

# Manitoba Communities in Bloom COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION GUIDE 2026

*A Reference Guide for Communities Participating in Manitoba Communities in Bloom  
Provincial Edition*



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## IMPORTANT DATES

Activity	Due date	Who is responsible
Submit MB CiB registration and payment. Registrations received <b>by March 31</b> are entered to win a Gift Basket	April 30th	Community
Community to submit the <i>Preparing for the Judges Visit</i> form	June 30	MB CiB provides to Community
Judges evaluation date confirmed, contact information and biographies sent to community	June 19	MB CiB provides to Community
Registration begins Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony	July	MB CiB provides to Community
Community to complete community profile book	Provided to judges 7 days prior to visit	Community
Host judges tour	End of July – beginning of August	Community
10 high resolution community photos for Awards Ceremony PowerPoint	Aug 21	Community provides to MB CiB
Annual Provincial Awards and Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive completed Evaluation Form, bloom rating, special mention and participation certificate</li> <li>Provide tabletop community display</li> <li>Provide community pride silent auction item</li> </ul>	September 26	Niverville CIB
Community bloom and special mention results Press Release	Following Awards Event	MB CiB
Final Evaluation Form (PDF) emailed to community	Following Awards	MB CiB
National Awards Ceremonies – Symposium	TBD	Optional community

## WHAT IS COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

### Communities in Bloom National Edition

Communities in Bloom is a non-profit Canadian organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement and the challenge of a national program, with focus enhancing green spaces in communities.

Established with the guidance of Britain in Bloom, Tidy Towns of Ireland, Entente Florale and Villes et Villages Fleuris de France, Communities in Bloom held its first edition in 1995. The program now includes hundreds of communities across the country involved in both the national edition and provincial editions. There is also an international challenge involving communities from the United States, Europe and Asia.

### Manitoba Communities in Bloom Provincial Edition

The Manitoba Communities in Bloom program provides a comprehensive evaluation beneficial to community development. It encourages all sectors of the community to work together to develop best practices to achieve clean, green sustainable communities that celebrate their heritage and unique potential.

Manitoba Communities in Bloom is the Provincial Edition which was established in 1999. Since that time over 60 Manitoba communities have participated in both National & Provincial Editions.

The program is administered by a volunteer Board of Directions and a part time contract program coordinator.

The definition of a community for the purpose of this program is *a town, municipality, village, or hamlet with residences, businesses, institutions and a local governing body (elected or not)*. Communities are divided into categories according to population to determine the registration fee and are evaluated on the accomplishments of their whole team (municipal, private, corporate and institutional).

CiB judges four participating communities providing an evaluation which focuses on beautification, environmental and heritage conservation efforts. Evaluated communities are provided with a bloom rating (1 to 5), a special mention (community highlight), and an Evaluation Report. This report provides specific feedback on community successes and constructive suggestions for improvement.

The Evaluation Report assesses six categories: Community Appearance; Environmental Action; Heritage Conservation; Tree Management; Landscape; and Plant and Floral Displays.

## BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

- ☼ Increases **community involvement and civic pride!** Communities have witnessed mobilization of citizens, groups, businesses and municipality working together through program participation.
- ☼ Delivers a **cost effective measurement of your communities' achievements** through a 16 page **Evaluation Form**, completed by qualified volunteer judges, which provides valuable information and suggestions on your community in six judging criteria: Community Appearance; Environmental Action; Heritage Conservation; Tree Management; Landscape; and Plant and Floral Displays
- ☼ Promotes **excellence and leadership in environmental action** such as recycling, composting and water conservation which are an integral part of the program evaluation.
- ☼ Provides opportunities to **learn best practices and exchange information with other Manitoba communities** and affiliated associations through the Annual Provincial Conference and Awards, quarterly newsletter, web site and Facebook.
- ☼ Offers information on **grants, funding initiatives and MB CiB sponsor discounts.**
- ☼ Promotes your community's visibility **provincially and nationally** through media, tradeshows, conferences and marketing

## COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☼ Create a local communities in bloom committee.
- ☼ Organize a one day judge's tour which highlights community accomplishments in the six judging criteria; to take place on a predetermined date between mid-July to mid-August.
- ☼ Arrange for and cover the cost for two single rooms for two judges for one or two nights and all meals (bed & breakfasts and billets are acceptable).
- ☼ Create and provide to MB CiB Judges a Community Profile Book outlining the community's achievements as it relates to the six criteria covered in the Evaluation Form.
- ☼ Provide transportation for judges during their tour of your community and to/from the airport/train station, if applicable.
- ☼ Plan to attend the Annual Provincial Conference and Awards Ceremony in September/October to receive bloom rating, certificate and Evaluation Form and to network and enjoy educational seminars.
- ☼ Promote your community with a community display and a community pride item for the Silent Auction at the Annual Conference & Awards Ceremonies.

