

Manitoba Jobs Agreement – WCA Position Statement

Executive Summary

The Winnipeg Construction Association Board of Directors recently reaffirmed its commitment to a construction industry that respects **worker choice, open and fair competition, and broad workforce participation.**

The Board further resolved to call on the Province of Manitoba to re-engage industry in a principles-based process that achieves workforce, training, and inclusion goals **without implementing a specific labour system, restricting worker or employer choice, or compromising government neutrality in labour relations.**

That direction reflects a broad consensus across Manitoba’s construction sector: workforce development and inclusion matter — but they must be pursued in ways that preserve competition, protect workers, and reflect how the industry actually operates.

The current Manitoba Jobs Agreement (MJA) framework falls short of that standard. To be clear, the MJA is a Project Labour Agreement that creates more difficulties in delivering on Manitoba’s public infrastructure than it eases. It introduces structural barriers that restrict competition, impose third-party control over non-union businesses, compel payments to organizations workers did not choose, and create serious privacy risks.

These outcomes are not necessary to achieve workforce or training objectives. This submission outlines **eight targeted amendments** to the MJA that would preserve government’s stated goals while restoring fairness, protecting worker rights, and ensuring open and competitive procurement.

Guiding Principles

1. Open, competitive procurement delivers best value and broad participation.
2. Workforce growth requires access — not restricted labour pathways.
3. Worker privacy is non-negotiable.
4. Public infrastructure dollars must not compel membership or payments to any third party.

Eight Amendments for Fairness, Competition, and Privacy

1) No Union Oversight of Non-Union Staff

The MJA must explicitly prohibit any union role in supervising, directing, disciplining, or managing non-union employees.

Outcome:

Non-union employers retain full control over their workforce and site operations.

2) No Union Dues or Union-Directed Payments from Non-Union Workers

The MJA must prohibit any requirement for non-union workers or contractors to pay:

- Union dues
- Working dues
- Representation fees
- Administration charges

as a condition of working on any Manitoba Public project.

Outcome:

Workers are not compelled to financially support organizations they did not choose.

3) Model Wage Compliance Framework (Publish + Attest + Audit)

Replace affiliation-based wage enforcement with:

- Publicly established model wage rates (transparent process)
- Contractor attestation of compliance
- Random spot audits with pre-agreed cooperation

Outcome:

Wage standards are protected without restricting participation or creating closed labour pipelines.

4) Raise MJA Threshold to \$750M

Increase the application threshold from \$50M to \$750M so the MJA applies only to true mega-projects — not routine schools or regional infrastructure.

Outcome:

Protects competition, regional participation, and Indigenous contractor access.

5) Hiring Based on Qualification + Manitoba Residency (Not Affiliation)

Hiring requirements must be based on competency and Manitoba residency — not union membership or affiliation.

Outcome:

All qualified Manitobans can participate equally.

5A) No Preferential Hiring / No Hiring Hall Exclusivity

The MJA must prohibit:

- Union-first dispatch
- Exclusive hiring hall requirements
- Restrictions on direct hiring

Outcome:

Contractors staff projects based on competence and availability.

6) Worker Privacy Protection

The MJA must prohibit union access to personally identifiable worker information, including:

- SIN
- Home address
- Date of birth
- Payroll or banking information
- Discipline or HR records
- Benefits or medical data

Workforce reporting must be minimized, aggregated where possible, and administered only by the Province (or a neutral third party) under strict privacy standards.

Outcome:

Protects workers and reduces liability and coercion risk.

7) No Project Bundling to Trigger MJA Applicability

Government must not package independent projects to artificially meet the MJA threshold (e.g., multi-site programs). Each site should be assessed on standalone value and scope.

Outcome:

Prevents policy gaming and protects fair market access.

8) Independent Review After One Year (Public + Tabled)

Before any expansion or extension, require an independent review assessing:

- Competition and bidder participation
- Project costs
- Timelines
- Apprenticeship outcomes
- Workforce inclusion
- Regional impacts

Results must be publicly released and tabled in the Legislature.

Outcome:

Evidence-based accountability and transparent oversight.

Closing

Manitoba's construction industry is diverse, highly capable, and ready to support workforce growth.

These amendments do not weaken training or inclusion goals — they strengthen them by ensuring broad participation, protecting worker rights, and maintaining open competition.

Public infrastructure policy must unite the industry, not divide it.

With these changes, the MJA can become a framework that truly works for all Manitobans.