

2026-2029 Accessibility Plan



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On cover: Sonia, an NSLC team member, helps Janine and Denise, Accessibility Advisory Committee members with buying products at the cash register.

For a plain text, screen reader compatible PDF version, please visit the Business Plans and Reports page under Corporate Information on myNSLC.com, or email diversityandinclusion@myNSLC.com



Message from Greg Hughes, President & CEO

We are pleased to introduce the next phase of our accessibility journey through the NSLC's second Accessibility Plan for 2026–2029.

We are proud of the progress we have accomplished over the past three years. We have worked hard to remove barriers, create inclusive and accessible spaces, offer more education and training, and build strong partnerships.

Built on the foundation of our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, which puts people first in everything we do, our 2026-2029 Accessibility Plan once again lays out our commitments in five key areas:

- Built Environment & Transportation
- Goods & Services
- Capacity Building & Awareness
- Information & Communication
- Employment

Our commitment to creating a culture of belonging at the NSLC extends beyond our team members. It includes our shoppers and our communities, which is why this plan, and the actions outlined within, were developed with input from our team, our shoppers, and our Community Accessibility Advisory Group, whose lived experience and insights have helped shape our approach. We will keep ourselves accountable through regular check-ins, transparent reporting, and ongoing evaluation.

As a Crown Corporation and Nova Scotia's responsible retailer of beverage alcohol and cannabis, we are committed to meeting the standards set out in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act. Accessibility is a responsibility shared by all of us, and we know there's always more to learn and do. We are dedicated to continuous improvement and collaboration, as we stand in our commitment to make Nova Scotia a better place to live and work.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Hughes'.

Greg Hughes
President & CEO

Definitions

At the NSLC, we recognize that terminology continues to evolve. We commit to an ongoing review of the language we use and will update as it is appropriate to do so.

Accessibility: The inclusive and intentional practices of ensuring and advocating for equitable access to physical spaces, resources, websites, and opportunities.

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC): Also known as the Community Accessibility Advisory Group; advises the NSLC on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to accessibility and inclusion at the organization.

Accommodation(s): An adjustment of a workplace rule, practice, condition, or requirement to the specific needs of an employee for the purpose of ensuring that the employee can participate in the workplace notwithstanding any Protected Personal Characteristic, subject to the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*.

Agency Store: A privately-owned, small retailer in a smaller community with a dedicated space to sell beverage alcohol under a license issued by the NSLC.

Assistive Technology: Technology that can be adapted to support, maintain, and improve functional access to information and process (e.g., screen readers).

Barrier: Nova Scotia's *Accessibility Act* defines a barrier as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice."

Built Environment & Transportation: A priority area for the NSLC; focused on making our buildings, physical spaces, and aspects of transportation accessible.

Capacity Building & Awareness: A priority area for the NSLC; focused on informing and educating our shoppers and teams about accessibility and inclusion.

Community: Includes the people and organizations across Nova Scotia with whom the NSLC serves, supports, and/or collaborates.

Community Organizations: Groups, non-profits, or businesses in Nova Scotia.

Corporate store: Retail locations owned and operated by the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation.

Emergency: An external event outside of the NSLC's control such as extreme weather and/or catastrophe which requires the NSLC to respond.

Employment: A priority area for the NSLC; focused on making the NSLC an accessible workplace.

Employment Lifecycle: The stages a team member goes through at the NSLC. It includes the phases of attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, and exiting the organization.

Focus Area: Within the NSLC's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, our direction, strategic actions, and priorities fall under three focus areas: Shopper, Team and Community.

Goods & Services: A priority area for the NSLC; focused on providing equitable access to products and services offered by the NSLC.

Information & Communication: A priority area for the NSLC; focused on sharing information and content in an accessible format.

Inclusivity: The intentional practice of providing equitable access to resources, opportunities, and interactions that, when combined, support a sense of belonging and fairness.

