



2022-2025

Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan



NOVA SCOTIA

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Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan
2022–25

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Message from the Minister

In 2017, Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act was passed into law, showing our commitment to being a more equitable and barrier-free province for all Nova Scotians. The full participation of persons with disabilities in our communities supports our goal of a healthy Nova Scotia—one in which we can all grow and prosper.

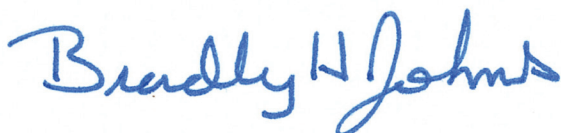
Government's 2022–25 plan is a roadmap of what we will do over the next three years to ensure we are leading by example to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility in our policies, programs and services, and in our workplace. The 2022–25 Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan builds on our 2018–21 plan, where significant progress was made to action accessibility commitments. Highlights of the plan include

- All departments are leading commitments.
- There are six government-wide commitments to advance accessibility.
- Priority areas and commitments were updated and now align with accessibility standard areas and the process we use to develop standards.
- Government policy will be developed using an accessibility lens.
- Accessibility commitments align with existing equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities across government.

We will only reach the long-term outcomes for an accessible Government of Nova Scotia if all departments and agencies are involved and committed to accessibility. We have a shared responsibility across government to support the implementation of this plan and to ensure its success. I welcome all employees to participate in this effort to lead by example to advance accessibility for Nova Scotians.

Together, we can achieve our vision of an accessible province. Together, we will succeed.

Sincerely,



Minister Brad Johns

Introduction

About the Language in the 2022–25 Accessibility Plan

Language changes over time. We have done our best to use inclusive, accessible, and respectful language throughout this plan. We have also tried to bring an *intersectional accessibility lens* (learn what this means on p. 6) to our work. The language we use in this plan is rooted in good intentions to treat people with dignity and respect.

The 2022–25 Accessibility Plan uses person-first language, such as “persons with disabilities.” This is the same as the language used in the Nova Scotia *Accessibility Act* and in our first accessibility plan (2018–21). The plan is about creating equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia. Equity means providing all members of a community with what they need to succeed.

What an Accessible Government of Nova Scotia Means – Our Outcomes

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to leading by example. We are committed to being accessible in the way we work, do business, and provide services to Nova Scotians. An accessible Government of Nova Scotia means:

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Persons with disabilities have equitable access to

- buildings owned and leased by the Government of Nova Scotia
- public spaces managed by the Government of Nova Scotia
- programs and services delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia
- information and communications prepared and delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia

EQUITABLE EMPLOYMENT

Persons with disabilities

- are employed, engaged, and move forward in their careers with the Government of Nova Scotia
- have access to additional support systems and tools, for those who require them

INCREASED AWARENESS AND CAPACITY

Government of Nova Scotia employees

- are aware of the rights of persons with disabilities
- can identify barriers to accessibility and the impacts those barriers cause
- can actively try to prevent accessibility barriers
- can support key partners and interested parties to improve accessibility

Under the *Accessibility Act*, government is required to develop an accessibility plan to help meet our goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030.

The Government of Nova Scotia made significant progress on the commitments we set out in our 2018–21 Accessibility Plan. You can find details of that progress in [Appendix A](#).

The 2022–25 Accessibility Plan is government’s second three-year plan. It builds on the 2018–21 Accessibility Plan and creates a new framework for government to improve accessibility.

How We Developed the 2022–25 Accessibility Plan

Departments and agencies across government worked together, through an Accessibility Interdepartmental Committee, to develop an approach, carry out community engagement sessions, and identify priority areas and commitments to create the new plan. An informal advisory committee provided advice throughout the plan’s development process. Over half of this group’s members were persons with disabilities to ensure First Voice perspectives were included at every step.

The 2022-25 Accessibility Plan was informed by Nova Scotians, including persons with disabilities, and is meant to acknowledge and address current needs and priorities for the people of this province.

What We Mean When We Say “First Voice”

The knowledge from any individual or group of people whose lived experience gives them expertise in that area.

What We Heard from Nova Scotians

The 2022–25 Accessibility Plan reflects what we heard during conversations across the province with interested and affected parties in community and within government around barriers that exist for Nova Scotians with disabilities. While the Government of Nova Scotia has made progress, we still have work to do to make government a more accessible and inclusive organization.

We held community engagement sessions asking for the views of Nova Scotians from a wide range of backgrounds from across the province, including


- persons with disabilities
- individuals representing marginalized groups
- individuals representing a variety of sectors

Government employees with disabilities also provided input and insights on their experiences working for the Government of Nova Scotia. They shared the priorities they feel should be included in government’s second accessibility plan.



