



Manitoba League  
of Persons with  
Disabilities



23  
24

# ANNUAL REPORT





# **Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities**

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# Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities Annual Report 23-24

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## Land Acknowledgement

Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities acknowledges that the work we do to support Manitobans with disabilities/gifts takes place on the traditional lands and waterways of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, as well the homeland of the Metis Nation. We respect the treaties made here, and all locations we are participating from, and are grateful to work, live, and interact on this land.

## Mission Statement

MLPD is a united, cross-disability voice, promoting a fully accessible and inclusive Manitoba.

## Philosophy

- 1) Manitobans with disabilities/gifts have the same rights and responsibilities as any other person.
- 2) All persons, regardless of abilities, must have access to opportunities in order to exercise these rights.
- 3) An accessible and inclusive society benefits everyone.

## Supporters

The work of MLPD to increase accessibility in Manitoba is made possible by the following:

Foundations and Community Organizations:

- The Allan Simpson Memorial Fund at the Winnipeg Foundation
- The Thomas Sill Foundation Inc.
- Michael John Rosner Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba
- Margaret Laurence Endowment Fund

Governments:

- Government of Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada
  - The Social Development Partnership Program, Disability Component
- Government of Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada
  - New Horizons 2024-2025

Organizations:

- The Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society (NDMS)

Corporations:

- Assiniboine Credit Union

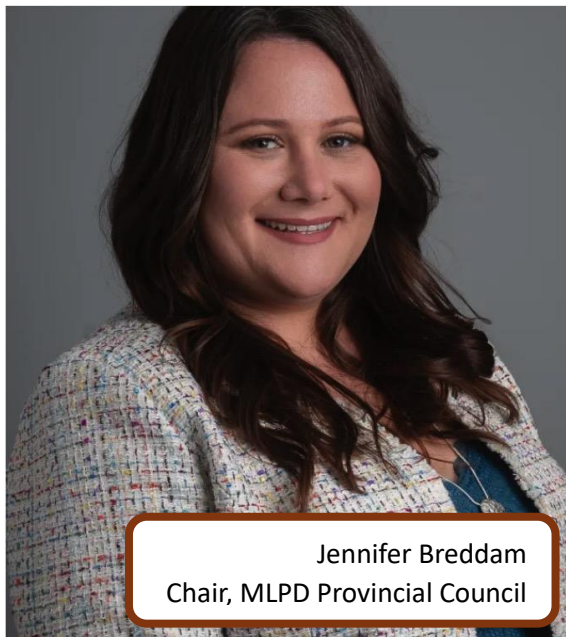
Private Donations:

- Individual supporters like YOU!

Special Thanks:

- A special thanks to our social enterprise customers: FortWhyte Alive!, Bike Winnipeg, Clinic Community Health, Bison Transport, Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, Marymount, Charles Sinclair School at Fisher River Cree Nation, and the City of Winnipeg.

## Message from Council Chair



Jennifer Breddam  
Chair, MLPD Provincial Council

Hello MLPD Members!

I am incredibly honoured to have the chance to share the remarkable journey and achievements of the MLPD Provincial Council with all of you. First, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my fellow Council members for their incredible teamwork and strategic guidance, which has been instrumental in driving forward MLPD's mission and vision. Our focus on two key priorities, reestablishing MLPD as the preeminent voice of Manitoba's accessibility movement and beginning MLPD's reconciliation journey in honour of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 92, has been the cornerstone of the Council's efforts this year. I also want to

acknowledge and commend the exemplary work of MLPD's staff and volunteers, including our outstanding executive director, Melissa Graham, whose leadership has been invaluable in propelling MLPD's initiatives. Melissa recently celebrated her first anniversary at the helm of MLPD. This devoted, talented team deserves a standing ovation for their impressive accomplishments this year.

Allow me to introduce myself and share a bit about my personal journey and commitment as MLPD's Council Chair. I am Jennifer (Jenn) Breddam, and my pronouns are she/her. I am a person with neurodivergence and a physical disability. I am also a member of the LGBTQ2IA+ community. I joined MLPD's Provincial Council at our May 2023 AGM. I like to say that Melissa cornered me

at a local labour event and compelled me to join, and while there is some truth to that story, I was already a fan of MLPD. It so happened that I had recently written an essay about MLPD's history in Manitoba's social justice landscape for one of my university courses. The truth is, saying yes to Melissa was an easy decision and while taking on the responsibility of Council Chair a couple of months later was unexpected, it felt like the right choice. A year later, I find myself surrounded by incredible people working together to empower people with disabilities and gifts, create an inclusive society, and advance social justice initiatives. I have no doubt that I am exactly where I need to be. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Council Chair and for the trust you have placed in me.

As mentioned, MLPD's Council has been dedicated to restoring MLPD as the leading voice of Manitoba's accessibility movement. Our efforts to achieve this goal involve engaging in advocacy and outreach initiatives, developing community and political relationships, and emphasizing diversity in our council recruitment.