Legislative Mandate: As a Crown Corporation and responsible retailer of beverage alcohol and cannabis in Nova Scotia, the NSLC's legislative mandate is outlined in the *Nova Scotia Liquor Control Act (LCA)*, *Nova Scotia Cannabis Control Act (CCA)*, and the *Federal Cannabis Act*.

Local Producers: Manufacturers located in Nova Scotia that grow, make, and produce, products sold at the NSLC and their own retail locations.

Low Sensory Experience: A shopping experience where lights are dimmed, music is turned off, and customer service practices are made more accessible for those with sensory sensitivities.

NSLC: Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation.

Persons with disabilities: Under the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act*, "disability" includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.

Plain Language: Language that a reader or listener can understand easily and completely without the use of complex statements and jargon.

Priority Area: An area of focus for the NSLC pulled from the *Accessibility Act* standards.

Private Wine and Specialty Stores: Private retailer that sells beverage alcohol in the province of Nova Scotia.

Prescribed Public Sector Bodies (PPSB): As defined by the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, Prescribed Public Sector Bodies are public sector organizations identified and mandated by the provincial government to meet certain accessibility requirements.

Shopper: Individual who buys products from the NSLC.

Strategic Plan: The plan driving the NSLC's priorities and goals for the next five years from 2025–2030.


Support and Distribution Centre: Our location at 93 Chain Lake Drive is where our corporate and distribution team provide support and products to our NSLC corporate retail locations and partners.

Team: Groups employed and working at the NSLC.

Team Members: Individuals employed and working at the NSLC.

Universal Design: A proactive process that includes inclusivity and accessibility in the early design phase, therefore reducing the need for accommodation or retrofitting.

WCAG: A set of technical standards for web content, websites, and web applications that improve online access for people with disabilities.

The bottom of the page features several light blue, wavy lines that create a sense of movement and depth.

Janine, a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, stands in the checkout lane speaking with Mary, an NSLC team member, at the Dartmouth Crossing store.



Get 30% OFF

NEW

NSLC
Balance
\$10.28

LANE CASE

KEEP THE GOOD GOING
Always have your NSLC bag handy

KEEP THE GOOD GOING
Always have your NSLC bag handy

Introduction

The NSLC is proud to present our second Accessibility Plan for 2026-2029. This document reflects our ongoing commitment to fostering an environment that promotes physical and psychological safety for our shoppers, team, and community.

Building on the progress we have achieved, this new Accessibility Plan highlights key successes and lessons learned over the past three years. It is grounded in the commitments outlined in the NSLC 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, aligns with current and proposed Nova Scotia Accessibility Standards, and embeds accessibility as a guiding principle in decision making for new projects and initiatives.

Our planned work and initiatives focus on five priority areas:

- Built Environment & Transportation
- Capacity Building & Awareness
- Employment
- Goods & Services
- Information & Communication

To ensure diverse perspectives, the priorities in this plan are informed by feedback from our community Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), internal Employee Resource Groups, the Accessibility Steering Committee, our Senior Leadership Team, and insights gathered through surveys in key initiatives over the past three years.

With the continued support of these groups, combined with a strong strategy, clear commitments, and actionable tactics, we are confident in our ability to advance our goal of creating accessible and inclusive spaces for all.

Sonia, an NSLC team member, is describing a product to Nicholas, an Achieve student from the NSCC.

Serving Nova Scotia



Report on Accessibility Plan 2023-2026

Over the past three years, the NSLC implemented our committed actions from the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan across our retail store network and Support & Distribution Centre.

As a Crown Corporation, we support Nova Scotians and the priorities of the Government of Nova Scotia by providing exceptional and responsible customer service, with fiscal sustainability and service delivery top of mind. As we implemented our first plan, we worked to balance our legislative responsibilities while also understanding our role, influence, and ability to make changes within our business aligning to the Nova Scotia *Accessibility Act*. Our unique position challenged us to consider and test different shopper-centric experiences and steward new programs and partnerships.

