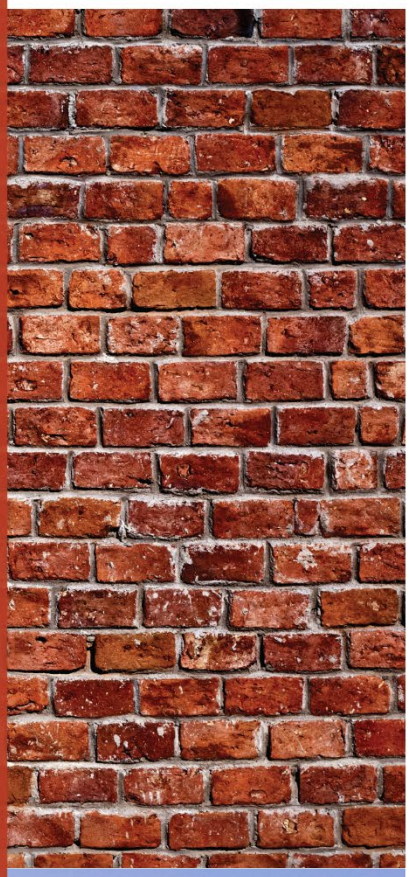
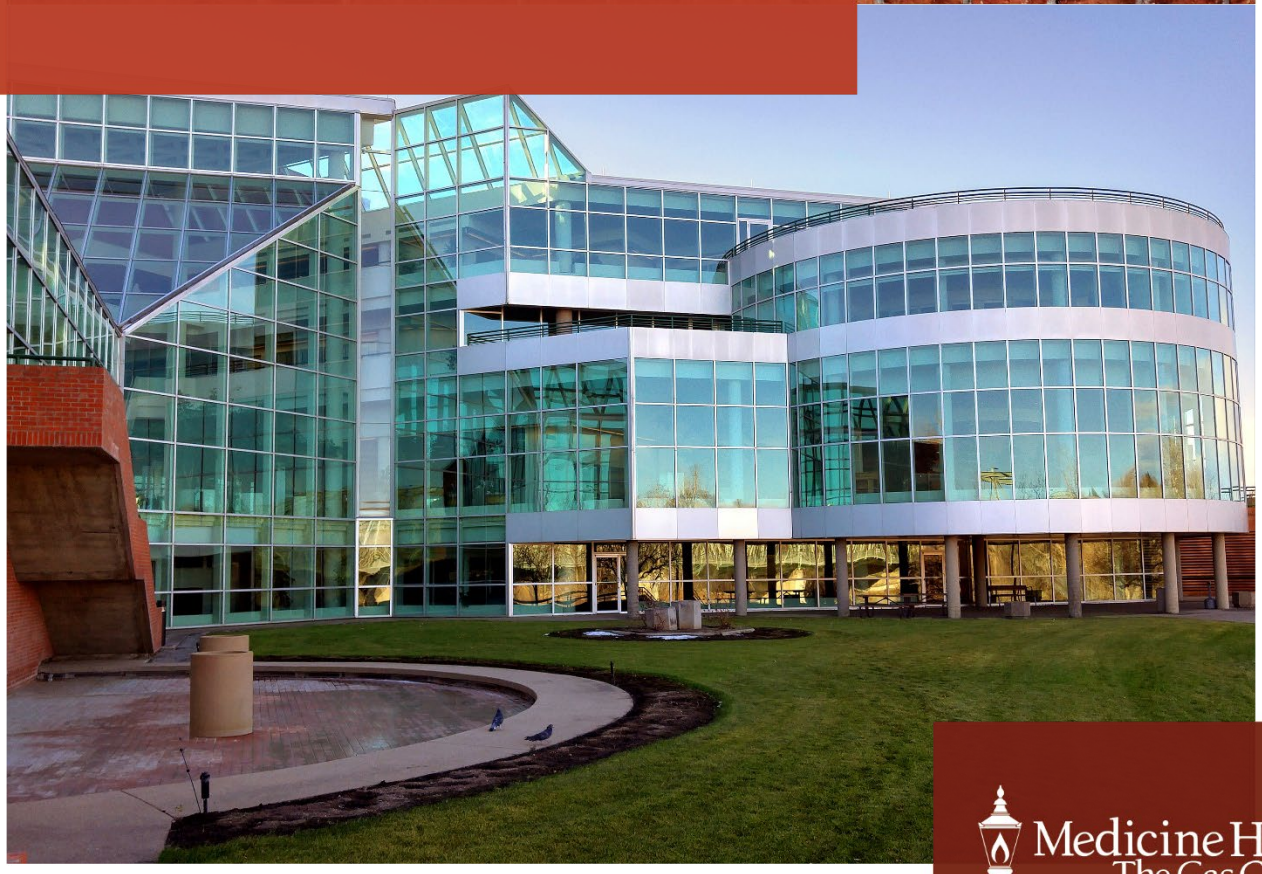
Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion (WGAI) Terms of Reference



Community Development Department
April 9, 2024



Medicine Hat
The Gas City

April 9, 2024

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion (WGAI)

MANDATE

The Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion is an advisory body under the City of Medicine Hat's Community Development department.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion is to advise and support City Departments on issues related to persons with physical, developmental and mental health disabilities. The WGAI recognizes both visible and invisible disabilities.