## THE ROLE OF MANITOBA COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

- ✿ Administers the Communities in Bloom Evaluation Form.
- ✿ Provides two qualified and trained volunteer judges.
- ✿ Creates the provincial tour schedule, coordinates the judges' travel and covers transportation costs.
- ✿ Compiles evaluation results and presents the completed Evaluation Form and participation certificate to each community at the annual Awards Ceremonies.
- ✿ Promotes community results (bloom ratings and special mention) through a news release to community media contacts immediately following the awards banquet.
- ✿ Promotes CiB community participants through trade shows, web site, Facebook and quarterly newsletter.
- ✿ Shares information including potential grants, contests and educational opportunities.

## PROGRAM REGISTRATION CATEGORIES

The definition of a community for the purpose of this program is a town, municipality, village, or hamlet with residences, businesses, institutions and a local governing body (elected or not).

### 1. Provincial – Evaluated

In the Provincial – Evaluated category communities are provided with a comprehensive evaluation beneficial to community development which focuses on beautification, environmental and heritage conservation efforts.

CiB judges provide a written report with specific feedback on community successes and constructive suggestions for improvement.

Evaluated communities are provided with a bloom rating (1 to 5), a special mention (community highlight), and an Evaluation Report.

#### a. Category highlights

- ✿ Community is evaluated by 2 judges using an evaluation grid
- ✿ Community is provided with a written report & a bloom rating
- ✿ Communities from this category scoring 5 plus blooms may be invited to participate in the National CIB Competition in future years (although not obligated)

#### b. Levels for 5 Bloom Communities — bronze, silver and gold levels

Five bloom communities participating in the Provincial – evaluated category will now receive a three level rating - **bronze, silver or gold**

- ✿ 5 Blooms: 82 to 83.9%
- ✿ 5 Blooms (Bronze): 84 to 86.9%
- ✿ 5 Blooms (Silver): 87 to 89.9%
- ✿ 5 Blooms (Gold): 90% and over

## 2. **Special Attraction**

The Special Attraction category is available to Manitoba green attractions such as parks, living history museums and public gardens.

Category Highlights:

- ⊗ The Special Attractions category has its own unique Evaluation Form. The 6 criteria remain the same as the other program categories however the evaluation points are on a more specific scale directed to special attraction considerations
- ⊗ The evaluation criteria focuses on management, planning, maintenance, improvement and innovation
- ⊗ The Special Attraction is:
  - Evaluated by 2 judges using an Special Attractions evaluation form
  - Provided with a written report & a bloom rating
- ⊗ Qualifying Special Attractions will be invited (but not obligated) to participate in the national competition the following year

## 3. **Provincial – Non Evaluated**

The Provincial – non evaluated category is available to communities who have participated in the MB CiB program; have been evaluated in the last three years; wish to continue to support MB CiB program objectives however are in need of taking time off from evaluation.

Category Highlights:

- ⊗ Available to communities who have participated in the MB CiB program and have been evaluated in the last three years
- ⊗ Community is not judged by MB CiB judges
- ⊗ Communities are included in all networking opportunities (i.e. CiB quarterly newsletter, sponsor information, grants/funding information, Annual Conference and Awards)

## 4. **Registration Fee**

The registration fee for the Provincial program is based on population size:

Provincial - Evaluated	Provincial – Non-Evaluated
<input type="checkbox"/> Population up to 500 = <b>\$250.00</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Population 501-1000 = <b>\$250.00</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Population 1001—3000 = <b>\$300.00</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Population 3001—5,000 = <b>\$400.00</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Population Over 5,000 = <b>\$500.00</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Population up to 500 = <b>\$125.00</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Population 501-1000 = <b>\$125.00</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Population 1001—3000 = <b>\$150.00</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Population 3001—5,000 = <b>\$200.00</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Population Over 5,000 = <b>\$250.00</b>

## FORMING YOUR LOCAL CIB COMMITTEE

The most enduring committees have a cross-section of volunteers: citizens, representatives from municipal (councillor or parks staff person), local businesses, economic development, chamber of commerce, community association, heritage societies, horticultural society, schools or youth organizations and service clubs. Encourage anyone who wants to help their community be its best.