What We Mean When We Say “Marginalized Groups”

A group of people who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from fully participating in society.



We heard that Nova Scotians with disabilities still face barriers to accessibility in many ways, including the following:

- Stigma and attitudinal barriers remain common.
- There is a lack of understanding about the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Government hiring processes can be inaccessible.
- Accessibility is often an afterthought and left out of equity, diversity, and inclusion work.
- Progress is held back because people are worried about the cost of becoming accessible.
- Plain language is not used enough in publicly shared information. Government communication is not always in accessible formats.

The results of our recent community engagement efforts (2021) support the recommendations that came out of the 2018 *What We Heard: Accessibility in Nova Scotia* report, which was used to help create government's first accessibility plan (2018-21).

What is in the 2022–25 Accessibility Plan

The 2022–25 Accessibility Plan has a total of eight priority areas and a series of commitments under each. Twenty-six departments and agencies across government will lead the way to ensure the commitments are achieved. The commitments align with their priorities and mandates. The plan

- includes a set of guiding principles and new priority areas (Education, Public Transportation, and Accountability) that align with Access by Design 2030 and *accessibility standards* (learn what this means on page 7).
- ensures we consider accessibility when developing government policies.
- brings an intersectional accessibility lens to existing equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities.
- helps us create and apply *accessibility standards* and helps prescribed public bodies (learn what this means on page 7) meet their *Accessibility Act* requirements.

When we reach the end of our 2022–25 plan, we will be five years away from Nova Scotia's goal to be an accessible province by 2030. The new plan will help us reach this goal by helping us

- prevent and remove barriers to accessibility in government policies, programs, services, and physical spaces
- lead by example when we develop accessible policies, programs, and services

What We Mean When We Say "Intersectionality"

How a person's diverse and unique identities, circumstances, and experiences - such as those related to their race, income, disability, sexual orientation, and gender - connect and overlap. Sometimes experiences facing barriers to accessibility are connected with experiences of ableism, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

"Intersectional Accessibility Lens"

This means we understand that persons with disabilities have many different identities, experiences and backgrounds that connect and overlap. We know that many persons with disabilities experience marginalization and discrimination. When we do our work, we think about how it will impact these diverse communities of people.

- strive to provide equitable access and opportunity to all Nova Scotians
- meet the needs of persons with disabilities in ways that promote and protect difference, dignity, and autonomy (a person’s ability to make their own decisions)

You can find each of the priority areas in the plan by using the icons below.



Priority 1:
Awareness and Capacity Building



Priority 2:
Buildings, Infrastructure, and Public Spaces



Priority 3:
Education



Priority 4:
Employment



Priority 5:
Delivery of Goods and Services



Priority 6:
Information and Communications



Priority 7:
Public Transportation and Infrastructure



Priority 8:
Accountability

What We Mean When We Say “Access by Design 2030”

Nova Scotia’s strategy for implementing the *Accessibility Act*, including how we will work together as a province to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities in the built environment, education, employment, transportation, information and communication, and goods and services.

“Accessibility Standards”

The *Accessibility Act* allows the Government of Nova Scotia to develop laws to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. Standards are a set of rules that government and other organizations must follow.

“Prescribed Public Sector Bodies”

Organizations that are required through the *Accessibility Act* to develop accessibility plans and accessibility advisory committees.

Guiding Principles

These principles represent the values and behaviours that will guide the work of government as we carry out the 2022–25 Accessibility Plan.

Nothing About Us Without Us

First Voice input and insights are part of decision-making processes. Many kinds of disabilities are recognized, including invisible, and episodic disabilities. Work is approached with an intersectional accessibility lens and will consider ableism as well as the other ways people are marginalized or oppressed.

Shared Responsibility

All government departments and agencies lead by example and work together.

Alignment

Accessibility is a part of our work each day. Accessibility goals line up with our mandates and priorities, including equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.

Human Rights

Accessibility is a human right. We strive to make sure all Nova Scotians can fully and meaningfully take part in society.

Safe Work Environments, Dignity, and Autonomy

Government workplaces are physically and psychologically safe for employees with disabilities. We promote and protect employee dignity and autonomy in all we do.

Innovation and Flexibility

We use new ways of thinking and working in our efforts to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities.



Our Priorities and Commitments

PRIORITY AREA 1: Awareness and Capacity Building



OUR GOAL:
Build a culture of accessibility
across the public service



What We Are Doing: Our Commitments in Summary

In 2022–25, government will

- build accessibility into policy and planning using an intersectional accessibility lens
- build internal capacity to improve accessibility and increase awareness around accessibility
- make sure our accessibility work is in line with our equity, diversity, and inclusion work across government
- support external interested and affected parties to advance accessibility

What We Mean When We Say *“Capacity Building”*

The process of developing an organization’s strength and potential. This goes beyond carrying out tasks to changing mindsets and attitudes.

