

# Abilities Manitoba

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Annual  
Report  
2019-20



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# Mission, Vision, and Values Statements

## Mission Statement

Abilities Manitoba is a network of agencies that exists to foster excellence in services for people with intellectual disabilities.

## Vision Statement

Together we can create a province where all Manitobans value the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities, and the partnership between communities, governments, families, and agencies that support them.

## Values

**Community Participation:** We need community participation to make inclusion, choice and respect for all people a reality.

**Respect:** The people we are supporting are deserving of qualified staff. Member agencies must comply with all pertinent legislation such as the Vulnerable Persons Act, Human Rights and all others to ensure all persons are treated equitably.

**Human Rights:** We promote the interests, rights and freedoms of supported individuals in member agencies.

**Transparency:** Member agencies will be respectful of and accountable to the people they serve, employees, funders/government and the community at large.

**Not-For-Profit:** Services provided to the people we support will be not-for-profit.

**Natural Supports:** We recognize the value and contribution of natural supports for people with intellectual disabilities.

## Board of Directors 2019-20

### **Audra Penner, President**

CEO and President, ImagineAbility  
[audrap@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:audrap@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Scott Smith, Vice-President**

Director of Program Development & Quality Assurance, Pulford Community Living Services  
[scotts@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:scotts@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Ruby Reimer, Past President**

Executive Director, Epic Opportunities  
[rubyr@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:rubyr@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Malinda Roberts, Treasurer**

Executive Director, Winnserv  
[malindar@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:malindar@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Oly Backstrom, Director**

Executive Director, SCE Lifeworks  
[olyb@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:olyb@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Jonathan Dionne, Director**

Director of Provincial Services, Manitoba Possible  
[jonathand@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:jonathand@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Charmayne Dube, Director**

Director of Services, New Directions  
[charmayned@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:charmayned@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Maria Freeman, Director**

Executive Director, Inclusion Selkirk  
[mariaf@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:mariaf@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Jennifer Rodrigue, Director**

Acting Director of Communications & Public Affairs, St. Amant  
[jenniferr@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:jenniferr@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Jimm Simon, Director**

Executive Director, Community Living Interlake  
[jimms@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:jimms@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

### **Courtney Welch, Director**

Director of Finance and Operations, Epic Opportunities  
[courtneyw@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:courtneyw@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

## Our Members

Arcane Horizon Inc.  
Association for Community Living –  
Beausejour Branch, Inc.  
Association for Community Living – Swan  
Association for Community Living – Virden  
Blue Sky Opportunities Inc.  
Brandon Community Options Inc.  
Career Connections Inc.  
Cerebral Palsy Association of MB  
Changes Supportive Living Services  
Community Ambitions Day Service Inc.  
Community Living Interlake  
Community Living – MB  
Community Respite Service Inc.  
ComSpan Inc.  
Connect Employment Services  
Continuity Care  
COR Enterprises Inc.  
Cornerstone Christian Care Society Inc.  
Cornerstone Enterprises Inc  
enVision Community Living  
Epic Opportunities  
Equal Opportunities West Inc.  
Fairfax Community Resources Inc.  
Family Visions Inc.  
Frontier Trading Co Inc.  
Gaining Resources Our Way (G.R.O.W.)  
Gateway Resources Inc.  
Grandview Gateways Inc.  
Hearthstone Community Group, Inc.  
Heima er Best Inc.  
ImagineAbility Inc.  
Inclusion Selkirk  
Inclusion Winnipeg  
Initiatives for Just Communities  
Innovative LIFE Options  
Juniper Centre Inc.  
K & D Transitions & Supports Inc  
Kelchris Inc.  
L'Arche Winnipeg Inc.  
L'Avenir Cooperative  
MacDonald Youth Services  
New Directions  
Norshel Inc

Options, Pathways and Transitions Inc.  
Parkland Regional Community Linc. Inc.  
Parkland Residential & Vocational Services Inc.  
Prairie Partners Inc.  
Prairie Places Inc.  
Pulford Community Living Services Inc.  
Riverton Care Services  
Riverdale Place Homes  
ROSE Inc.  
Samtak Coop Inc.  
SCE LifeWorks  
Shalom Residences Inc.  
SMD Alliance Inc.  
Southwest Community Options Inc.  
St. Amant Inc.  
Touchwood Park Association Inc.  
Trailblazers Life Choices Inc.  
Transcona Springfield Employment Network Inc.  
Turning Leaf Inc.  
Vocational Training Centre  
Visions of Independence  
WASO Inc.  
Westman Opportunities Inc.  
Wings of Power Inc.  
Winnserv Inc.

