



Events East

Accessibility Framework

Developed in alignment with the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act for the period of April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2026.

Our Journey

In 2017, Nova Scotia passed the *Accessibility Act*, legislation that recognizes accessibility as a human right and sets a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. Two years later, Nova Scotia crown corporations and agencies were prescribed as public sector bodies under the *Accessibility Act* as of April 1, 2021, with a mandate to establish an accessibility advisory committee and develop an accessibility plan.

In 2021, the Events East and its partners embarked on a journey to create inclusive, accessible experiences for our organization and community. Together with our partners and community, we formed an Accessibility Advisory Committee, inviting Nova Scotians with lived and learned accessibility experience to join us in developing an Accessibility Framework. This Framework outlines our goals and commitments as we work to identify, prevent and eliminate barriers to people with disabilities through our workplace, venues and events we host.

We would like to thank our community committee members, whose continued guidance and insights have been critical in the development of this Framework and continue to serve as active champions for accessibility:

- **Earl Muise**
- **Frank O'Sullivan**
- **Michelle Mahoney**
- **Milena Khazanavicius**
- **Veronica Merryfield**

We look forward to our ongoing collaboration as we work to eliminate barriers for Nova Scotians, creating accessible experiences for all.

Who We Are

Events East Group is a special purpose government agency that manages and operates the Halifax Convention Centre and Scotiabank Centre. We are known for attracting and hosting the best events in the region through our commitment to event excellence. Our facilities allow us to attract new visitors and opportunities to Nova Scotia, connecting us to the world.

We were created in 2014 as part of a partnership between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and we work in collaboration with them to manage our businesses in a responsible and transparent manner.

Our Approach

The intent of this Framework is to provide goals and commitments for improving accessibility in the following focus areas: Built Environment, Employment, Goods & Services and Information and Communication. This Framework provides the foundation for multi-year, venue-specific action plans and priorities.

Vision

To provide full and equitable access in all aspects of our environment, service offerings, information and in the attitudes, behaviors, and endeavors of all persons within Nova Scotia.

Guiding Principles

These are the principles that we aspire to uphold and reflect in our work:

Awareness

We will promote awareness with our employees and leadership to better serve the public.

Diversity

We understand that individuals possess a variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics that make us different. We respect and appreciate our differences.

Equity

We believe in the quality of being fair and reasonable in a way that gives equal treatment and opportunity to everyone.

First Voice

We value the contribution of Nova Scotians with disabilities in the development of this framework and the advancement of accessibility through their lived experiences.

Human Rights

We recognize that people with disabilities face barriers that hinder them from fully participating in society and we believe accessibility is a fundamental human right.

Inclusion

We commit to ensuring that the public and our employees are treated with respect and dignity.

Innovation

We believe that being innovative, proactive and flexible are essential to advancing accessibility.

Intersectionality

We understand that a person's identity, life circumstances and experiences can overlap with their disability. This increases barriers that prevent them from fully participating in society.

Accessibility Standards – Goals & Commitments

The following outlines our areas of focus and the goals we will work towards through multi-year venue-specific accessibility plans, with priorities and key measures identified and reported on annually.

Built Environment

Goal

Our buildings and public spaces whether owned, leased, or operated are barrier-free and offer design features to enhance experience to people of all ages and abilities.

Commitments

As opportunities and projects arise, we will work towards ensuring:

1. During the planning and design for new builds or major renovations, apply and evaluate the design using the principles of universal design which are:
 - Equitable use: Design functional and appealing to all users which avoids segregating, stigmatizing, or isolating any users.
 - Flexibility in use: Provides choice in methods of use.

- Simple and intuitive use which eliminates unnecessary complexity in design.
 - Perceptible information where the design provides necessary information effectively and simply.
 - Tolerance for error that minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
 - Low physical effort so that the design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of effort by all.
 - Space is provided for approach, reach and use regardless of the user's body size, posture or mobility.
2. Actively engage community partners during the initial planning and design stages and following implementation to ensure there is a collaborative dialogue on the identification and removal of barriers and the improvement of access in buildings and public spaces.
 3. Undertake an accessibility audit of all leased or operated assets.
 4. Develop an implementation plan that includes timelines and a reporting tool to track progress.
 5. Collaborate with local partners, landlords, abutting property owners, and municipalities to integrate accessibility between properties.
 6. Ensure access is maintained for buildings and public spaces during temporary disruptions such as construction or seasonal challenges such as snow and ice.
 7. Ensure all emergency evacuation systems, policies, procedures, communications and training enable the safe and efficient evacuation of persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility during an emergency.

Employment

Goal

We are an accessible and equitable employer. We will support our employees by preventing and removing barriers to employment for persons with disabilities across the span of one's career.