Number of Committee members can vary depending on the geographic size of the community, the community's demographics, and the population size. Municipalities have run successful programs by asking a local organization (e.g., the Chamber of Commerce, Recreation Services, Economic Development or service club organizations) to manage the program in collaboration with a Committee member.

### Committee's main tasks

- 🌱 Organize the local program
- 🌱 Liaise with municipal authorities
- 🌱 Prepare an itinerary and logistics for the judges' visit
- 🌱 Produce an information booklet (called the Community Profile Book) on the community for the judges
- 🌱 Provide representation at the Annual Conference and Awards

### Budget

While participation in the program does not require considerable financial resources, obtaining funds and services to promote the program, involving the community, honouring the participants and volunteers, attending the awards ceremonies are recommended.

Start with a simple budget to cover the registration fee, judges' accommodations, tour costs and Annual Conference and Awards attendance (conference fee, accommodation).

New participants are encouraged to start with simple objectives. Municipal budgets will often cover the registration fee and hosting the judges can be an in-kind donation from a local business or billet in someone's home.

## HOW COMMUNITIES ARE EVALUATED

### Judges

Manitoba Communities in Bloom volunteer judges are professionals (active or retired) in the fields of horticulture, the environment, sustainability, community development, education, parks management, urban management and other related fields. Judges are aware of the various challenges communities face and the municipal and grassroots involvement required for community participation.

## HOW COMMUNITIES ARE EVALUATED (continued)

Two judges work collaboratively as a team and are paired to complement each other's skill sets so the community may get the most out of the evaluation experience.

They review material (Community Profile Book) provided by your committee and participate in a community tour. The Community Profile Book and the judges tour work together to provide a complete picture of your community.

Judges discuss and come to a consensus on the mark that will be assigned in each cell of the Evaluation Form. Your community will receive a copy of their evaluation, including comments and suggestions, at the award ceremony. Until that time the evaluation results are confidential.

While completing the evaluation is the primary role of the judges, they will also be available to speak to the media and participate in various social activities. These types of activities can help to build the Communities in Bloom program in your community.

The judges are a resource and the report they create becomes a tool for the community to measure what they are doing well, and what could be improved upon. This is a year-to-year evaluation to assist with improving your community. Most communities see a very noticeable improvement once in the program for approximately 3 years.

### Evaluation Form

The judges utilize an Evaluation Form which has 6 criteria. Each criteria considers activities of the municipality, business and institutions, residential, as well as the overall community involvement. Familiarize yourselves with the grid and the values allocated to each area as they are not all equal.

A blank copy of the Evaluation Form is sent to the communities in June to provide a reference for the judge's tour. The completed Evaluation Form is presented to the community at the Annual Awards and a copy (PDF) emailed the community following the Awards Ceremony. Evaluation Forms are confidential – CiB does not make the scores (only bloom ratings) or the form content public.

### The Evaluation Form categories

- ☼ Community Appearance: Maintenance of buildings and structures, removal of litter, weeds and graffiti
- ☼ Environmental Action: Waste reduction, sewage disposal, recycling, composting, integrated pest management (IPM) and water conservation
- ☼ Heritage Conservation: Efforts to preserve built heritage; natural and cultural heritage
- ☼ Tree Management: Existence of long and short term planning, by-laws and standards for planting suitable trees, appropriate care practices
- ☼ Landscaped Areas: Community efforts to make plants an element of surroundings; colour, texture, regional suitability, native species and maintenance

- ☼ Plant and Floral Displays: General beautification with beds, containers and ornamental displays

## BLOOM RATINGS, SPECIAL MENTIONS, SPONSOR AWARDS and NATIONAL

### Bloom ratings

Based on a tally of the points awarded by the judges under each of the elements, the community is assigned a “Bloom Rating” of 1 to 5 blooms.