### Associate Members:

The Alliance of Direct Support Professionals  
of Manitoba  
Red River College: Disability and Community  
Support Program

### How our members support our work:

- Participate in working groups and combine forces to tackle complex issues
- Advocate at the local level
- Participate in surveys and respond to data collection which is paramount to advocacy
- Share stories on social media of successes, milestones and overcoming barriers
- Donations of time and resources to our important work and in many other fabulous ways!

# Leadership Report 2019-20

Audra Penner & Margo Powell

[audrap@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:audrap@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

[margo@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:margo@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

The past year has been an exceptional one with the normal peaks and valleys, hard work and progress in a number of areas. We are so pleased with the many strides made this year.

- We entered into a multi-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Province to continue the quality improvement work. This resulted in hiring Wendy Humphry and Branden DeFoort to work with Leanne Fenez on this project. We are thrilled to take this work on – it represents a significant step towards quality improvement. More details can be found in that report.
- Yolly has settled into her position as bookkeeper and administrative assistant and we were able to increase her hours this year. Yolly also provided administrative support to the quality improvement work, bringing her position close to fulltime. We continue to make progress housing our finances, implementing policies and improving processes.
- Disability Matters Vote held a most successful campaign leading up to the Provincial election. The election period was short and fell over summer and despite these factors DMV had a great presence in the election and the campaign was a huge success. Building on the success of 2016, we were able to mobilize quickly and entrench the campaign into the election, receiving much recognition from media and politicians alike.
- We took a big step forward and hired two Capacity Builders in October. This was possible thanks to a grant from the Winnipeg Foundation. Jeannie Alexander and Leslie Udell have worked half time and their work has been so valuable. Having them on board has allowed us to better connect with member agencies and move forward in a number of areas. Our small team of three, grew quickly to a team of seven with the expansion of quality improvement work and the addition of Capacity Builders. Reference their report for more details on the great work they have done.
- In October we also moved out of ImagineAbility and into Pulford. We utilized three offices amongst the seven of us and are so appreciative of their hospitality and warm welcome. We are grateful to ImagineAbility for the space they offered us for 4 years.
- As Leslie and Jeannie started their positions, our Executive Director went on an unexpected medical leave. President Audra Penner and the board of directors stepped up to continue to support the team in Margo's absence. Much gratitude to all for the additional time, energy and commitment that was required during Margo's absence.
- We also secured a new Corporate partner in December. Tache pharmacy came on board as a bronze sponsor and were able to attend a few membership meetings in the winter. We also continued to retain corporate partner relationships with Northway Pharmacy, Inclusion System, Istedy and HUB International. We are most grateful for these relationships and support.

- We pushed the needle forward on sustainability in other areas as well.
  - Our golf tournament generated close to \$35,000 in revenue in August.
  - In addition to the Winnipeg Foundation grant, we secured a grant from Assiniboine Credit Union as well for website improvements. We also accessed an intern for 4 weeks to work on our website. Our website received a facelift and much needed updates as a result.
  - We hosted an exciting training with Shaun Loney and Lucas Stewart from Encompass Coop in March that generated some income for Abilities.
- We continued to be involved in Building on Abilities through committee work, monitoring rollouts to a number of cohorts and formulating our own committees with stakeholders.
- The Board has continued to grow and evolve. The Policy Committee worked hard and a number of policies were implemented this year. The Financial Sustainability Committee evolved into a Finance Committee and the Membership Committee met regularly.
- The Board and Margo met regularly with Deputy Minister John Leggat, Assistant Deputy Minister Catherine Gates throughout the year and we are most pleased with the relationships we currently have with CLDS. Strong relationships make a huge difference in working together on issues and opportunities.
- In mid-March as the fiscal year was wrapping up, the global pandemic was declared around COVID-19. The last few weeks of March saw the entire Abilities team pull together to respond to the pandemic. We mobilized a staff deployment model, sought personal protective equipment for our members and began significant outreach and online resources for all agencies in Manitoba. This also included multiple meetings each week with CLDS.