Commitments

As we work towards fostering a barrier-free workplace, we will aim to:

1. Ensure job advertisements are available in accessible formats and clearly indicate that persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility are encouraged to apply.

2. Develop fair and equitable policies and practices that encourage the recruitment, selection, retention and advancement of persons with disabilities.
3. Work with selected job applicants and employees to identify accessibility barriers, review accessibility requirements and provide appropriate individual accommodations.
4. Support the development of a culture of respect and inclusion for persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.
5. Achieve representation from persons with disabilities.

Goods and Services

Goal

There is equal opportunity and ability for all persons to access goods and services offered by or delivered through our organization and venues.

Commitments

We will work with our partners/suppliers with a goal to ensure:

1. Goods and services will:
 - a. be delivered without bias
 - b. will not be denied to persons with disabilities or barriers
 - c. be delivered without pre-determining due to accessibility requirements, who cannot be the recipients. Recipients of goods and services are persons who meet eligibility under guidelines, procurement parameters, and service offerings.
2. Accommodate persons with disabilities in the best possible way to ensure they can access goods and services offered.
3. Provide physical spaces that deliver a positive and accessible client service experience. We will understand that persons with disabilities may require a different physical environment to ensure free mobility, enjoyment, and accessibility to enhance the client service experience in a positive way and will actively strive to provide that positive experience.
4. Employees will be provided with training to increase accessibility awareness and ensure appropriate treatment of persons with disabilities. We will ensure training to its employees on the subject of increasing accessibility awareness, and respectful treatment of persons with disabilities.
5. Ensure all documents used in the delivery of goods and services are available upon request, in an accessible format such as program materials, guidelines and application forms.

Information and Communication

Goal

All Nova Scotians can receive, consume and share all information communicated both corporately within our workplace and publicly through the venues we operate and events we host.

Commitments

We will work toward ensuring:

1. Digital communications, corporate documents and other promotional material through our websites, social media, email and other digital information sharing will be accessible to all through use of dictation, screen-reader-friendly content and other best practices.
2. Our offices and public facilities can be accessed and navigated by all through inclusive signage and wayfinding tools. This may include ensuring information is readily available online or through assets to support planning in advance.
3. The terms and language we use in our communication will align with best practices to reflect the community and people we serve.
4. When planning events such as press conferences, engagement sessions and other organization-led events, consideration will always be given to help maximize participation and access for all including but not limited to on-site interpreters, online access and recording of content for later use.
5. Ensure a timely feedback mechanism or tool is in place in an accessible format, in response to inquiries or feedback.

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

We will move forward and continue building on the foundation outlined in this Framework through plans that will convert our commitments into actions to achieve a culture of accessibility in all that we do. Guided by our goals and commitments, we will develop organizational and venue-specific accessibility plans for Halifax Convention Centre and Scotiabank Centre with clearly defined measures that allow us to measure our success.

We commit to a full review of this Framework at least every 3 years or as required. Further, we will develop a monitoring tool and evaluation process that will allow us to regularly assess and report on our progress.

To ensure ongoing compliance with the Accessibility Act and make meaningful, lasting change, we will work in collaboration with our partners in government to seek supplemental funding that supports delivery against our commitments and vision of accessibility for all Nova Scotians.

Appendix A - Definitions

The following are commonly used terms that have been defined based on current standards and review by our Accessibility Committee.

Accessibility

Providing people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. It is used to describe how widely a service, product, device, or environment is available to as many people as possible. Accessibility can be seen as the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.

Accessibility Act

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act is the provincial legislation enacted in 2017 to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities.

ASL

American Sign Language (ASL), which needs translators between users and non-users.

Barrier

A barrier is defined as “anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities”.

CART

Communication Access Real-Time Translation which delivers captions remotely to any screen in real time, also known as Live Captioning.

CSA B651-18

A set of standards, released by the Canadian Standards Association, which outlines a set of technical recommended requirements for accessible design within built environments including sidewalks, buildings, signposts, etc.

Disability

A term of self-identification used by those with a broad range of disabilities including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

Inclusion

The process whereby every person regardless of age, ability, gender, income, education, religion, sexuality, and culture who wishes to, can access, and participate fully in all aspects of the activity just as any other person.

Plain Language

Clear, conversational communication that is easily understood by the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find and use the information.

Systemic Barriers

Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of, social, economic, and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but are built into the way society works.

TAI

Tactile Attention Indicators (TAI) are textured ground surface indicators found on footpaths, stairs, bus station platforms and more to assist pedestrians who are visual impaired.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1

Guidelines which cover a wide range of recommendations for making web content more accessible to a wide range of individuals with disabilities including blindness, low vision, deafness, and hearing loss, etc. Recommendations include easily read fonts, simpler layout for website content, and making all functionality available from a keyboard.