GOALS

1. Equitable participation of persons with disabilities.

2. All of the City of Medicine Hat's public facilities, programs and services are accessible and inclusive.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. At the request of departments, the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion offers support and/or advice about accessibility and inclusion.

2. Review and assess existing municipal services to determine whether they meet the goal of equitable participation, accessibility and inclusion.

3. Establish goals annually to guide the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion's work with others to achieve greater accessibility and inclusion.

4. Receive and interpret information to help inform City communication and engagement plans and activities to promote the needs of persons with disabilities to the community at large and its various agencies.

5. Develop and forward recommendations to City staff as appropriate regarding priorities, objectives, standards and programs/services.

6. Track and report on Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion's goal progress.

MEMBERSHIP

1. The Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion shall consist of up to 12 members, at least 75% of whom are persons with disabilities. Of the 75% (or 9 members), up to 3 of the 9 members could be individuals who are supporting a family member with a disability, or work in an agency that supports individuals with a disability.

2. There shall be no remuneration for serving on the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion.

3. Applications will be accepted each fall with details on how to apply communicated through a variety of channels. An ad-hoc committee composed of the Chair and/or Vice Chair and two or more current members of the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion along with the Staff Liaison will review the submitted applications, and select the individuals to fill the open positions. These selections will be forwarded to the Director of Community Development for approval.

4. Members will typically serve three-year terms with four (4) positions available annually. If a member has vacated their position prior to completion of their term, the Working Group for Accessibility &

Inclusion may request that the Director of Community Development appoint a new member for the remainder of the term.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

1. The Chair and Vice-Chair(s) will serve 1-year terms.

2. The Committee will elect the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) at the first regular meeting of the year or the first regular meeting following the appointment of new members.

3. The Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion will strike ad-hoc committees as required.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Members are disqualified from serving on the WGAI if:

1. They become employees of the City of Medicine Hat; or

2. They are absent from three (3) meetings per year without notifying the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion Chair or the staff liaison of their absence. The onus for informing the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion of an inability to attend meetings lies with the individual member.

At their sole discretion, the Director of Community Development may revoke the appointment of any member of the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion.

MEETINGS

1. The Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion shall hold at least seven (7) regular monthly meetings per year.

2. A quorum shall consist of fifty percent (50%) of the membership.

3. Motions shall be considered carried if approved by fifty percent (50%) of those in attendance.

INFORMATION FLOW

Information will flow through the staff liaison to and from City Departments. Where possible, department representatives will be invited to WGAI meetings to request supports, receive/clarify findings, provide updates, and share successes, etc.

LIMITATIONS

The Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion shall not:

- enter into contracts or agreements;
- spend money;
- make purchase on behalf of the City;
- give directions to City employees;
- obligate or bind the City in any manner whatsoever;
- act in an advocacy capacity or make direct requests or recommendations to provincial, federal or other municipal governments on behalf of the City.

BUDGET

The Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion is provided with an annual operating budget funded by the City of Medicine Hat. City staff will manage the budget.

RECORDS

The Community Development department maintains the Minutes and other documents of the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion.

MEDIA

Official communication on behalf of the organization is made through the City of Medicine Hat's Corporate Communications office. WGAI members are not authorized to speak on the City's behalf. If approached by the media and asked to comment, WGAI members are asked to politely decline the opportunity to be interviewed.

On occasion, and with the knowledge and support of WGAI's staff liaison, a WGAI member may be asked to speak to the media. Examples of this may include:

- speaking with regard to an accessibility and inclusion awareness campaign
- offering congratulations on a new or improved accessibility project, or
- in conjunction with one or more departments where a disability perspective strengthens the message (ex. the importance of snow clearing)

AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

These Terms of Reference may be amended by the Director of Community Development without notice and at the Director's sole discretion.

An amendment to the Terms of Reference may also be initiated by the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion using the following procedure:

1. At least 30 days' notice is given.

2. The amendment is passed at a regular meeting by a vote of at least 75% of the total membership of the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion.

3. The amendment is approved by the Director of Community Development.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Members of Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion shall abide by the following ethical guidelines:

1. Members will declare at the first opportunity any pecuniary interests they or any close relative who may benefit have, as it relates to the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion group's work. The member will leave the meeting while the matter is discussed and will not have a vote on the matter.

2. Members will not use information designated as confidential for their personal gain or that of another person.

3. Members will respect confidentiality and not communicate information designated as confidential to anyone not authorized to receive it.

4. Members will not use their position on the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion to secure special privileges, favours or exemptions for themselves or any other person.

5. Members will continue to abide by the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion's ethical standards for a period of twelve months after leaving the WGAI.

6. Standards with regard to confidential information shall apply forever.

7. Members shall act ethically in all situations and assume that unethical activities are not acceptable.

8. Failure to abide by these standards may result in dismissal from the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion. Members are encouraged to have any of their questions with regard to these standards addressed by WGAI's Staff Liaison.

STAFF LIAISON/SUPPORT

1. The Community Development department will designate a staff-person to serve as liaison and resource to the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion.

2. The Community Development department will supply administrative support to the Working Group for Accessibility & Inclusion that includes the preparation and circulation of agendas, minutes and annual reports.