It is phenomenal to have a full-fledged team at Abilities Manitoba. We are in awe of how blessed we are with an amazing team of employees and board members. Thanks to all for your commitment, dedication and support to all our member agencies.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margo Powell  
Executive Director

Audra Penner  
Board President

## Capacity Builders Report

Jeannie Alexander & Leslie Udell

[jeannie@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:jeannie@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

[leslie@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:leslie@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

It really is hard to believe that we have been doing this work for almost a year. Time has gone so fast and so much has happened. It seems to have been excellent timing to have us on board just when the world is hit with a pandemic!

We began our new positions by visiting as many of our member agencies as possible and gathering information about their positive stories and their concerns. This information was used to identify key themes that would guide our efforts in the months to come. Some of those themes were incorporated into panel presentations and break out discussions within the General Membership meetings. Margo also brought some of the common concerns to CLdS for discussion on a broader basis. We were about to implement strategies to tackle ongoing issues with SIS assessments and BOA when the pandemic hit and our focus changed.

Part of our responsibilities have been to take an active role in organizing and running General Membership meetings. Our priority has been to encourage greater interaction and brainstorming between members, promoting opportunities for optimization and tapping into all the great work that is being done around our province. Meetings have incorporated break out groups that are set up to maximize opportunities for attendees to meet other members, promoting increased sharing across agencies.

Jeannie had begun pulling together BOA working groups. This work was put on hold mid-March, and is expected to slowly resume in the upcoming months.

Leslie worked with the Professionalization Committee to move forward on a plan for consistent Core Competency training for staff across the province. This work came to a halt in March but has recently slowly started back up again.

Since the pandemic hit, we have been working hard at supporting member agencies by sourcing and delivering PPE, developing resources, and keeping in touch trying to problem solve. We have had one virtual General Membership meeting and are planning some webinars for the future. We are trying to assist agencies to plan for future waves of COVID 19 and to continue to make more resources available. Leslie has initiated a coalition of organizations to take a look at the issue of rights restrictions during the pandemic and to advocate for better testing options, particularly for people who need accessible transportation to get to testing and for hospitals to create protocols that will allow essential supports for people who are hospitalized.

We expect that supporting member agencies through pandemic related challenges will remain a prominent role for us into the Fall. Our work is driven by the needs of Abilities Manitoba member agencies. Please, continue to contact Jeannie and Leslie with your challenges, questions, and ideas. We are always happy to hear from members and we will continue to do whatever we can to ensure members feel heard and well supported.



# Quality Framework Project

Leanne Fenez

[leanne@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:leanne@abilitiesmanitoba.org)

The past year saw a great deal of activity related to Phase #2 of the Quality Framework project. While it took a little bit of time to solidify a Memo of Understanding and final budget for this phase of the project, we did move ahead in June, 2019 to complete our second round of stakeholder engagement, visiting the seven same communities that we had visited previously. We met with people with disabilities, their families and service providers to share what we accomplished and learned in Phase #1, what recommendations we had made and what was coming up next. We also shared a draft copy of the Leading Practice Guidelines and solicited feedback on both content and implementation until the middle of July.

## **Personal Outcome Measures Pilot:**

A formal Expression of Interest to participate in the pilot was sent out to all Manitoba CLdS organizations in November, to which eleven organizations responded. All eleven organizations will participate in the pilot, seven were selected to use Personal Outcome Measures and four were originally selected to be used as control organizations for the purposes of a formal evaluation conducted by Healthy Child Manitoba – Social Innovation Office (HCMSIO)

Two Quality Specialists were hired who are assisting with training and interviewing using the Personal Outcome Measures tool/method.

