Policy Priorities 2026 - 2027

Our policy and advocacy agenda is guided by three core principles that reflect the mission and core values of The Chamber:

1. **Ensuring business growth and competitiveness:** We advocate for policies that cultivate a competitive business environment and an ecosystem that fuels innovation, growth, and access to vital resources, ensuring businesses can thrive.
2. **Informed by members:** Our agenda is driven by the voices of our members, with continuous feedback gathered through working groups, surveys, and direct engagement with Chamber staff.
3. **Commitment to equity:** Our advocacy efforts are rooted in a strong commitment to reconciliation and the principles of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion, ensuring that our policies promote fairness and opportunity for all.

Policy Priorities

Keeping with the three principles and in line with the mission and vision of The Chamber, for the year of 2026 – 2027, we propose the following priorities to drive our policy and advocacy agenda.

➢ Downtown Winnipeg Revitalization

Advocating for the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg is a key priority for The Chamber because a vibrant downtown drives economic growth, attracts talent, and enhances the city's overall appeal. For businesses in Winnipeg, a revitalized downtown leads to increased foot traffic, tourism, and investment opportunities, all of which contribute to a thriving local economy. The Chamber will advocate for recommendations outlined in our Downtown Winnipeg Revitalization Policy Position, which aim to generate economic impact, address social issues, and promote vibrancy.

This issue is important to Chamber members: Downtown revitalization was identified as the top issue (42.3%) that respondents to our annual member survey want us to advocate for.

➢ Community Safety

Addressing safety and crime is crucial for fostering a secure environment that supports economic growth and community well-being in Winnipeg. Concerns about crime impact local businesses, affect employee and customer confidence, and diminish the overall quality of life. The Chamber will advocate for recommendations outlined in our Community Safety Policy Position, which aim to protect individuals, promote prevention by addressing the root causes of crime, and foster partnerships.

This issue is important to Chamber members: Community safety was identified as the second most important issue (38.5%) that respondents to our annual member survey want us to advocate for.

➢ Trade and Tariff Impacts

In a globalized economy, maintaining strong international trade relationships is essential to Winnipeg's economic success. The ongoing trade tension between the U.S. and Canada will be felt across industries, affecting supply chains, investment decisions, and long-term business confidence. The Chamber will advocate for recommendations outlined in our Tariff Policy Position, which aim to protect businesses, expand import and export markets, and address current trade challenges.

This issue is important to Chamber members: 50.8% of respondents to our annual member survey rated U.S. tariff and trade policy uncertainty as a challenge facing their organization.

➢ Economic Growth and Productivity

Advocating for increased productivity is a priority for The Chamber because it directly fuels economic growth, strengthens business competitiveness, and secures Winnipeg's long-term prosperity. Canada and Winnipeg are falling behind on the global stage, making productivity a critical area of focus to create high-quality jobs, attract investment, and ultimately improve the standard of living across our community. The Chamber will advocate for recommendations outlined in our Economic Growth and Productivity Policy Position, which aim to grow, invest, and enable Winnipeg's future economy.

This issue is important to Chamber members: Canada remains in the middle of the pack among OECD countries in terms of productivity and at the bottom of the G7. At the provincial level, Manitoba's business sector labour productivity decreased by 1.9% in 2024 (Statistics Canada), a trend that we know is directly impacting our members.

➢ Fiscal Responsibility

Ensuring fiscal responsibility in government supports business stability and economic prosperity. The Chamber will advocate for streamlined tax policies, reduced regulatory burdens, and transparent government spending to foster a stable economic environment that supports long-term business success.

This issue is important to Chamber members: In our annual membership survey, 53.9% indicated that recent government decisions have negatively impacted their business operations, highlighting the need for more predictable and supportive fiscal policies.

➢ Environmental Sustainability

Promoting sustainability within Winnipeg's business community is vital to future-proofing our local economy and addressing the urgent challenges of climate change. The Chamber will advocate for recommendations outlined in our Environmental Sustainability Policy

Position, which aim to reduce emissions, adopt better practices, and become leaders promoting a circular economy.

This issue is important to Chamber members: Environmental sustainability was identified as the third most important issue (26.9%) that respondents to our annual member survey want us to advocate for.

➢ Workforce Development

Building a strong, adaptable workforce is central to Winnipeg's economic future. Addressing current labour shortages requires more than filling jobs; it demands strategic investment in people. Rapid technological change is already reshaping industries, and growing skills mismatches risk deepening workforce gaps. The Chamber will advocate for recommendations outlined in our Workforce Development Policy Position, which aim to expand reskilling and upskilling programs, invest in education and apprenticeship opportunities, and better leverage the talents of new Canadians to build a more dynamic and adaptable labor market.

This issue is important to Chamber members: Workforce development and skills training were identified as the fourth most important issue (23.1%) that respondents to our annual member survey want us to advocate for.

➢ Truth and Reconciliation

Our business community has an opportunity to lead the way in economic reconciliation for the country, as Winnipeg is home to one of the largest Indigenous populations in Canada. The Chamber will advocate for recommendations outlined in our Truth and Reconciliation Policy Position, which aim to accelerate Indigenous economic development, improve access to capital, and become leaders in advancing reconciliation.

This issue is important to Chamber members: The number of Indigenous-owned businesses is growing in Canada, rising from 1% to 4% between 2021 and 2025. In Manitoba, 6% of businesses are Indigenous-owned, a vital part of our business community (CSBC, Q1 2021 – Q4 2025).

➢ Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is critical for Winnipeg's economic growth. Without affordable housing, businesses will see reduced workforce availability and customer spending, creating an economic environment that is unattractive to investors. The Chamber will advocate for recommendations outlined in our Affordable Housing Policy Position, which aim to maintain affordability through increased density, address environmental impacts, and highlight the economic benefits to Winnipeg's economy.

This issue is important to Chamber members: Affordable housing remains a priority for Chamber members, with 19.2% of respondents indicating they want The Chamber to advocate for affordable housing.

We advocate by:

1. Establishing policy priorities through member consultations, stakeholder engagement, and Board of Directors input.
2. Delivering timely submissions, op-eds, media outreach, and reports to lead discussions on key policy issues.
3. Building strong relationships with community organizations and stakeholders to align our advocacy efforts.
4. Maintaining strong, positive relationships with all levels of government, public policy experts, and the media to drive our agenda.

The Chamber remains committed to being data-informed and member-centred in all our advocacy efforts. By focusing on downtown revitalization, community safety, economic growth and productivity, trade and tariff impacts, environmental sustainability, workforce development, Truth and Reconciliation, affordable housing, and fiscal responsibility, we are positioning The Chamber as a leader in addressing the most pressing challenges facing Winnipeg's business community. Through enhanced member engagement and strategic communication, we will ensure that our policy work continues to make a significant and lasting impact on the city's future.