At the municipal level, Kevin Linklater represented MLPD on the Winnipeg Transit Plus Public Advisory Board this year. Kevin advocated for improved service delivery and kept our Council informed about Transit Plus developments. Additionally, Melissa and I met with the Director of Transit Plus this spring to address the accessibility community's concerns regarding upcoming service delivery plans. We also met with delegates from the TTC Riders to explore advocacy opportunities in Winnipeg and recently proposed a partnership with a social justice advocacy group funded by the University of Manitoba to create an advocacy campaign that would roll out in the 2024-2025 academic year.

With a new NDP Provincial Government, our Council has renewed optimism for collaboration opportunities. Alongside Melissa and her team, we have begun developing relationships, including meeting with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Families and introducing MLPD to the Minister of Advanced Education. Melissa and I also participated in a seminar featuring Robert McRuer, a prominent international disability studies researcher and author at the University of Manitoba. MLPD hosted him at our office along with UM's Vice Provost, Tina Chen, to discuss MLPD's work and connection to the Manitoba accessibility community.

Making connections such as these opens MLPD to new opportunities for collaboration and business development. However, equally important are our relationships with Canadian social justice organizations. To ensure our Council was apprised of national accessibility news and initiatives this year, our vice chair, Alan Levy, represented MLPD at the Canadian Council of Disabilities where MLPD holds a permanent council position. This pivotal role is essential for our Council to develop and maintain relationships with accessibility-focused organizations across Canada.

In line with our Council's priority to engage meaningfully in the process of reconciliation, I briefly participated in the CCD's working group focused on developing the CCD's 10 Disability Justice Principles, where I provided insight on incorporating the principles of reconciliation and

decolonized language into the developed statements. Furthermore, I was honoured to meet with the esteemed leader of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN), Chief Maureen Brown, in January of this year. I humbly received guidance from her about leading change toward reconciliation within the accessibility community.

As MLPD is only at the beginning of our reconciliation journey, we eagerly anticipate opportunities for significant learning and development as we engage with and form relationships with Indigenous members of our community and Peoples across Treaty Nations One through Five and the Métis Nation in which MLPD operates. Our council is enthusiastic about advancing this work in the 2024-2025 year as we continue to prioritize the decolonization of our organization, practices, and advocacy in honour of our responsibilities towards reconciliation.

Lastly, I would like to thank our outgoing council members, Kevin Linklater, Pat Locken and Joel Robinson, for their unwavering support and dedication to MLPD during their tenure on Council. These three incredible individuals provided essential leadership to MLPD through significant challenges and times of growth. Additionally, I would like to welcome our newest member, Breanne Boyce. Breanne and Melissa partnered earlier this year to advocate for Transit Plus users facing discrimination, and we are excited to have her activist energy on our team.

In closing, I am inspired by the dedication and passion of each and every individual involved in MLPD. Together, we are making significant strides in advocating for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities and gifts, fostering meaningful partnerships, and actively contributing to the process of reconciliation. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such extraordinary individuals and look forward to the continued success and positive impact we will strive to achieve in the coming year. Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to our shared vision.

*Jennifer Breddam*

Chair, MPLD Provincial Council



# Executive Director's Report

Greetings MLPD Members and Friends,

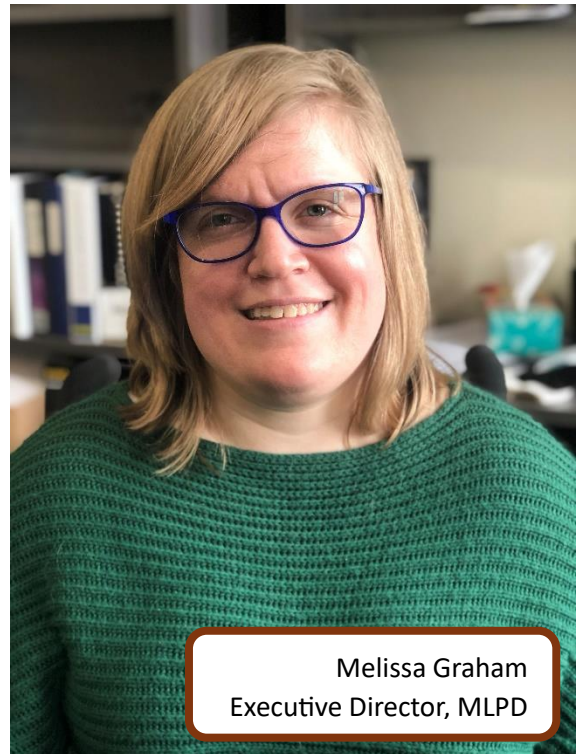
What an incredible year it has been for MLPD! I am so proud to present this Annual Report for 2023-2024. This past year has truly been transformative for the organization. We have adjusted to our new office, expanded our Accessibility Consulting Services, strengthened relationships with Indigenous people and organizations, broadened our reach in the community, and hired new staff!