The pilot officially began on January 6<sup>th</sup> with three Abilities Manitoba staff obtaining their training and certification in the use of Personal Outcome Measures. Two of these same staff were certified to train others. Training of staff in the seven pilot organizations began in January and to date we have trained 89 people. A handful of CLdS staff are also included in this number.

Interviewing began at the beginning of February. Our aim is to provide the opportunity for 20% of the people supported within the pilot organizations to participate in a Personal Outcome Measure interview. Feedback based on what was learned that may help the organization improve their services for that person is then provided. Care was taken to choose 20% of the people within each organization that are representative of the demographic characteristics of the total number of people they serve.

Due to the pandemic, interviewing and training was halted in mid-March however, has slowly resumed beginning in late July as organizations and people receiving services feel safe to do so. We have taken advantage of the nice summer weather to do outdoor interviewing and are also conducting virtual interviewing as well to keep all involved safe.

A formal evaluation is planned to discover whether the use of Personal Outcome Measures is beneficial and if so, how. Originally, Healthy Child Manitoba (Social Innovation Office) was

resourced to conduct this evaluation, however, changes in this department as well as the pandemic have led to some challenges in this area.

We are working with our partners in government for more resources to extend the original timeframe (and budget) of the project to:

- Allow for time to hit our 20% target acknowledging that the pandemic has disrupted our original schedule.
- Expand the pilot to fold in the control organizations as the original design of the evaluation is no longer valid and we hope that all interested organizations can benefit from the pilot
- Conduct an appropriate third party evaluation of the project and its original objectives.

### **Leading Practice Guidelines:**

The Leading Practice Guidelines are now set up on the Abilities Manitoba website in an interactive format along with associated resources, sample policies and documentation. You can access these here: <https://abilitiesmanitoba.org/docs/leading-practice-guidelines/>

We are developing a plain language/easy read version of the Leading Practice Guidelines so that people receiving support and their families will have more information about what they could expect.

We are also developing a self-assessment workbook for organizations to use the Leading Practice Guidelines to assess where they are in relation to the guidelines, where they want to be and what they intend to focus on in the next year to move forward. We have several organizations that are interested in trialing this workbook once fully drafted.

Leanne Fenez  
Quality Lead

## Our Three Priorities

### Better Outcomes:

When we talk about **better outcomes** we are seeking fair wages for disability support staff, improved training and a quality assurance framework.

### Better Access:

When we talk about **better access** we specifically mean better access to services and are seeking to address wait times, system coordination and cost of living increases for agencies.

### Better Inclusion:

When we talk about **better inclusion** we mean a stronger emphasis on person centered supports. This relates to an increased focus on relationships and community connections as well as continued work on the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, employment for people with disabilities and a dignified income.



## Board Committees and Working Groups

### BOARD COMMITTEES

#### Finance Committee

Chair: Malinda Roberts  
Members: Audra Penner, Margo Powell,  
Scott Smith, Courtney Welch

#### Golf Tournament Sub-Committee

Chair: Scott Smith  
Members: Jeannie Alexander, Maria  
Freeman, Margo Powell, Yolly Tang

#### Membership Committee

Chair: Maria Freeman  
Members: Linda Stephenson, Darrin Clinton,  
Scott Morden, Charmayne Dube, Audra  
Penner, Margo Powell

#### Policy Committee

Chair: Ruby Reimer  
Members: Courtney Welch, Scott Morden

### WORKING GROUPS

#### Barrier Free Manitoba

**Representative:** Leanne Fenez

**Background:** Barrier-Free Manitoba is a non-partisan, non-profit, cross-disability initiative that was formed in 2008 with a goal of getting the Province Manitoba to enact strong and effective legislation that requires the removal of existing barriers and prevents the creation of new ones.

This legislation was passed and proclaimed on December 5, 2013 in the form of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. This was accomplished because of the widespread support provided by organizations and individuals from and beyond Manitoba's disability communities.