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

1.1 Departments will work to embed accessibility into government policy work, including the following:

i) The Executive Council Office will apply an accessibility lens on cabinet submissions, put accessibility into government corporate business planning templates, and find ways to highlight programs and plans that support government accessibility goals.

ii) The Office of Equity and Anti-Racism will work with departments to develop and carry out an equity impact assessment on all new and revised government policies. The assessment will be developed using an intersectional accessibility lens.

iii) The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing will work with municipalities to look at how they can add accessibility to the Statements of Provincial Interest.

iv) Intergovernmental Affairs will carry out policy research to compare the federal Accessibility Canada Act (2019) and other provincial and territorial acts with the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act* (2017) to guide future accessibility work.

- i) Executive Council Office
- ii) Equity and Anti-Racism
- iii) Municipal Affairs and Housing
- iv) Intergovernmental Affairs

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

1.2 The Department of Justice will work with other departments to carry out the human rights ruling that restaurants must be accessible to individuals using wheelchairs.

Justice

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

1.3 Departments will build accessibility into their equity, diversity, and inclusion work, including the following:

i) All departments will bring accessibility into departmental-level equity, diversity, and inclusion work, including committees, plans, and everyday language.

ii) The Public Service Commission will support departments to embed accessibility into equity, diversity, and inclusion planning and initiatives.

iii) The Department of Health and Wellness will create an external equity, diversity, and inclusion health equity framework that will include an accessibility lens. The department will also work with the Office of Addictions and Mental Health and the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment to make sure that equity, inclusion, and accessibility are part of all planning and programs.

iv) The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency will work with equity-deserving groups, including persons with disabilities, to collaborate on an awareness-raising campaign that promotes the importance and value of a diverse, inclusive, and accessible trades workforce. The campaign features apprentices and journeypersons from equity-deserving groups and targets employers, industry organizations, educators, and youth.

- i) All
- ii) Public Service Commission
- iii) Health and Wellness
- iv) Labour, Skills and Immigration/NS Apprenticeship Agency

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

1.4 Departments will build reciprocal relationships and partnerships with disability organizations and/or other equity-deserving groups and individuals to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Justice
Public Works
Communities, Culture,
Tourism and Heritage /
African NS Affairs
Community Services

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

1.5a Public Service Commission and Justice will design and deliver new training for government staff and hiring managers on accessibility and disability, including topics around providing additional support for employees with disabilities and addressing stigma.

Public Service
Commission
Justice

1.5b All Government of Nova Scotia employees will take part in accessibility and disability training, offered through government's learning programs.

All

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

1.6 Departments will increase their ability to support accessibility work inside government and raise awareness about it by

- i) supporting staff to learn more about and develop better skills around accessibility
- ii) sharing existing accessibility resources and information across government
- iii) moving forward using accessibility practices, such as holding accessible meetings and events
- iv) working with accessibility experts to build tools for outreach
- v) designing and building an online community hub where government employees can find accessibility tools, information, and key contacts
- vi) providing support to the Government of Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network to strengthen its reach and impact

- i) Communications Nova Scotia; Justice; Equity and Anti-Racism; Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services; Labour, Skills and Immigration; Executive Council Office; Environment and Climate Change; Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage; Health and Wellness; Community Services; Economic Development; Education and Early Childhood Development
- ii) All
- iii) Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Health and Wellness; Advanced Education; Equity and Anti-Racism; Seniors and Long-Term Care
- iv) Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
- v) Justice
- vi) Justice

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

1.7 Departments will develop and carry out a public education plan to raise awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and accessibility barriers, and to build community capacity to improve accessibility across sectors.

Justice
Communications
Nova Scotia

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

1.8 Departments will work with communities and organizations to increase their understanding about accessibility and disability topics, to improve the accessibility of community-based programs and services.

Labour, Skills and
Immigration
Advanced Education
Communities, Culture,
Tourism and Heritage /
African NS Affairs

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

1.9 Departments will look for and promote existing funding opportunities to support accessibility. They will make sure eligibility requirements include criteria for accessibility.

Fisheries and Aquaculture
Municipal Affairs
and Housing
Seniors and
Long-Term Care

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

1.10 Departments will develop resources and supports for prescribed public sector bodies (such as municipalities and universities) to help them become more accessible. These efforts will help groups meet requirements in the Accessibility Act including

- accessibility planning
- carrying out and following the built environment, education, and employment accessibility standards

Justice

Advanced Education

Education and Early
Childhood Development

Economic Development

Health and Wellness

Municipal Affairs
and Housing

Communities, Culture,
Tourism and Heritage

PRIORITY AREA 2: Buildings, Infrastructure, and Public Spaces



OUR GOAL:
Enhance the accessibility of government owned, leased and operated buildings, offices and public spaces.