- up to 55 points 1 bloom
- 55 – 63 points 2 blooms
- 64 – 72 points 3 blooms
- 73 – 81 points 4 blooms
- 82 + points 5 blooms

### Five bloom communities participating in the Provincial – evaluated category

Three level rating - **bronze, silver or gold**

- ☼ 5 Blooms: 82 to 83.9%
- ☼ 5 Blooms (Bronze): 84 to 86.9%
- ☼ 5 Blooms (Silver): 87 to 89.9%
- ☼ 5 Blooms (Gold): 90% and over

### Special Mentions

In addition to bloom ratings communities are recognized for a specific project or community highlight noted by the judges during their visit.

### National CiB invitation

Qualifying communities who have achieved a 5 bloom rating, shown a dedication to the Communities in Bloom program and recommended by MB CiB may be invited to participate at the national level.

## PLANNING THE JUDGES TOUR

By mid June the Manitoba CiB office will provide you with your judges visit date, judges’ names, brief biographies, and a copy of the Evaluation Form.

When planning your judges’ route review the Evaluation Form and be sure to showcase your community’s efforts and achievements in ALL 6 categories. Each criteria also includes points on municipal/public properties; commercial sector; and private properties/citizens.

Familiarize yourself with the 6 criteria in the Evaluation Form. Preparation of materials that address all the criteria in the Evaluation Form is the key.

Use last year's evaluation to your advantage – note the comments from the judges for improvements, additions etc. Highlight accomplishments or changes that have taken place over the last year.

Note when planning the tour that judges require a 3 hour period of time in private to compile their notes for the evaluation and to determine if they have any further questions prior to departure and debriefing.

### What needs to be prepared ahead of time

In early June you will receive a form *Preparing for the Judges Visit*. You will be asked to provide the following information:

- ✿ Accommodation details for the judges (2 single rooms maximum of two nights)
- ✿ CiB community tour contact information (who to meet and where to meet)
- ✿ Basic tour details (starting/ending times, special events etc)
- ✿ Media contacts (MB CiB will provide a press release following the Awards Ceremony in September to media contacts provided by the communities)
- ✿ Community photos (approximately 10) to showcase your community on our website, quarterly newsletter and slideshow at the Awards Ceremony & tradeshow

For the judges day of the visit you will need to have prepared:

- ✿ Community Profile Book
- ✿ A list people involved during the tour, their affiliations and connection to what is being toured
- ✿ Name tags (including affiliation, title etc.) for each person involved in the tour

### Transportation

The community arranges for a vehicle to transport the two judges and tour guide/s. Walking tours, and alternative transportation (like transit) are also another option; remember to consider the time allowance.

### Sample Tour Agenda

- The **beginning** of the tour day is typically 8:00 am. (If the committee is incorporating a breakfast as the first stop, 7:30 am would be appropriate). A meeting with the Mayor and /or department heads could start the day.
- Knowledgeable individuals should be available at most **stops** to explain the nature of the project (highlighting how the community was involved in its completion). Most stops are 10 to 15 minutes.
- **Lunch** is an opportunity to give a limited number of community organizations a chance to make short presentations on their activities. The lunch is also an opportunity to meet the Mayor if the schedule did not allow evaluation criteria should be covered.
- Tour resumes for the **afternoon**.

- The judges require a **2 hour period of time** in private to compile their notes for the Evaluation Form and to determine if they have any further questions near the end of their visit prior to departure and debriefing.
- Schedule a **short wrap-up meeting** with the judges at or near the end of their tour. The judging team can provide feedback on the tour and make suggestions while it is fresh in their minds. While the evaluation scoring cannot be discussed, the feedback can be useful.
- Tour **evening** wrap up is another opportunity for community involvement – some ideas have been a BBQ with community volunteers or dinner with elected officials. (Note: Consider that Judges may need to travel to the next community that evening.)

### Planning the tour route - considerations

- Ensure adequate time to travel between stops, choose “best” route to take which will show off the majority of your community. Use a variety of roads when possible.
- Calculate how long you will have at each stop and be sure the judges and the hosts at each stop are aware of the time available.
- If homeowners or volunteers are aware of the time available, they will time their activity accordingly and will not be surprised if the judges’ visit is brief.
- If travel time does not allow for visits to remote sites of interest, a write up in the Community Profile book with current photos may suffice.
- Be aware of the need for refreshments and washroom breaks. Are you prepared for a rain on the tour day? What is your contingency plan?
- Meals do not always need to be in a restaurant. Public parks, museums, libraries or City Hall can provide an excellent venue for a meal and may be better suited for presentations that can be provided during the meal.