**Membership:** SMD, New Directions, Abilities Manitoba, Children's Coalition, Manitoba Supported Employment Network, Cerebral Palsy Association.

#### Day Services Review Advisory Committee

**Representative:** Krista Bissett

**Background:** The Day Services Review Advisory Committee began meeting in the fall of 2013 and continues to meet on a regular basis. Our purpose is to develop a standardized consistent approach to how agencies are funded and to identify efficiencies in services while promoting greater independence and community participation.

**Membership:** Family Services, Manitoba Supported Employment Network, Abilities Manitoba and Community Representatives.

## Professionalization

**Representative:** Charmayne Dube

**Background:** This working group was established to assist with developing a province-wide strategy that will enhance training standards and wages for direct staff and make recommendations to Abilities Manitoba.

**Membership:** Charmayne Dube, Jeannette DeLong, Krista Bissett, Kristin Knockaert, Leanne Fenez, Leslie Udell, Maria Freeman, Scott Smith, Margo Powell, Bryan Lotocki and a Representative from the Alliance of Direct Support Professionals of Manitoba (ADSPM).

## Red River College Advisory Committee

**Representative:** Jeannie Alexander

**Background:** This committee meets twice a year to provide guidance and advice on all matters related to the Disability and Community Support Program at Red River College to ensure program relevance to both students and employees.

**Members:** The Advisory Committee consists of representatives from Red River College, student representatives, a Family Services Representative and community representatives.

## Membership Committee

The membership committee is responsible for:

- Engaging the membership to promote Abilities Manitoba
- Educating members on the requirements and benefits of membership
- Enhancing the membership experience
- Developing and overseeing the implementation of orientation programs for onboarding new members
- Maximizing opportunities to have reciprocal communication with the membership and ensuring opportunities for members to participate fully in meetings
- Developing and implementing member satisfaction surveys
- Promoting membership peer recognition, reflecting optimization of member's expertise
- Partnering with other members/committees on matters of common interest
- Overseeing and coordinating the nomination of prospective Board members
- Reviewing the membership fee structure and protocols in consultation with the Finance Committee

For the year 2019-20, the membership committee met six times to continue work on the strategic plan informed by the members in June 2018. We have engaged in discussions and actions in the following areas:

- a. Outreach to non-members
- b. Gathering info for membership materials to be developed
- c. Discussion of regional tables to gather all agencies by region
- d. Improved resource bank on website
- e. More intentional welcoming and atmosphere at membership meetings
- f. Nominations process

The addition of two, part-time Capacity Builder positions has resulted in more connections with agencies and they have supported the committee responsibilities through their work. The membership committee is engaged in a number of discussions related to the member experience, engagement and being responsive to our evolving structure.

## Policy Committee

**Background:** With the recent growth experienced by Abilities Manitoba and an evolving governance role fulfilled by the Board of Directors it was increasingly important to draft and approve a personnel policy manual. A policy committee was struck to work on this project.

The principles followed by this committee are as follows:

- Make responsible, progressive and sustainable policy recommendations to the Abilities Manitoba Board of Directors in keeping with the Abilities Manitoba Constitution.
- Understand that good policy helps the board, committees and employees make and implement effective decisions.
- Consider issues of decision making and governance as a whole when developing policies.
- Ensure that the board, committees and employees can function effectively with sound guidelines and procedures to guide their work.
- Regularly review and update existing policies to reflect organizational realities.

**Membership Composition:** The committee is and will be comprised of at least one member of the Abilities Manitoba Board of Directors who will act as the Chairperson of the committee and up to four members of the general membership.