We learned that accessibility is not a stand-alone, siloed program, but an opportunity to collaborate and create shared value for all partners. Applying an accessible, inclusive, and universal design lens organizationally, in both everyday operations and new projects, is now a standard approach and is fully integrated into the NSLC 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

To celebrate our progress, below are some highlighted successes from the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility & Inclusion Embedded into our Strategic Plan

In April 2025, the NSLC released a new five-year Strategic Plan sharing our vision and direction under the strategic focus areas of: Shopper, Team, Community. The plan explicitly acknowledges our commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility and recognizes the importance and impact of this work for our shoppers, team members, and for the communities where we live and work.

Our commitment to accessibility was also demonstrated through our approach in designing and sharing the new Strategic Plan, and included updating our report to an accessible format, font size, and design.

The NSLC's Service Standards, our guiding principles for providing exceptional service, have also evolved. By adding *Inclusion* to our Standards, we have embedded our commitment to creating a culture of belonging for all in every interaction and within every decision we make.

Increased Capacity Building

Investing in the education of our team was important to grow accessibility awareness and knowledge at the NSLC. Partnering with other organizations from the community to deliver education focused on accessibility and inclusion increased our team's knowledge in accessible customer service and fostered a more inclusive workplace for all.

Education initiatives included:

- Hosting a Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) professional to educate team members in a full day workshop on universal design.
- Inviting ReachAbility to deliver a one-day workshop focused on inclusion in the workplace and hiring, leading to a visual roadmap for the People & Culture team to reference.
- Engaging Placemaking4G (P4G) to provide Foundations of Belonging leadership education for all NSLC people leaders across the organization.
- Inviting SeaChange CoLab to deliver training sessions focused on: Accessible Customer Service, Allyship, and to be the Phase 2 provider of the Foundations of Belonging education for all team members.
- Hosting CNIB at Regional Managers Meetings and through a virtual education session to educate leaders and team members on accessible customer service for low vision, partially sighted, and blind shoppers.
- Inviting the Low Achiever, Gillian Forth, to deliver education on neurodiversity.

Created a Community Accessibility Advisory Group (CAAG)

The phrase, "nothing about us without us," emphasizes the importance of prioritizing first-voice perspective from individuals with disabilities in decision-making processes. To ensure the community perspective is at the forefront of our plans, we created a Community Accessibility Advisory Group with community members from across the province to advise on our plans based on their lived experience as people with disability(ies).

Partnered with the NSCC Achieve Program Partnership

The NSLC collaborated with Nova Scotia Community College's (NSCC) Achieve Program, which provides students with hands-on experience in real workplace settings. Through this collaboration, we welcomed 19 students across 15 retail stores and our Distribution Centre, giving them the opportunity to participate in daily operations while learning about our organization, customer service, and the products we offer. Thanks to this partnership, we've hired two Achieve Program students in our retail stores and one student in our Distribution Centre.

Expanded Access to Products

Being a shopper-centric retailer means that we understand our shoppers' needs and how we can create shopping experiences that are welcoming for all. To meet these evolving needs, we have improved the reach of our services such as offering Home Delivery and increasing access to cannabis. Since legalization in 2018, we have grown from 12 cannabis locations to 51 throughout our network. We have also added Non-Alcohol Adult Beverages to our product offering and are taking steps to improve the e-commerce experience on our shopper facing website.

Formalized Accommodation Policy

Formalizing our Accommodation Policy was a key step to promoting physical and psychological safety for our team members. The policy provides clarity on accommodation requests, promoting an equitable and standardized process for team members and leaders. Additionally, on-boarding education was developed to ensure all new-hires understand the support available to them throughout their employee journey with the NSLC.

Piloted Low Sensory Experience

Our built environment, which consists of our Support & Distribution Centre and over 100 corporate stores, provides a unique opportunity to test accessible shopper experiences. During an eight-week period between May and July, our Joseph Howe, Timberlea and Clyde Street stores participated in a Low Sensory Experience. Once a week, for 1.5 hours, the stores would dim lights, pause music, and limit shopper interactions. The results were positive, with 78% of shoppers surveyed and 84% of participating team members sharing a positive experience with the pilot.