What We Are Doing: Our Commitments in Summary

In 2022–25, government will

- complete and begin to carry out the accessibility standard for the built environment when it is enacted
- develop tools and carry out accessibility audits for the buildings that government owns, aligned with the new accessibility standard for the built environment
- develop plans to create more physically accessible health-care spaces, nursing home facilities, schools, and public and private sector housing
- promote accessible parks, beaches, and other public spaces so more people know about and use them

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

2.1 Departments will work together across government to develop and begin to carry out the provincial accessibility standard for the built environment when it is enacted.

Justice
Public Works
Communications
Nova Scotia
Regulatory Affairs and
Service Effectiveness
Natural Resources and
Renewables
Health and Wellness
Communities, Culture,
Tourism and Heritage

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

2.2 Public Works (DPW) will

- continue to develop its Accessibility Audit Handbook/tool to be used to find and remove barriers in buildings and public spaces operated by government
- continue to carry out built environment audits to inform the development of a plan and recommendations for meeting requirements under the *Accessibility Act*
- provide guidance to other departments to support their use of DPW's Accessibility Audit Handbook/tool.

Public Works

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

2.3 Departments will work with Public Works and our landlords to review the accessibility of buildings and spaces. The reviews will help to find and remove barriers for clients and employees. They will also help to bring the buildings and spaces in line with the built environment standard once it is made into law.

Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
Labour, Skills and Immigration
Environment and Climate Change
Fisheries and Aquaculture
Economic Development
Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services
Justice
Equity and Anti-Racism
Health and Wellness
Agriculture
Seniors and Long-Term Care

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

2.4 Municipal Affairs and Housing will provide training to building inspectors on the built environment standard to support accessibility audits.

Municipal Affairs and Housing

Commitment**Lead Department(s)*****2.5 Fisheries and Aquaculture will***

Fisheries and Aquaculture

- review the accessibility of barrier-free sport fishing sites that already exist to note how accessible these sites are for a range of disabilities
- develop an accessibility guideline for sport fishing sites
- build one new barrier-free sport fishing site each year that is in line with the new standard
- keep information about accessible sport fishing sites up to date on its website

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

2.6 Departments will continue to work toward creating physically accessible spaces, including the following:

i) Health and Wellness will work with the Nova Scotia Health Authority, Emergency Health Services, Public Health, the IWK Health Centre, and other partners to develop a plan to make sure health-care spaces are in line with the built environment accessibility standard, when it comes into force.

ii) Municipal Affairs and Housing will continue to work on an accessibility plan for public housing and work with community housing and private sector partners to further the goal of creating affordable and accessible housing units.

iii) Education and Early Childhood Development will remove barriers in school buildings to improve the accessibility of spaces used to deliver integrated services such as school psychology and speech language pathology.

iv) Seniors and Long-Term Care will ensure new-construction and renovation of nursing home facilities will meet the most current standard for accessibility.

i) Health and Wellness

ii) Municipal Affairs and Housing

iii) Education and Early Childhood Development

iv) Seniors and Long-Term Care

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

2.7 Natural Resources and Renewables will promote accessible parks, beaches, and other public spaces so more people know about and use them.

Natural Resources and Renewables

PRIORITY AREA 3: Education



OUR GOAL:
Create learning environments where
all students in all stages of life can
participate



What We Are Doing: Our Commitments in Summary

In 2022–25, government will

- complete and begin to carry out the accessibility standard for education when it is enacted
- develop a plan to support students with disabilities at every stage of learning
- teach Nova Scotians about disability rights and accessibility by putting it into school curriculum
- create more inclusive learning experiences for trades apprentices with disabilities

Commitment

3.1 Departments will work together across government to develop and begin to carry out the provincial accessibility standard for education when it is enacted.

Lead Department(s)

Justice
Education and Early
Childhood Development
Labour, Skills and
Immigration
Advanced Education

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

3.2 Departments will collaboratively develop a provincial approach to improve transitions for students with disabilities within and between education levels and sectors.

