

Accessibility Plan 2024-2027

Working together to achieve an accessible Nova Scotia



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A Note on Language

Choosing whether to use identity-first language or person-first language is a personal choice. At Build Nova Scotia, we think everyone should be free to identify themselves however they feel best. Build Nova Scotia will always ask people with disabilities how they wish to be addressed.

In this document, we will use person-first language. Person-first language means we mention the person before their disability, for example, “person(s) with a disability” or “Nova Scotians with disability.”

Build Nova Scotia respects and values everyone’s choices.

A Message from the President and CEO

David Benoit

Build Nova Scotia's goal is to build places that enrich lives and keep everyone connected and thriving, no matter where they live in Nova Scotia. We do this by managing projects, properties, and infrastructure across the province.

We wish to thank the community volunteers on Build Nova Scotia's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Your guidance has been vital in helping us break down barriers to make our services, initiatives, and facilities accessible to everyone.



Build Nova Scotia recognizes that there are three broad pillars of accessibility that can be applied to any type of work and are not limited to a specific industry.

Emotional Accessibility

First impressions matter. Build Nova Scotia's properties, operations, and workplaces, create a positive experience for all.

Functional Accessibility

Ease of navigation. Build Nova Scotia's products and services are designed in a way that everyone can easily understand and access them.



Technical Accessibility

Ease of use. Build Nova Scotia's physical and digital products are designed for full and equal access.

Build Nova Scotia commits to ensuring accessible properties, operations, and workplaces. Our Accessibility Advisory Committee has identified specific areas that Build Nova Scotia needs to address based on the type of work we do:

- **Built Environment**
- **Employment**
- **Goods and Services**
- **Information and Communication**

Legislation governing education and transportation is not within Build Nova Scotia's area of responsibility.

The Government of Nova Scotia will implement accessibility standards by 2030. Build Nova Scotia commits to adopting them, ensuring easy access to properties, operations, and workplaces for all.

Build Nova Scotia looks forward to ongoing collaboration with clients, community members, and all Nova Scotians as we advance this plan in the years ahead. Together, we envision a vibrant community where diverse contributions, varied perspectives, and life experiences enhance our shared journey.

David Benoit
President and CEO
Build Nova Scotia



Guiding Principles

Accessibility

Remove barriers for full inclusion.

Awareness

Enhance accessibility for all Nova Scotians.

Diversity

Value each person's uniqueness.

Equity

Integrate Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) to enhance our culture, talent, and brand.

First Voice

Prioritize inclusive collaboration, amplify first voice.

Human Rights

Accessibility is a human right.

Inclusion

Unique perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences add to our collective journey.

Innovation

Respect and inclusion fuel creativity, innovation, and success.

Intersectionality

Lives are complex and shaped by various factors.

Accessibility Standards Actions and Commitments

Built Environment

Commitment

Ensure all properties and public spaces managed by Build Nova Scotia are designed to be accessible to everyone. This includes prioritizing accessibility changes for historic or legacy properties while still preserving their historical value.

Actions

1. Assess all physical spaces managed and maintained by Build Nova Scotia. The assessment will identify barriers, solutions, and prioritize actions to remove the barriers.
2. Diverse voices will be included from start to finish on all projects to ensure the identification and removal of barriers.
3. During the planning and design for new builds or major renovations, we will apply and evaluate the project using the principles of universal design, which are:
 - **Equitable use:** The design should work well for everyone and look attractive. It should not separate, label, or isolate anyone.
 - **Flexibility in use:** The design is flexible and caters to different preferences and abilities. It offers choices, adjusts for right- or left-handed use, and accommodates varying speeds.
 - **Simple and intuitive use:** The design is easy to understand, regardless of a user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or concentration level.
 - **Perceptible information:** The design ensures that information is clearly communicated to users, no matter the environment or their sensory abilities. It achieves this through various methods like pictures, audio, spoken words, touch, and by ensuring good visibility.
 - **Tolerance for error:** The design minimizes the negative outcomes of accidental actions. It arranges elements to lower risks.
 - **Low physical effort:** The design allows for comfortable use without causing fatigue.



4. Work with local partners, landlords, neighbouring property owners, and municipalities to ensure accessibility standards are consistent between properties.
5. Ensure continued access is maintained for buildings, parking, and public spaces, during temporary disruptions like construction or seasonal weather such as snow, ice, and flooding.
6. Ensure that emergency evacuation systems, policies, procedures, communication, and training accommodate safe and efficient evacuation for person(s) with a disability.

Employment

Commitment

Eliminate barriers to employment for person(s) with a disability to ensure fairness across the entire hiring and employment lifecycle.

Actions

1. Assess current employment and hiring standards to identify barriers, solutions, and prioritize actions to remove the barriers.
2. Work with applicants and employees to address accessibility barriers, provide accommodations, and ensure inclusive job advertisements and recruitment platforms.
3. Create fair policies to promote the recruitment, retention, and advancement of person(s) with a disability, allowing for flexible training and onboarding.
4. Support the development of a culture of respect and inclusion for person(s) with a disability or others who experience barriers to accessibility.

Goods and Services

Commitment

Ensure universal access to goods, services, and public spaces, promoting equal opportunity for all.

Actions

1. Assess current goods and services procurement practices to identify barriers, solutions, and prioritize actions to remove the barriers.
2. Establish a Supplier Diversity Plan, outlining Build Nova Scotia's dedication to fostering minority supplier growth initiatives.
3. Standardize accessibility requirements for Build Nova Scotia's Request for Proposals (RFP) process.
4. Guarantee equitable access to all goods and services provided by Build Nova Scotia.
5. Deliver employee accessibility training to cultivate a culture of inclusion and diversity, improving the customer service experience.



Information and Communication

Commitment

Ensure all individuals can access, understand, and share information communicated by Build Nova Scotia.

Actions

1. Assess current information and communication practices to identify barriers, solutions, and prioritize actions to remove the barriers.
2. Use plain language in our communication that mirrors the community and people we serve.
3. Create communication guidelines for plain language and accessibility across all formats, including print, digital signage, video, and audio. Ensure inclusive events with on-site interpreters, online access, recorded content, and described audio as necessary.
4. Ensure the Build Nova Scotia website properties meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards.
5. Ensure Build Nova Scotia offices and public spaces can be accessed and navigated by inclusive signage and wayfinding tools.
6. Establish a feedback system using plain language to address all inquiries.

Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Actions

Build Nova Scotia is ready to realize our commitment to accessibility. Here are the steps Build Nova Scotia will take:

1. Conduct an annual internal review to update our accessibility plan.
2. Conduct a comprehensive review every three years to ensure Build Nova Scotia's plan aligns with the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act* and our mandate.
3. Establish mandates and form Accessibility Working Groups for each focus area:
 - **Built Environment**
 - **Employment**
 - **Goods and Services**
 - **Information and Communication**
4. Develop visual project timelines, milestones, and deadlines for clarity and organization.

Budget and Resources

Action

Build Nova Scotia will work closely with government partners to secure additional financial resources to fulfill our commitments.



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