**Update:** Over the summer and fall of 2019 the policy committee met regularly to draft policies in the following areas:

- Guiding Principles (focusing on mission, vision, values and goals)
- Policy Manual Application (including definitions and future revision criteria)
- Employment Policy (clarifying hiring, job descriptions, offers of employment and end of employment criteria)
- Performance Management (summarizing expectations for regular reviews, performance feedback and dismissal)
- Personnel Records (including file management and release of information)
- Personnel Policy (focusing on employee conduct such as conflict of interest, public and media relations and harassment policy)
- Employee Administration (outlining general pay practices including overtime pay)
- Benefits (overviewing all benefits such as vacation, sick leave and professional development opportunities)
- Safety and Wellbeing (including overall safety statement and specific reference to violence in the workplace and working alone policy)
- Financial (covering aspects of financial management such as budgets, spending limits, wage scales, expense reimbursement and banking and signing authority)

To date all policies have been drafted, reviewed by the Board of Directors and all but the section on employee benefits have been approved. We are finalizing a few details regarding the benefits section and anticipate this too will be finalized within the coming months. Following the approval of each section noted above discussion will be held as to how the policy committee can be of assistance as we strive to keep our policies relevant and regularly updated.

## Finance Committee

### Treasurer's Report: Year End March 31, 2020

Many people have supported the work of Abilities Manitoba over this past fiscal year. As Treasurer, I would like to thank:

- Margo (Executive Director) and Yolly (Administrative Assistant)
- The Board Finance Committee (Scott Smith, Audra Penner, and Courtney Welch)
- Sarah Jane Marquez-Hicks (Director of Finance – Pulford Community Living Services)
- Corporate Partners
- The Winnipeg Foundation
- Each member organization

Some of the accomplishments of Abilities Manitoba during the fiscal year April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020 were:

- Completion and submission of corporate tax returns. We are now up to date with all tax requirements.
- Review, reconciliation and collection of aging receivables. We also implemented a good process to ensure that receivables are kept up to date and the process is working well.
- Reviewed and continued to develop financial related policies as Abilities Manitoba grows as an organization.
- Terminated the former Financial Sustainability Committee and created a Finance Committee. The Finance Committee reflects the governance role of the Board of Directors and the distinction between the role of the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.
- Worked with the Director of Finance from Pulford Community Living to do a review of our financial practices. This resulted in the clean up of several old accounting entries and updated processes moving forward that reflect accounting best practices. There is more work to do in this area and we have budgeted resources for support in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

We finished the fiscal year March 31, 2020 with a deficit of (\$35 785) and a bank balance of \$206 723. The deficit for March 31, 2020 is largely due to membership fees (bad debts \$10 000 and less members than expected \$23 500) and the correction of an accounting error in the previous fiscal year (\$5000).

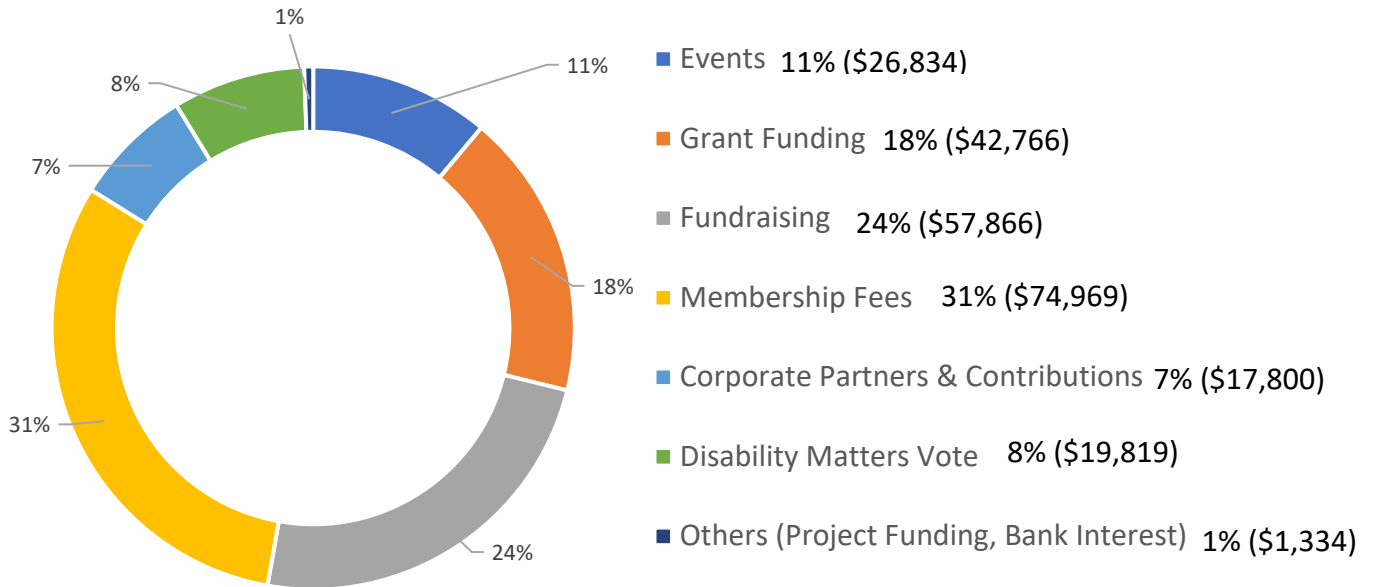
Variance notes are included on the financial statements. An additional note page has been added to provide information about the accounting corrections that were supported by Sarah Jane. The Balance Sheet is also attached for your information.