Education and Early
Childhood Development

Labour, Skills and
Immigration

Advanced Education

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

3.3 Education and Early Childhood Development will

- integrate information about disability rights and accessibility into relevant P–12 school curriculum areas as they are renewed and developed
- make sure the inclusive education policy matches the language and commitments of the *Accessibility Act*
- develop and deliver a campaign to raise awareness across all branches about accessibility
- offer professional learning opportunities for department staff about accessibility, including building accessibility into the leadership program for administrators
- find and remove barriers students with disabilities face in accessing assistive technology, equipment, accessibility services, and supports
- find and remove barriers for students with disabilities who use before- and after-school programs

Education and Early
Childhood Development

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

3.4 Labour, Skills and Immigration will support the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning in aligning with the education standard, as developed. They will also apply inclusive education principles to the school’s curriculums when renewed or newly created.

Labour, Skills and Immigration

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

3.5 Advanced Education will

Advanced Education

- prioritize efforts to remove ableist and attitudinal barriers in post-secondary environments and create positive experiences for students with disabilities by strengthening contracts for disability service delivery with post-secondary institutions
- support universities to increase how many students with disabilities take part in co-op, professional, and graduate programs. This goal is listed in the Outcome Agreements (2019–24) between the department and each university. The department will track progress made each year.

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

3.6 The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency will create new supports for apprentices with disabilities by

Labour, Skills and Immigration/NS Apprenticeship Agency

- developing a Learning Support Strategy for apprentices who need extra support and resources to finish their program
- developing exam preparation resources and different types of assessment pathways to meet the needs of diverse learners

PRIORITY AREA 4: Employment



OUR GOAL:

Improve recruitment, retention, and advancement of persons with disabilities seeking a career within the Government of Nova Scotia



What We Are Doing: Our Commitments in Summary

In 2022–25, government will

- begin to develop the accessibility standard for employment
- find and remove systemic barriers to employment for persons with disabilities
- create support for employees and managers to advance accessibility in the workplace
- create more employment and leadership opportunities for persons with disabilities
- develop and promote work-integrated learning programs for persons with disabilities

Commitment

4.1 Departments will work together across government, and with the Standard Development Committee, as a provincial accessibility standard is developed for employment.

Lead Department(s)

Justice
Community Services
Labour, Skills and Immigration
Public Service Commission

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

4.2 The Public Service Commission will carry out an employment systems review to find accessibility barriers in government's employment processes. The review will look for barriers related to recruitment, hiring, advancement, and leadership development faced by employees from equity-deserving groups, including persons with disabilities.

Public Service
Commission

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

4.3 Departments will create plans in line with the Public Service Commission's work to remove departmental-level barriers to employment for persons with disabilities.

All

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

4.4 The Public Service Commission will

- support managers and employees to promote accessibility knowledge and practices
- develop new resources and supports to help departments to increase the number of positions set aside for persons with disabilities, including leadership positions. This will include creating a way to track and evaluate progress made each year.
- measure how many staff from equity-deserving groups, including persons with disabilities, take part in government's Leadership Development Program

Public Service
Commission

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

4.5 Government commits to working to increase greater employment opportunities and leadership experiences for people with disabilities.

All

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

4.6 Labour, Skills and Immigration will

- work with its partners to create opportunities for work experiences for students with disabilities and meaningful jobs for graduates
- work with employers and industry partners to promote accessible and safe workspaces throughout the provincial apprenticeship system

Labour, Skills and Immigration/NS Apprenticeship Agency

PRIORITY AREA 5: Delivery of Goods and Services



OUR GOAL:
Make sure persons with disabilities
have equitable access to goods and
services delivered by the Government
of Nova Scotia



What We Are Doing: Our Commitments in Summary

In 2022–25, government will

- begin to develop the accessibility standard for the delivery of goods and services
- develop new supports to help persons with disabilities find the services and information they need
- build accessibility into government's procurement processes
- remove barriers to government programs and services

Commitment

5.1 Departments will work with the Standard Development Committee to develop recommendations for the provincial accessibility standard for the delivery of goods and services.

Lead Department(s)

Justice
Service Nova Scotia
and Internal Services

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

5.2 Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services will create new ways to engage and measure the progress of teams in improving the accessibility and inclusion of their products and services using the department's digital standards.

Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

5.3 Departments will develop new supports to help persons with disabilities navigate and find the services and information they need.

Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services
Justice

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

5.4 Departments will build accessibility into government's procurement processes.

Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services
Education and Early Childhood Development

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

5.5 Departments will remove accessibility barriers to government programs and services to make them more accessible. Some examples are listed below.

- Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage will develop an accessibility plan for Provincial Visitor Information Centres.
- Executive Council Office will work with departments to find and remove barriers that persons with disabilities face when applying to agencies, boards, and commissions.
- The Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness will support businesses with information about and resources on accessibility through their business navigators.
- Environment and Climate Change will develop and promote a process to provide accessibility supports (when requested) for those applying for certification through the department.
- The Department of Agriculture will make sure front-line staff have the knowledge and skills to support persons with disabilities accessing their programs and applications and will remove barriers to the process.