For those of you who read our Year-End Report, some of our accomplishments will be familiar to you, but in the last few months there's been even more to share. This fiscal year, we completed social enterprise projects with FortWhyte Alive!, Bike Winnipeg, Marymound, and the City of Winnipeg. As I write this report, we are wrapping up projects with Clinic Health Services, Bison Transport, Charles Sinclair School, and the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. All of our consulting work helps make Manitoba more accessible and inclusive, while also supporting the costs of our advocacy work.

MLPD also has several grant-funded projects, including a series of webinars for National Accessibility Week focused on Indigenous experiences of accessibility and inclusion, funded by Accessible Canada. Thanks to funding from the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba we have been hosting a series of community-building "coffeehouse" sessions. We are training our first cohort of peer-support volunteers though funding from the Winnipeg Foundation. We are part of a group of organizations working together to encourage the hiring of employees with disabilities and gifts at Canada Post. Soon we will be working on another project bringing together Indigenous Elders and youth with disabilities/gifts. We look forward to telling you more about that soon.

Of course, our advocacy work remains at the heart of what we do. This year MLPD had a significant presence in the provincial Disability Matters Vote campaign. We also supported tenants at Whellams Lane in their struggle for equitable access to Transit Plus. We lead a sidewalk snow campaign, alongside other Winnipeg disability organizations, and we answer calls every day from community members looking for support navigating their needs and services.

Our small and mighty organization is out in our community doing many things. None of this would be possible without our wonderful team, Sheryl, Debby, and Ella, who make all the magic happen.



Melissa Graham  
Executive Director, MLPD

I would be remiss if I did not also thank Allen Mankewich, who left us to work for the Province, and whose skills helped us survive Disability Matters Vote and helped us understand that we couldn't just do outreach off the side of our desk. Thank you to our amazing Council members Jenn, Alan, Erin, Pat, Kevin, and Breanne for your guidance, sharing your expertise and keeping us grounded in community. Thank you to our many accessibility reviewers who make our consulting services possible. Miigwetch to our Circle of Knowledge Keepers – Louise, Jeanie, Tara, and Melanie - for supporting and sharing in our journey to decolonize our understanding of accessibility and the work we do. Thank you also to our bookkeeper Daniel Clark, our office volunteer Kristen Brown, and anyone who I have unintentionally left off this list. I would also like to extend my gratitude to our members for their trust in us. I hope we are making you proud.

We have many great plans for the coming year; one of those plans is to have more involvement from our members. We will be bringing back electronic newsletters and looking for new ways that our members can inform the work of the organization. We are a community-led organization first and foremost.

We have some work to do to help our elected officials understand how essential a community-led disability organization is.

I believe that the more we strengthen our relationships with each other, the more we reach out to each other regardless of the barriers we face, the closer we will be to an accessible, inclusive Manitoba that prioritizes the voices of lived experience.

I look forward to sharing that with you as we approach our 50th anniversary in 2025.

Thank you, Miigwetch, Merci, and in solidarity,



Melissa Graham  
Executive Director

## Our Team

### *Melissa Graham: Executive Director*

Melissa is a lifelong disability justice advocate based out of Winnipeg. She has over a decade of frontline experience, working for the Self-Managed Attendant Services Program in Ontario and other organizations in the disability sector. Melissa holds her Masters in Social Work from the University of Toronto, and was working towards her PhD before accepting her position with MLPD. She has a long history in disability policy and research focused on intersectionality, decolonization, social justice and accessibility. Melissa is well-known for her activist background, particularly as the founder and lead organizer for the Toronto Disability Pride March. She organized this annual event for 11 years while building relationships with other disability grassroots organizations nationally and internationally, and contributing to research on disability movement organizing. She has successfully passed the torch to other organizers to continue the march. She carries what she has learned from this work into the collaborative, social justice work of MLPD.

### *Sheryl Peters: Projects Manager*

Sheryl is a Winnipeg-based social researcher, non-profit programs coordinator, and artist. She has experienced life-long invisible disabilities. Sheryl holds a Master's degree in sociology and a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts. She was working toward a PhD in sociology when her disability shifted her path. Her previous research and programs work focused on social equity, a social justice approach to autism and disability, health and well-being of women and older adults, person-centred health care, and decolonizing/community-based approaches to research and community work. Sheryl has taught classes in similar topics at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg. Sheryl's creative projects include documentary video and community arts – most notably digital storytelling projects with Autistic people, their families and educators, and Indigenous women and girls.



Sheryl Peters (left)  
Melissa Graham (right)

### *Debby McLeod: Accessibility Coordinator*



I just want to say how happy I am working with MLPD. I have worked for all of my adult life in the Health Care Industry. The last 20 years before retirement, I worked as the Critical Equipment Specialist in the Adult Emergency Dept. at HSC, and in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit. I am recently new to the Disabled community. In November of 2020, I lost my left leg from below the knee due to a serious bone infection. I am finding new challenges and adventures every day with MLPD. I am constantly learning about the world of non-profit and funding. It takes me back to all the days of fundraising for my children for various sporting activities. I look forward to continuing to learn with my new adventures in my new world and community. Thank you for this opportunity.