### Tour guides and volunteers

Two tour guides are recommended. They should be knowledgeable about the community and familiar with the Evaluation Form. The role of the tour guides is to:

- Introduce individuals at a tour stop, give background information during the drive/walk and outline the next the stop on the tour.
- Manage the time allocated to the stop - including time for questions.

### After the judges tour – getting the evaluation results

Your community will receive a copy of their Evaluation Form and certificate at the Awards Ceremony, along with a bloom rating and special mention, and sponsor award (if applicable). Those communities unable to attend the Awards Ceremony will receive theirs by mail following the event. Until that time the Evaluation Form results are confidential.

### Other tips for your judges’ tour

- Keep your local media informed of what is happening, and to enlist support for projects that are in progress. Share the positive comments from the Evaluation Form with the community
- Point out accomplishments from all seasons.
- Show the best and worst of what you have and explain plans to deal with the worst. This is reality, and having a plan to improve is better than trying to hide the obvious

- Be sure to ask judges questions if you have areas where you would like opinions or expertise, particularly in an area of knowledge applicable to that judge. They are more than willing to share knowledge and experience.

### Community Profile Book

The Community Profile Book is a document that provides a snapshot of your community and its initiatives focusing on the Evaluation's 6 criteria. The book is a required informational tool for the judges (the book itself is not evaluated). The judges will use this book while touring your community therefore will require a copy at the beginning of the tour.

#### Community Profile Book guidelines

- Design and comprehensiveness is at the full discretion of the community
- Lightweight and portable; most communities find no more than 30 pages to be sufficient
- Plastic coil bindings or duo-tang folders are entirely acceptable

#### Suggestions of what to include in your Community Profile Book

- Pictures/descriptions of community achievements in each of the 6 judging criteria
- Map of the community and with tour route
- Tour agenda
- List of contacts/volunteers that judges will be meeting (name and affiliation)
- Photo captions
- Brief introduction or description of your
- Year-round projects and achievements with focus on "new" and major initiatives.
- Include as much information as possible about the commercial and industrial sectors; describe how businesses are participating in or contributing to each of the evaluated criteria
- Initiatives in relation with recommendations from past evaluations.
- Projects and or programs made possible by volunteer and/or in kind involvement.
- Information on projects and or programs that will not be included in the evaluation tour

#### Other uses for your Community Profile Book

While the Community Profile Book is simply intended to be an informational reference document for the judges, it may serve other purposes as well.

- ☼ Can become an economic development tool for promoting your community to visitors, potential sponsors, and potential volunteers.
- ☼ Many communities have given copies of their Community Profile Books to their local libraries, Chambers of Commerce, City/Town Halls, and Visitor Information Centres.
- ☼ Some communities have put their Community Profile Books on their communities' websites.
- ☼ Others have enclosed their Community Profile Books with grant applications or sold advertising space in their Community Profile Books

### Sample Community Profile Books

There are examples of other Community Profile Books from communities across Canada and a template on the National CiB website [www.communitiesinbloom.ca](http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca). Contact the Provincial Coordinator [coordinator@mbcommunitiesinbloom.ca](mailto:coordinator@mbcommunitiesinbloom.ca) if you would like assistance.

## MANITOBA CIB PROVINCIAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AWARDS CEREMONY

The Annual Conference and Awards is a unique opportunity for participants to network with Manitoba Communities and MB CiB judges, share valuable information, learn from experts and celebrate achievements.

Each year this event is hosted by a Manitoba community involved in the program. Host communities have the opportunity to showcase their home town to conference delegates.

Communities are encouraged to provide a community information table and to contribute a community pride item for the Silent Auction which is another promotional opportunity.

At the Awards Banquet community photos are shared with conference delegates. The highlight of the event is the announcement of Communities' Bloom Ratings and Special Mentions along with winners of sponsor awards and National CiB eligibility. Communities are presented with their evaluations, and participation certificates.

### **The 2026 Manitoba CiB Provincial Conference and Awards Ceremony will take place on September 26<sup>th</sup> in Niverville, MB.**

More information, including registration forms, will be provided as it becomes available. Watch the MB CiB website and newsletters for details!

## NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON PARKS & GROUNDS AND AWARDS CEREMONIES

The National Awards Ceremonies, hosted in a different location every year, is held in the fall in conjunction with the National Symposium on Parks and Grounds.