Agriculture
 Fisheries and Aquaculture
 Labour, Skills and Immigration
 Advanced Education
 Environment and Climate Change
 Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness
 Executive Council Office
 Equity and Anti-Racism
 Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
 Seniors and Long-Term Care

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

5.6 The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency will work together with other Atlantic provinces to improve the accessibility of a regional online apprenticeship management system.

Labour, Skills and Immigration/NS Apprenticeship Agency

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

5.7 The Advisory Council on the Status of Women will work with government and community partners to carry out the recommendations in the Not Without Us report and will work toward removing accessibility barriers for women with disabilities who experience domestic violence.

Status of Women

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

5.8 Seniors and Long-Term Care will expand the range of equipment available for loan or subsidized purchase through their existing equipment loan programs, to support people to live at home and engage in their communities.

Seniors and
Long-Term Care

PRIORITY AREA 6: Information and Communication



OUR GOAL:
Make government communications
usable by all



What We Are Doing: Our Commitments in Summary

In 2022–25, government will

- begin to develop the accessibility standard for information and communications
- remove barriers to government information and communications for government staff and the public
- build knowledge and skills around accessible communication practices across government

Commitment

6.1 Departments will work with the Standard Development Committee to develop recommendations for the provincial accessibility standard for information and communications.

Lead Department(s)

Justice
Communications
Nova Scotia

Commitment

6.2 Communications Nova Scotia will apply an equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility lens to its ongoing review of communications policies and practices.

Lead Department(s)

Communications
Nova Scotia

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

6.3 Departments will work together to create new accessible communication resources. These resources will help develop knowledge and skills that support accessible communication practices across government.

Justice
Communications
Nova Scotia

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

6.4 Departments will use accessible communication practices in government programs and services. This includes

- i) reviewing information and communication channels, websites, and documents to find accessibility barriers. They will create plans to improve the accessibility of information and communication for the public.
- ii) adapting new technologies for persons with disabilities to improve access to Nova Scotia's libraries and each of the Nova Scotia Museum sites
- iii) making Shubenacadie Wildlife Park experiences more accessible by using American Sign Language (ASL) in guided video tours of the park

i) Equity and Anti-Racism; Agriculture; Community Services; Education and Early Childhood Development; Labour, Skills and Immigration; Natural Resources and Renewables; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage; Status of Women; Justice
ii) Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
iii) Natural Resources and Renewables

PRIORITY AREA 7: Public Transportation and Infrastructure



OUR GOAL:
Improve accessibility of public transportation and its infrastructure to make it easier for all to travel



What We Are Doing: Our Commitments in Summary

In 2022–25, government will

- begin to develop the accessibility standard for public transportation and its infrastructure
- create plans to find and remove accessibility barriers in community and school transportation systems, including in rural areas

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

7.1 Departments will work with the Standard Development Committee to develop recommendations for the provincial standard for public transportation and its infrastructure.

Justice

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

7.2 Departments will develop plans to remove barriers in community and school transportation systems, especially in rural areas. This includes

i) Education and Early Childhood Development finding and removing barriers to school transportation for students with disabilities

ii) Natural Resources and Renewables promoting ways to fund accessible active transportation projects through Infrastructure Canada's grant programs

iii) Status of Women working with government partners to improve public transportation and accessible transportation options, especially in rural areas

iv) Public Works, together with its sector partners, working with not-for-profit agencies, First Nations communities, and municipalities to find and remove barriers to community transportation and, where possible, put in place accessible community transit services

i) Education and Early Childhood Development

ii) Natural Resources and Renewables

iii) Status of Women

iv) Public Works

**PRIORITY AREA 8:
Accountability**



OUR GOAL:

Coordinate accessibility priorities across government and monitor/measure progress



**What We Are Doing:
Our Commitments in Summary**

In 2022–25, government will

- monitor, measure, and report on progress toward preventing and removing accessibility barriers

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

8.1 Departments and agencies will develop plans to carry out and track 2022–25 accessibility commitments.

All

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

8.2 Justice will use a monitoring and evaluation framework to track and measure progress of government’s accessibility plan. Updates will be shared each year in the Minister’s Annual Report on Accessibility.

Justice

Commitment

Lead Department(s)

8.3 Justice will create and carry out a compliance and enforcement framework to track and make sure the Accessibility Act is being followed.