### *Ella Rockar: Outreach and Communications Coordinator*

Ella is MLPD's newest staff member. Ella holds a Master's and Bachelor's degree in sociology, through which she focused on program development and evaluation, public policy, and equitable access to housing. Ella has dedicated her career to the non-profit sector. Her work has centered on creating community-based supports to increase housing and sexual healthcare access. Ella is excited to join the MLPD team and lend her expertise in community connection, event planning, and outreach. When not at work, you can find Ella in her garden, with her dog Cleo, or with a book and a big mug of tea.



## Our Council

### *Jennifer Breddam: Chair of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities*

Jennifer is a social justice advocate at heart and endeavours to incorporate the values of inclusivity, equity, and authenticity into her life and work. Since 2020, Jenn has been pursuing a Bachelor's degree in labour studies with an Indigenous Studies minor at the University of Manitoba. She will graduate in 2024 and aspires to pursue higher education within the human rights field. Before returning to university, Jenn built a successful career as a human resource and labour relations professional. She is passionate about her field, with a particular interest in the intersection of human rights and the world of work.

When she isn't studying or spending time with loved ones, Jenn supports her community through volunteerism. Beyond her role as Chair of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities (MLPD) Provincial Council, Jenn is a board member of the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties (MARL), President of the University of Manitoba Labour Studies Students' Association, as well as several other meaningful causes close to her heart. Additionally, Jenn is a Burns Leadership Institute Fellow and has studied multilateral diplomacy leadership at the United Nations in Geneva. She has maintained a GPA above 4.0 since returning to the U of M and has achieved recognition on the Faculty of Arts Dean's honour list each year. Jenn is humbled by the many awards and scholarships she has received as a result of her hard work in class and within her community.

Through the various advocacy hats she wears, Jenn hopes she can learn from and be of service to Canadians facing human rights barriers within and outside of employment. She seeks to be a change leader within the labour relations field, advancing worker rights and the labour movement through collaboration with Manitoba employers and their local community. Beyond these aspirations, Jenn is passionate about exploring the world near and far with her adoring spouse, Dave, being mom and step-mom to their four incredible kids, and is a bonafide "plant lady" with over 50 varieties adorning their home.

### *Alan Levy: Second Vice-Chair of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities*

Throughout his career Alan's goal has been to foster and celebrate organizational and societal diverse and inclusive workplaces with a sense of belonging; he has been committed in his organizational and academic work to build teams that reflect a wide variety of skills and perspectives and backgrounds and feel free to express their opinions, this includes his work with whistleblowing. Believing in his research on whistleblowing which only strengthens organizations

to be better in their service to all customers and to society, whether in the private or public sectors.

Alan holds a BA from the U of W, Masters of Industrial Relations from the University of Toronto and a Master of Laws from Osgoode Hall, York University.

Alan's conflict resolution work is what separates him from most leaders. Both as an academic and practitioner of conflict resolution models of testing, practicality applies to some of the most difficult disputes in the Country.

### *Erin Honke: Provincial Council Member of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities*

Erin Honke is a student in her final semester of a Bachelor of Psychology at the University of Winnipeg. She loves young children and has spent the past 7 years working as a nanny.

After earning her undergrad, she will be getting a Master's degree to become a licensed therapist. She has always had a desire to help others, and when she struggled with her own mental health challenges while coping with her chronic pain condition, she discovered how helpful therapy programs can be. This is one of the reasons she is passionate about MLPD.

She has been living with chronic pain for the last 10 years which has impacted her quality of life. However, she is energized, motivated, intelligent, and eager to learn.

For the last few months, she has been serving on MLPD's Fundraising Committee. She has been attending committee meetings and completed her first grant application. In her four years at university, she has remained an honour roll student while also balancing work and volunteer positions, most recently acting as the organizer for multiple fundraisers for Save a Dog Network. She believes her education and psychology training, which included disability studies courses, allows her to connect with people in our community quite easily.

### *Kevin Linklater: Provincial Council Member of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities*

Kevin is very interested in the well-being of those who live with a disability. He has had experience with the Manitoba Brain Injury Association as a board member and also as a member. While he was a board member, he saw the need for fundraising. He also helped raise awareness of the Brain Injury Association for those who have just suffered a brain injury. He is currently a student at the University of Winnipeg working towards his disability studies degree. With that degree he can be a community support worker for those in the disability community.

## *Pat Locken: Provincial Council Member of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities*

Pat is a former Business Education Instructor and Work Experience Coordinator with Red River College. Her interest in disability issues stems from experience trying to access services for family members. She has served on the SSCY (Special Services for Children and Youth) working group and RCC board and helped to establish the Movement Centre of Manitoba (MCM), working on fundraising and serving three terms as Board Chair.