Accessibility Plan 2026-2029 Foundations

While we are proud of our progress, we know that our work is just beginning. In addition to the learnings and successes of the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan, the NSLC has grounded the 2026-2029 Plan within the following requirements:

Our Legislative Mandate

The NSLC is the responsible retailer of beverage alcohol and cannabis and is required to uphold the conditions outlined within the *Nova Scotia Liquor Control Act*, the *Nova Scotia Cannabis Control Act*, and the *Federal Cannabis Act*.

The NSLC's mandate is a core component to our business and drives decision making around the safe and responsible distribution and sale of beverage alcohol and cannabis throughout Nova Scotia. As such, we must balance our mandate as a responsible retailer with our accessibility priorities.

NSLC's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan

The NSLC's new Strategic Plan is a people-first plan, with three strategic focus areas: Shopper, Team and Community. These focus areas will guide our decisions and actions for the next five years, including the actions and commitments outlined in our Accessibility Plan.

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act and Accessibility Standards

As a Prescribed Public Sector Body (PPSB), the NSLC maintains awareness and compliance with new or evolving accessibility standards as dictated by the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act*. We understand our responsibility to continue to support improved accessibility across the province within the retail industry, working towards the goal of a fully accessible Nova Scotia.

Accessibility Plan 2026-2029 Development & Community Feedback

To develop and inform the NSLC's 2026-2029 Accessibility Plan, we sought feedback and consulted with different groups. Below is a description of each of the methods used.

Retail Store Visits & Feedback

We visited a select number of stores and asked Store Managers and some team members about their experience with the NSCC Achieve Program and their overall thoughts on accessibility at the NSLC.

NSLC Workshops

Throughout August and September, two full-day workshops were held to gather input from key partners and subject matter experts from our Support & Distribution Centre and our retail network.

Team members were intentionally assigned to groups to encourage diversity of feedback and thought when reviewing the actions and commitments the NSLC was considering for the plan.

Shopper & Team Feedback – Service Excellence Centre Reports

The Service Excellence Centre (SEC) is a frontline customer service team at the NSLC. They answer inquiries and gather feedback and requests from shoppers and team members. We reviewed data collected by the SEC over the past three years to identify the top feedback and requests, as they related to accessibility, from both shoppers and our NSLC team members.

Accessibility Steering Committee Consultation

The Accessibility Steering Committee consists of leaders from across the NSLC. The committee meets monthly to discuss processes and topics related to accessibility and is responsible for identifying and delivering accessibility priorities for the organization. This group was instrumental in identifying and prioritizing our actions for the next three years.

Community Accessibility Advisory Group Feedback

The NSLC's Community Accessibility Advisory Group is our external Accessibility Advisory Committee. This group consists of six community members from across the province who identify as individuals with first-voice and lived experience of disability. The group meets on a quarterly basis to provide input on accessibility work at the NSLC. Throughout the development of the plan, the group was approached more frequently for feedback to ensure that the NSLC is on track with external community recommendations and perspectives.

Accessibility Plan 2026-2029

For our 2026-2029 Accessibility Plan, some actions are carried over from the 2023-2026 Plan, while others have been updated to reflect the needs of our shopper, our team, and our communities.

In this next section, we outline the NSLC's overall commitments, along with commitments and tactics for each priority area for the next three years.

The NSLC's Strategy for Accessibility

- Keep the NSLC's Strategic Plan focus areas of Shopper, Team, and Community, at the centre of our decisions and actions as accessibility commitments are implemented.
- Implement and leverage Nova Scotia's Accessibility Standards, as they are recommended and enacted, to create an accessible and inclusive NSLC.
- Apply an accessibility and inclusion lens to all strategies, projects, and operations throughout the organization.

PRIORITY AREA

Built Environment & Transportation



Commitment: We commit to continuing to create inclusive and accessible spaces for our shoppers, our teams, and our communities.