Justice

Commitment**Lead Department(s)**

8.4 Take steps to address recommendations from the first review of the Accessibility Act. Justice

Conclusion

Through the 2022-25 Accessibility Plan we will continue to strive to lead by example and provide equitable access and opportunity for all Nova Scotians. As we continue to prevent, find, and remove barriers to accessibility, it is important that we monitor and report on progress and results. Through the release of the Minister’s Annual Report on Accessibility we will show how we are meeting the commitments of the 2022–25 Accessibility Plan.

We will only reach our goals for an accessible Government of Nova Scotia if all departments and agencies work together. We have a shared responsibility across government to act and support the implementation of this plan. Together we will make the changes needed to make sure Nova Scotia is an accessible, equitable, and inclusive province.

Appendix A:

Our Accessibility Achievements – Progress Made in 2018–21

The Government of Nova Scotia has made significant progress toward our goal of an accessible province by 2030. The 2018–21 Accessibility Plan outlined commitments and actions for government to improve accessibility and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. We have achieved many key outcomes from our first three-year plan.

Awareness and Capacity Building

Government increased awareness about accessibility barriers and the *Accessibility Act*. Departments improved their abilities to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that keep persons with disabilities from fully taking part in their communities. Achievements include the following:

- Launched government’s diversity and inclusion strategy (All Together), focused on senior leadership accountability for championing diversity and inclusion improving the experience of members of equity-deserving groups, including persons with disabilities.
- Reviewed training priority areas and topics, including best practices for the delivery of accessibility training for leaders and employees. Developed new mandatory accessibility training for all government employees, and ensured accessibility and disability content was included in existing diversity training modules.
- Developed media and creative content for a provincial awareness campaign with the slogan “Access Includes Everyone.” This campaign includes a website, social media, and print, digital, and television ads.
- Supported prescribed public sector organizations to develop and carry out accessibility plans by developing resources, delivering presentations, and responding to inquiries.
- Distributed more than \$3.8 million to over 160 businesses through the Business ACCESS-Ability program and \$3 million to about 275 non-profits and community groups through the Community ACCESS-Ability program.
- Promoted the use of the Community Works Program for municipalities to receive grants to create staff positions that support accessibility planning in their communities.

- Announced changes that give municipalities across the province the ability to provide financial assistance directly to businesses that are making changes to support accessibility.
- Awarded Age-Friendly Community Grants to help make sure physical and social aspects of communities are designed to improve the health and well-being of older adults.
- Supported community organizations across the province with funding to purchase accessible public transit vehicles.

Information and Communications

Government worked to ensure Nova Scotians with disabilities can receive and understand the information and communications it delivers. Achievements include the following:

- Developed a form to record and review assistive technology requests. Developed tools to support the use and maintenance of assistive technology devices for government employees.
- Created practical tools to support government employees in making accessible documents.
- Created more accessible user experiences for Government of Nova Scotia websites. Our online presence now meets international accessibility standards.
- Increased accessibility of government information and communications by using accessible design best practices, captioning and sign language, image descriptions and text, high-contrast images, screen reader-friendly plain text, and more.

Buildings, Infrastructure, and Public Spaces

Government worked across departments to increase the accessibility of government-owned and operated buildings, offices, and public spaces across the province. Achievements include the following:

- Supported the Accessibility Advisory Board to complete recommendations on the built environment standard, which is a key outcome of the 2022–25 Accessibility Plan.
- Developed and updated an Accessibility Audit Handbook to support accessibility audits for public buildings based on current building codes and standards.
- Incorporated a clause into new government leasing documents that states services provided by the property owner must be accessible to persons with disabilities, and that standards that fall under the latest building codes must be followed.
- Aligned Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Tribunal decision requiring all new restaurants to include washrooms that are accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.
- Launched new adaptability requirements in the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations that require all new residential dwellings to have adaptable features such as wider doors and corridors and electrical switches that are at accessible heights.
- Audited and retrofitted several provincial beaches, parks, and campgrounds to make them more accessible to users with disabilities. Added accessible equipment to provincial beaches, including Hippocampe beach chairs, Mobi-Mats, and removable accessible boardwalks. Launched an updated Provincial Parks website describing accessible park experiences and available adaptive equipment.
- Increased the number of barrier-free sportfishing sites to 22 across the province with features such as accessible parking, fishing platforms, and trail systems.

Employment

Government removed barriers that keep Nova Scotians with disabilities from finding work within government, including existing and future employees. We supported accessible employment practices, workplaces, and training opportunities. Achievements include the following:

- Developed new training related to disability and accommodations and put it into the mandatory recruitment and selection training modules for new government hiring managers.
- Began covering tuition to inclusive post-secondary education university programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Added a Deaf case manager at a Nova Scotia Works centre to work with Deaf and hard of hearing clients across the system as a result of enhancements to employment programs and service delivery.
- Expanded opportunities for students with disabilities to take part in a paid work-integrated learning program in their fields of study.
- Updated the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency's Diversity and Inclusion Framework to include an accessibility lens.
- Reviewed the hiring processes for Community Services to find and remove barriers for persons with disabilities.