Pat's main concerns are currently about public accessibility, including education, and access to supports for adults with physical disabilities who are mentally and socially capable of independent living but do not qualify for funding to make this possible.

## *Breanne Boyce: Provincial Council Member, Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities*

With a background in psychology, business administration, and family social sciences, Breanne has a passion for social justice and empowering the community. Breanne was introduced to MLPD during an advocacy campaign for persons with disabilities and the elderly during their pursuit for justice against changes imposed by Winnipeg Transit Plus.

## Funded Projects

### *WORBE*

This project is led by the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS), and MLPD is a partner on the project's advisory committee, along with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), and Quebec Association for Equity and Inclusion in Post-Secondary Education (AQEIPS). WORBE is a multi-stakeholder project funded by the Federal Government through Employment and Social Development Canada. The purpose of the project is to have more people with disabilities/gifts become sustainably employed at Canada Post. MLPD is providing knowledge about barriers to employment, has been active in the job coaching program, and is contributing to the resources that may be used to provide education to Canada Post and other potential employers.

### *National AccessAbility Week – Webinar and Event*

National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) takes place every year starting on the last Sunday in May. It is a time when accessibility and inclusion is promoted across communities and workplaces and a time to celebrate the contributions of Canadians with disabilities. It is also an opportunity to

recognize the efforts of Canadians who are actively removing barriers and ensuring persons with disabilities/gifts have an equal chance to participate in all aspects of Canadian society.

We received funding from Accessible Canada to host a series of webinars for National AccessAbility Week 2023 and 2024 in partnership with NEADS and CCD. Each organization facilitated a webinar for each year. Each webinar was live online, captioned, with ASL translation, some with LSQ, and French language translation. All the recordings will be made available to the public. Recordings of MLPDs webinars are available on our YouTube page at [www.youtube.com/@mlpdcanada](http://www.youtube.com/@mlpdcanada)

MLPD brought together a circle of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers in 2023 and 2024 – Elder Louise MacKay, Melanie Marsden, Jeannie Whitebird, and Tara Petti – to develop webinars that focused on making Indigenous cultural events, spaces, and everyday life accessible and how we can all do this together. This year’s webinar was held at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights on May 25<sup>th</sup> and was titled “We Journey Together” in Michif, Anishinaabemowin, Cree, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun.

In addition, this year we received funding from Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society (NDMS), a disability organization in Nunavut, to hold an in-person event during National AccessAbility Week. Together with Indigenous community partners and Women’s Health Clinic, our circle and staff organized the All Spirits Gathering, which brought together Indigenous and accessibility communities for an afternoon of accessible ceremony, feast, and celebration at the Odena Celebration Circle at The Forks. Speakers included: Nahanni Fontaine – Minister of Families (also the Minister responsible for Accessibility), Bernadette Smith –



Debby McLeod (left)  
Sheryl Peters (middle)  
Melissa Graham (right)

Minister of Housing, Addictions, and Homelessness, and Leah Gazan – NDP Member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre. Uzoma Asagwara, Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, also attended. The event was well attended by the media. Photos and video of the webinar and events are available on our YouTube channel and social media. The Full Moon Partners moved their full moon ceremony to this day to coincide with our All Spirits Gathering. Many of the



attendees from the All Spirits Gathering in the afternoon stayed into the evening to participate in the full moon ceremony.

### *Community Navigation Peer Support Project - Winnipeg Foundation*

MLPD received funding from the Allen Simpson Memorial Fund. We are working with nine peer support volunteers. These volunteers will eventually be supporting our advocacy efforts and connecting with the community. They are receiving training on: Indigenous perspectives on disability, disability justice perspectives, housing, income supports, harm reduction, and how to support community members. We will be wrapping up the project in the next fiscal year.

### *Creative Conversations About Disability – Jewish Foundation Manitoba – General Community Impact Grant*

The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba funded us to bring together community builders and disabled artists over a series of small events to celebrate disability community and have facilitated conversations. You may have attended one of our Crip Coffeehouses funded by this project. There will be more of these conversations in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

## Accessibility Consulting Services



Debby McLeod (left)  
Melissa Graham (right)  
at FortWhyte Alive!

Our Accessibility Consulting Services (ACS) has had its best year yet in the 2023/2024 fiscal year, with six projects completed and two projects soon to wrap up. Launched in 2024, this service is a social enterprise where we provide accessibility services, such as accessibility reviews of physical spaces, websites, and policy documents, accessibility plans and guidance, and accessibility training to businesses, organizations, governments, and Crown Corporations. It allows us to include the experience and expertise of people with disabilities/gifts in our projects and pay them for sharing their knowledge. The ACS has

significantly expanded its reach this year providing us greater flexibility as an organization, which allows us to expand into public education and advocacy work.