Malinda Roberts  
Treasurer



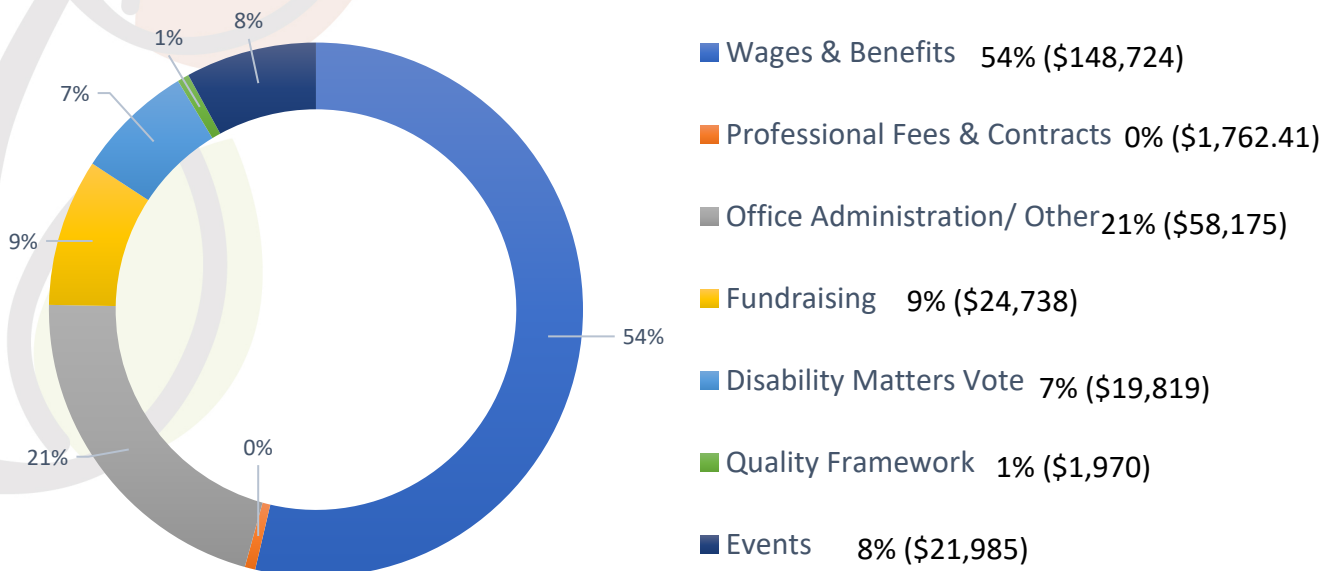
## Financials for 2019-20

### Abilities Manitoba- Revenue 2019-20



**Total Revenue: \$241,390**

### Abilities Manitoba - Expenses 2019-20



**Total Expenses: \$277,174**

## Corporate Partners

### Gold Sponsor

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### Silver Sponsor

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inclusion

### Bronze Sponsors

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## Contact Information



**Executive Director, Margo Powell**

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