Delivery of Goods and Services

Government worked toward ensuring Nova Scotians with disabilities have equitable access to the goods and services it delivers. Achievements include the following:

- Integrated accessibility and inclusion guidance into new formats of the Nova Scotia Digital Service Manual and Digital Service Standard.
- Developed services to make sure government employees with disabilities have access to tools and other supports needed to work, including flexible work options, assistive devices, interpretation services, and modifications to workspaces.
- Provided funding to the Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia Association to create Literacy and Essential Skills programming for the Deaf community.

- Removed barriers to accessing education services, including
 - offering flexible, accessible virtual learning and counselling sessions and meetings to students and families
 - working with The Youth Project to develop accessible educational resources that address the intersections of disability with other identities, including race and being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- Continued work toward ensuring Nova Scotians with disabilities have equitable access to the goods and services government delivers, including
 - making sure Public Enquiries operators have the information they need to support calls about accessibility and disability
 - developing mandatory accessibility training for procurement staff and training material for client departments and suppliers
 - adding accessibility-related categories and service providers in the government procurement system when finding vendors
 - introducing an advanced electronic queuing and appointment booking system with clear accessibility choices for clients needing in-person visits to Access Nova Scotia centres

Appendix B:

Accessibility Interdepartmental Committee (AIC)

(As of June 2022)

| AIC REPRESENTATIVE | DEPARTMENT |
|--|--|
| Linda Higgins Louise VanWart | Advanced Education |
| Chantel Reid-Demeter | African Nova Scotian Affairs |
| Philip Sampson Amber Creamer | Agriculture |
| Michael Noonan Angela Campbell Nalini Malaviarachchi | Communications Nova Scotia |
| Andrew Sare | Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage |
| Barbara MacKeigan | Community Services |
| Maxine Manuel | Economic Development |
| Ann Power | Education and Early Childhood Development |
| Gwen Gorrill | Environment and Climate Change |
| Miranda Romkey | Equity and Anti-Racism (Office) |
| Emily Taweel | Executive Council Office |
| Tania Arruda | Finance and Treasury Board |
| Oladiwura Eyitayo-Oyesode | Fisheries and Aquaculture |
| Michelle Hebert | Health and Wellness |
| Exie Sciocchetti | Intergovernmental Affairs |

| AIC REPRESENTATIVE | DEPARTMENT |
|--|--|
| Emmanuel Itiveh Christina Redmond | Justice |
| Laura Beth MacPherson | Justice, AIC Lead |
| Dawn Stegen | Justice, AIC Chair |
| Flavia Saldanha | Labour, Skills and Immigration |
| Andrea Jeffs Moira Clancey | Municipal Affairs and Housing |
| Uli vom Hagen | Natural Resources and Renewables |
| Amy Martin | Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network |
| Celeste Sulliman | Office of L'nu Affairs |
| Carla Bezanson | Public Service Commission |
| Arlene Valère Colin Carrigan Patricia Duncan | Public Works |
| Christina Harris | Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness |
| Jen MacDonald | Seniors and Long-term Care |
| Danielle Elias Meg Beretta | Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services |
| Shiva Nourpanah | Status of Women (Office) |

In addition to the Accessibility Interdepartmental Committee, the following individuals contributed to the development of the 2022–25 Accessibility Plan:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Margo Hampden | African Nova Scotian Affairs |
| Peggy Weatherbee | Agriculture |
| Meghan Murphy | Community Services |
| Valerie Bellefontaine (retired) | Community Services |
| David Briggins (retired) | Fisheries and Aquaculture |
| John Ariyo | Health and Wellness |
| Mariana Carrera | Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network |
| Sherri Aikenhead | Office of Mental Health and Addictions |
| Kim Cooke (retired) | Public Works |
| David LeBlanc | Public Works |
| Lewis Pope | Public Works |
| Loretta Sparks-Beals | Public Service Commission |
| Elizabeth Haggart (retired) | Seniors and Long-term Care |
| Laura Offman | Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services |

Appendix C:

Interdepartmental Working Group – Advisory Committee

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Andrew Sare | Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage |
| Janice Hussey | Community Services |
| Renee Savoie | Community Services |
| Mariana Carrera | Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network |
| Breagh MacLean | Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network |
| Kaylie Adamski | Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network |
| Lewis Pope | Public Works |
| Kristel Vom Scheidt | Justice |
| Laura Beth MacPherson | Justice (Chair) |