An Accessibility Reviewer is someone who uses their lived experience and knowledge of accessibility and the disability community to provide feedback to businesses and organizations.

The payment that Accessibility Reviewers receive depends on the level of commitment required for each project. If you would like to be an accessibility reviewer for any of our upcoming projects, please contact the MLPD office or visit <https://mlpd.mb.ca/whats-new/>

### *FortWhyte Alive!*



Guide dog at FortWhyte Alive!

This past autumn we were fortunate to work with ten accessibility reviewers to complete a review of FortWhyte Alive! Our reviewers were provided with a Family Pass to Fort Whyte Alive to visit, ‘secret shopper’ style, to examine the pathways, welcome centre, interpretive centre, and most of the other physical space that visitors would encounter when spending several hours there. MLPD staff met multiple times with management at Fort Whyte Alive and provided a 25-page report, including short and long-term recommendations to make Fort

Whyte Alive more accessible. Reviewers greatly enjoyed this assignment! Staff and management were very welcoming and happy to have MLPD there.

### *Bike Winnipeg*

One of the more unique accessibility reviews was a focus group last summer with Bike Winnipeg to review the accessibility of two variations of cargo e-bikes that Bike Winnipeg was considering purchasing. Cargo e-bikes are bicycles with a large cart, either on the front or back of the bike for hauling items. They have an electronic motor that you can switch on when needed. Reviewers took turns trying out the cargo e-bikes and then gave their feedback in a focus group with Bike Winnipeg.



E-bike review for Bike Winnipeg

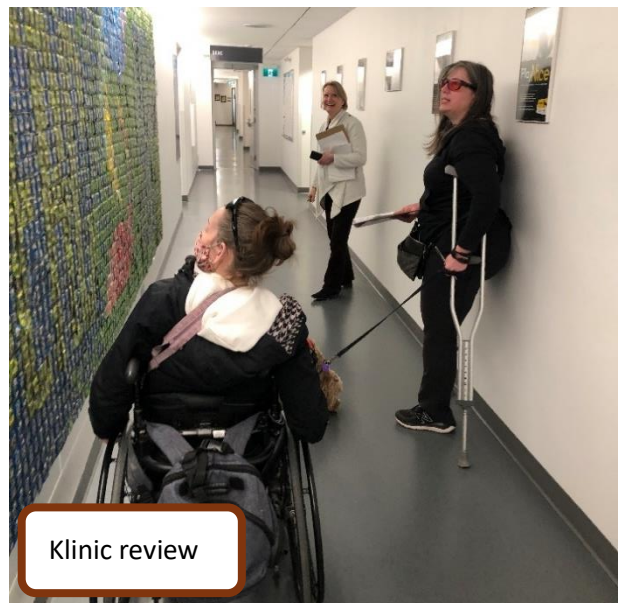
### *Elections Canada*

For part two of our four-part project with Elections Canada, we hosted a webinar on engaging with elected officials at the policy table with David Kron from Barrier Free Manitoba and Janet Rodriguez from Disability Without Poverty. We also published two related articles. One is on the importance of lived experience of disability, from the organization Disability Without Poverty. The other article is on advocating for accessibility, an interview with Council Member Breanne Boyce

who successfully advocated for more accessible transit on behalf of herself and fellow tenants in her housing complex in Winnipeg. In 2024/2025 you can look forward to more resources, on working and voting in federal elections. You can find more information at <https://mlpd.mb.ca/accessibility-in-federal-elections/>

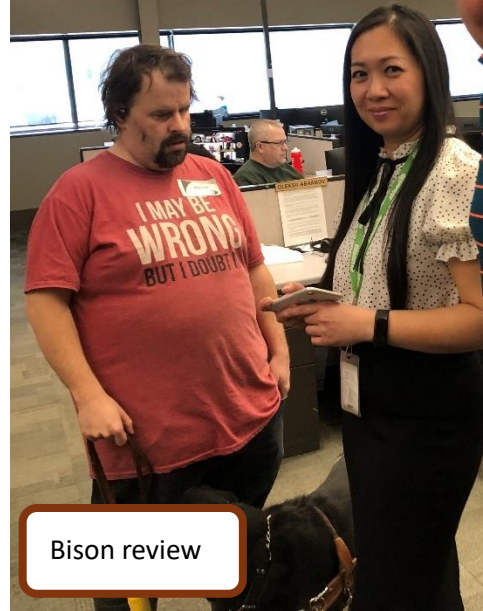
### *Klinik Community Health*

We were proud to conduct a full accessibility review this spring for Klinik Community Health. Klinik is a community health centre that provides primary health care services to the West Broadway community and priority populations, including a medical clinic, programs for mental health, newcomers, sexual wellness, transgender health, Indigenous well-being, social wellbeing, counselling, workshops, training, and so much more. It is a hub for wellbeing in the West Broadway area of Winnipeg. The review included a physical site review, policy review, two focus groups, and an employee survey. Klinik staff was excited to have an accessibility review, it had been years in planning for them, and they were incredibly welcoming to MLPD staff and reviewers. MLPD provided an extensive report with short and long-term recommendations to assist Klinik in its goal of increasing accessibility.



