the Province of Manitoba to enhance housing options across the province since a strong housing system is essential to community and economic growth.
 - A long-term, comprehensive housing plan must be established that rebalances the fiscal burdens between the federal and provincial/territorial governments as well as provides incentives to the private sector to pursue initiatives with partnering local communities.
 - Every dollar invested in housing in Canada earns \$1.40 in GDP.
 - Moreover, the population of seniors in Canada is expected to double over the next twenty years, yet affordable housing is in short supply while the social and renting housing systems are experiencing a lack of affordable housing options, particularly in rural communities.
 - Investments in affordable housing and creating incentives to increase rental housing will help keep vulnerable seniors in their homes and out of the health care system, ease the serious strain on our social housing system, and make housing more affordable for the one-third of Canadians who rent. These incentives will also take the pressure off the housing market and household debt.
 - Therefore, the AMM appreciates being consulted on the new provincial housing strategy as outlined in the Speech from The Throne in November 2017, particularly how it may relate to available funding from the federal government.
 - The AMM also encourages further discussions on how the Province of Manitoba and municipalities can partner under the auspices of the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF) to move projects forward.

Appendix – AMM Active Resolutions

AMM Resolution #41-2017

Topic: Accessibility Legislation & Standards

Sponsor(s): Municipality of Russell-Binscarth (Midwestern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Families

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has mandated that municipalities must create an Accessibility Plan in accordance with the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and its corresponding standards; and

WHEREAS the costs associated with developing and implementing an Accessibility Plan are expected to be borne by municipalities; and

WHEREAS the requirement for an Accessibility Plan is just another example of provincial downloading by creating legislation or regulations that impose costs on municipalities without the provision of funding;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to significantly reduce the administrative and financial burdens on municipalities as a result of the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and its corresponding standards.

AMM Resolution #39-2016

Topic: Eliminating Municipal Contributions to Income Assistance

Sponsor(s): City of Thompson (Northern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Families

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba amended *The Manitoba Assistance Act* legislating municipal contribution levels for income assistance; and

WHEREAS as a result of this legislative change municipalities are required to pay annual contributions to the Province of Manitoba for income assistance which is a provincial responsibility; and

WHEREAS the City of Thompson was not in favour of the legislative changes that were enacted which resulted in increased costs for municipalities; and

WHEREAS the downloading of this provincial responsibility to Manitoba municipalities is not fair and equitable;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to amend *The Manitoba Assistance Act* to eliminate the requirement for municipal contributions to income assistance.

AMM Resolution #40-2016

Topic: The Manitoba Assistance Act

Sponsor(s): RM of Ste. Anne (Eastern District), RM of Ritchot (Eastern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Families

WHEREAS Manitoba municipalities received a letter from Manitoba Employment and Income Assistance, dated January 20, 2016, announcing changes to *The Manitoba Assistance Act*, specifically Section 16.3: Promotion of Employment Opportunities, which states, "Every municipality must identify and promote employment opportunities for recipients of income assistance and general assistance in accordance with the terms of an agreement to be reached between municipalities and the minister"; and

WHEREAS a Memorandum of Understanding was reached in consultation with the AMM which describes municipal obligations, including the requirement to designate a community liaison and provide quarterly activity reports to the government advising of available employment opportunities in municipalities; and

WHEREAS most rural municipalities, particularly those with agricultural communities, have extremely limited employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS municipal boundaries do not necessarily define or factor into an individual's search for employment; and

WHEREAS many municipalities do not have the resources, knowledge and/or qualifications to determine where employment opportunities are available, as the information is more likely available at the provincial government level; and

WHEREAS Manitoba Employment and Income Assistance is a provincial branch dedicated to the development of the workforce and income support as well as employment and income assistance, to which retail sales tax funding is allocated to staff the department and complete the tasks which are now being downloaded to municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to amend *The Manitoba Assistance Act* to remove the new municipal responsibilities of the designation of community liaisons, collection of data pertaining to employment opportunities and provision of quarterly activity reports to government.

AMM Resolution #22-2010

Topic: Housing in Manitoba

Sponsor(s): Town of Gladstone (Midwestern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Families

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada are actively encouraging foreign immigration to the Province of Manitoba to increase population to stimulate and grow the economy; and

WHEREAS significant immigration is happening at a fast pace in many smaller municipalities due in part to the success and protections afforded under Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Manitoba's Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program and also due to major private sector foreign worker recruitment initiatives; and

WHEREAS there is a critical shortage of affordable housing to rent or purchase in most small municipalities and rural communities throughout Manitoba that seek to attract new immigrants, foreign workers and their families;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada to establish a provincial-federal task force with municipal and private sector participation to coordinate and expedite the delivery of existing and new affordable housing incentive programs to address the immediate and critical housing shortage in rural Manitoba.