### *Bison Transport*

Bison Transport is one of Canada's largest trucking companies. It is based in Winnipeg, with offices across western Canada. Employing nine reviewers, we conducted a physical review of the local offices, maintenance shops, and truck wash at Bison Transport, and we are conducting an employee survey of over 150 employees. The physical review and employee survey will inform a significant part of Bison Transport's Accessibility Plan.



### *Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation*

MLPD is currently supporting the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FWF) to ensure that they are meeting their Accessible Canada Act requirements as a Crown Corporation by helping them develop their Accessibility Plan. Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is a Crown corporation established in 1969 that purchases, processes, and markets freshwater fish products across Canada and around the world. The FWF processing plant in Winnipeg processes fish from Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. MLPD’s work for FWF includes a review of the offices and the processing plant, and a document and policy review, which will inform the Accessibility Plan. This plan will also help them provide more accessible employment opportunities to people with disabilities/gifts.

### *Marymount*

MLPD worked with Marymount to conduct an accessibility review of their new website. Marymount is a youth and family social services organization in Winnipeg and Thompson that provides many programs and services for vulnerable youth, such as crisis stabilization, assessment, and treatment programs, group homes, treatment foster care, clinical services and cultural healing services, and education opportunities. Reviewers navigated the website to test its ease of use, such as how to access services, find a doctor, and register for a workshop, the accessibility of the website design, and readability for people with sight impairments who use screen readers.

## City of Winnipeg

MLPD conducted a follow-up accessibility review in this fiscal year to support the City of Winnipeg in developing an accessibility website for disruption notices to City facilities. In the previous fiscal year, The City of Winnipeg approached us to support them in the development of an accessibility website and asked us to bring together people with disabilities/gifts from a variety of lived experiences for two focus groups and a survey. The purpose of these focus groups was to determine what people with disabilities/gifts might want from an accessibility website, and how they might prefer to receive notifications about accessibility barriers. Once a beta version of the website was developed, The City of Winnipeg asked us in this fiscal year for a review of the draft website. Reviewers examined the draft website for ease of use, readability for screen readers, and any other information that might be needed for people with disabilities/gifts to navigate disruptions in the facilities, sidewalks to the facilities, and bus routes to the facilities.

### Charles Sinclair School – Fisher River Cree Nation

MLPD travelled up to Fisher River Cree Nation this spring for a request to provide a physical review of the elementary school, Charles Sinclair School. Warm and welcoming staff accompanied reviewers on a tour of the school. The children were enthusiastic and curious about why we were at their school and asked many questions about disability and accessibility.



### Accessibility Reviewer Stats

- 8 accessibility reviews for organizations or businesses in Winnipeg
- 26 reviewers that have conducted one or more reviews in 2023/2024
- All reviewers are members of the disability community
- They have reviewed:
  - Offices
  - A school
  - A health clinic
  - A processing plant
  - A welcome centre
  - Shops

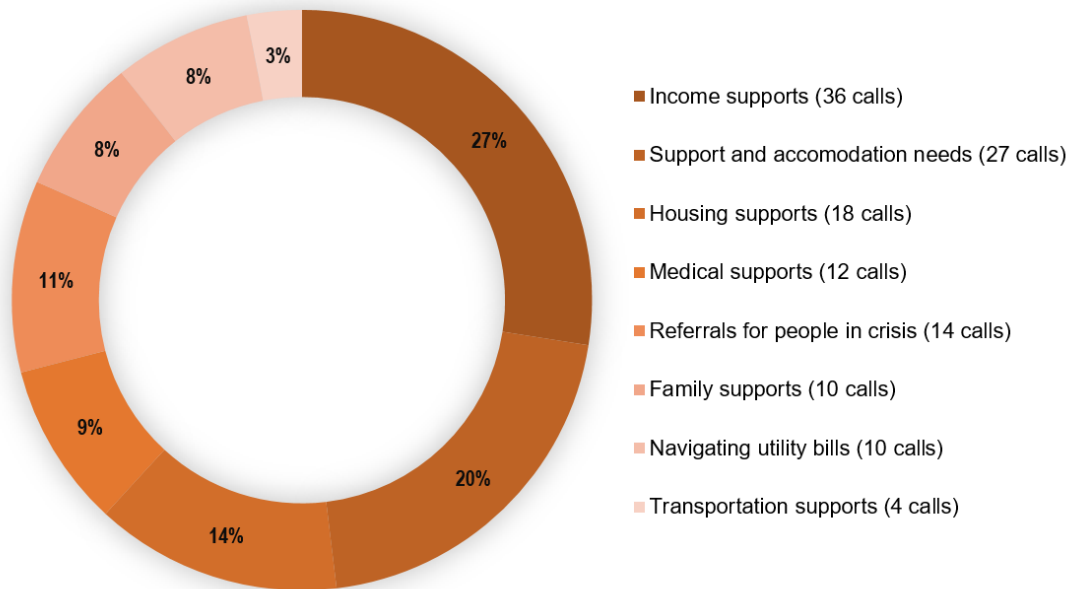
- Maintenance bays
- Nature trails
- Websites
- Cargo e-bikes
- Boardrooms
- Waiting areas
- Hallways
- Washrooms
- Parking
- Wayfinding
- and much more!

## Representing Our Community

### *Advocacy Calls*

This fiscal year, Debby McLeod led phenomenal advocacy efforts. With over 76 hours spent on the phone and another 46 emails, Debby helped members of the disability community and their supporters with a wide range of supports, needs, and referrals.

### ADVOCACY CALLS BY TOPIC



## *Disability Matters Vote*

MLPD played a key role in Disability Matters Vote (DMV) this year. We supported the campaign to raise issues of accessibility and inclusion impacting Manitobans for the 2023 provincial election. Through DMV, we brought attention to the five key priority issues determined by the steering committee:

- An accessible Manitoba
- A skilled workforce of support workers
- Income supports that will help people with disabilities/gifts meet their basic needs
- Removing barriers to employment
- Ensuring access to quality public services in a timely fashion

Melissa Graham, MLPD's Executive Director, was a spokesperson for the campaign. Melissa also served on the campaign steering committee and advocated for issues that are important to our members to ensure that those issues were part of the Disability Matters Vote agenda.



Melissa Graham (right)  
Sheryl Peters (middle)  
Debby McLeod (left)

## *At the Policy Table*

On October 30, MLPD welcomed the Honourable Nahanni Fontaine, Minister of Families, Minister responsible for accessibility, and Minister responsible for gender equity to our office. We also met with the Deputy Minister of Families in the Spring of 2024. MLPD also helped coordinate a meeting with community members and Canada's Chief Accessibility Officer, Stephanie Cadieux, in September 2023 to discuss what is happening in Manitoba in terms of accessibility challenges and successes.

## *Canada Disability Benefit*

An important legislative milestone happened with inclusion of the Canadian Disability Benefit into the latest Federal budget. This benefit was not quite what we hoped for just yet. We are working with Disability Without Poverty and local organizations to encourage positive changes.

## CEDNET



Left to right: Melissa Graham, Sheryl Peters, Allen Mankewich, Debby McLeod

MLPD has been working with other organizations through CEDNET, the Community Economic Development Network, providing an accessibility lens to social issues toward sustainable, inclusive, and equitable communities. We recently put forward a policy resolution to include a lived experience of disability analysis to all provincial policies, programs, and legislation. Resolutions

inform budget submissions, meetings with government, and Network priorities for the upcoming provincial election and beyond. The resolutions continue to inform members' collective advocacy - articulating a shared vision for change.

## Public Transport

MLPD has been very active with assisting community members on accessible transportation issues and advocating for systemic change in transportation for people with disabilities/gifts. In March 2023, MLPD partnered with Barrier-Free Manitoba, the Independent Living Resource Centre, Transportation Options Network for Seniors, and CNIB to host a public information session on the Accessibility for Manitobans Act Transportation Standards to hear directly from passengers what they think about the standard.

In the fall of 2023, we worked with tenants at 60 Whellams Lane to ensure that a negative decision made by Transit Plus was overturned. This decision would have significantly impacted the tenants' ability to access the service. Thanks to the hard work of our current Council Member Breanne



Breanne Boyce (left)  
Melissa Graham (right)



Boyce and our support, the decision was overturned. MLPD will continue to stay active on transit issues to ensure that our community members can move around Winnipeg and enjoy everything the city has to offer.

### *Sidewalk Snow*

In the winter of 2024, MLPD launched our first Sidewalk Snow Campaign. We worked with the Vision Impaired Resource Network (VIRN), Accessible Sport Connection, the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC), Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba, and the Transportation Options Network for Seniors (TONS). We picked a very mild year to start this campaign, but we look forward to picking it up again next year.

## Support Accessibility in Manitoba

- 1) In Memoriam – you can donate to MLPD in memory, honour or celebration of a loved one.
- 2) United Way programs - you can identify MLPD as your charity of choice through your United Way contribution.
- 3) A bequeath – you can designate MLPD as a benefactor in your Will or Insurance Policy.
- 4) All Charities Campaign – Available to all Employees of the Province of Manitoba and its affiliates. Please request that your donation or a portion thereof, be directed to the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities Inc.
- 5) Designate funds to MLPD from a social or other fundraising event.

The Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities (MLPD) is a registered charity and tax receipts will be issued. We accept donations by cheque, Visa or MasterCard or on the MLPD website.

Charitable Business Registration No. 889197448RR0001

Money raised is used in Manitoba