How we will do this:

- Complete accessibility audits of NSLC corporate stores using an updated tool to better understand the retail store experience, from an accessibility and inclusivity perspective, for both our shoppers and our teams.
- Use the audit results to create a plan to address urgent gaps within our retail network and evolve our existing design standards.
- Evaluate the opportunity to create a list of accessibility features within our retail network that could be shared publicly.
- Explore expanding the Low Sensory Experience to other stores across the province.
- Review third-party contracts and agreements to consider if and how wording may be adjusted to account for provincial Built Environment Standards.
- Review emergency evacuation plans at the Support & Distribution Centre and corporate store emergency features to ensure shoppers and team members can respond to emergencies accessibly, inclusively, and safely.
- Apply the Built Environment Standard for technical specifications when renovating or building new NSLC buildings.

An NSLC team member presses a sensory-option button on a light-dimming wall panel at the Dartmouth Crossing store.

PRIORITY AREA

Capacity Building & Awareness



Commitment: We commit to continuing to invest in increasing awareness, acceptance, and education on accessibility and disability for our shoppers, our teams, and our communities.

How we will do this:

- Explore assistive technology options to support member training and education.
- Partner and invest with accessibility-forward partners to create and provide education to NSLC team members.
- Use feedback from our shoppers and team members to determine future education opportunities and topics for the team.
- Continue to create and share resources and education to support continued team learning about accessibility and inclusivity at the NSLC.
- Share information outlining the NSLC's accessibility work with Agency Store and Private Wine and Specialty Stores owners, as well as Local Producers, to provide them the opportunity to potentially apply a similar approach, if and when possible.

Meagan, Hunter, Nicholas, and Joy from the NSCC Achieve Program take a picture inside the NSLC in Dartmouth Crossing.

Employment



Denise, an Accessibility Advisory Committee member, is welcomed by Mary, a team member, at the entrance of the NSLC in Dartmouth Crossing.

Commitment: We commit to fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging for our team members as we strive to be an employer of choice.

How we will do this:

- Update and monitor emergency management plans and processes to ensure safety for all shoppers and team members at the NSLC, especially for those who require additional support during an emergency.
- Foster a culture of belonging by creating team members' goals grounded in accessibility and inclusion to be tracked through performance management.
- Update processes, materials, and supporting documents used throughout the employment lifecycle to ensure they are accessible and inclusive.
- Provide support to anyone who requires and requests an accommodation at any point throughout their employment with the NSLC.
- Educate team members on accessibility and inclusivity to ensure the entire NSLC team-member experience reinforces a culture of belonging.
- Partner and collaborate with community organizations to develop strategies and opportunities to create inclusive employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Engage community organizations that support people with disabilities to provide feedback and advice on the employment lifecycle and employment opportunities at the NSLC.
- Review the technology and tools used to support the NSLC employment lifecycle to ensure they do not create accessibility barriers.

Goods & Services



Commitment: We commit to being a shopper-centric retailer by providing equitable access to products, goods, and services.

How we will do this:

- Expand product assortment and services to help ensure shoppers have access to the products we carry.
- Review the NSLC's process for service disruption (e.g. store closures, etc.) to ensure a consistent approach in how and where information is shared with Shoppers, Teams, and Communities and adapt as needed.
- Continue to review and take steps to improve the in-store experience to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging for our shoppers and our team members.
- Review existing processes and opportunities for shoppers and team members to provide feedback related to accessibility and inclusivity at the NSLC to understand if there are any gaps.

A picture of the arm-adjustable NSLC cash register monitor.

Information & Communication



Commitment: We commit to sharing information that is easy to understand at the right time, in the right way, for the right audiences, whether externally for our shoppers and other partners, or internally for our team members.

How we will do this:

- Follow accessibility best practices and guidelines when developing and sharing information with our shoppers, our teams, and our communities.
- Follow WCAG or accessibility guidelines for content, whenever possible, as our technology and systems allow.
- Provide public documents or materials released by the NSLC in alternate formats when requested.
- Provide tools and services for shoppers and team member feedback that are accessible, inclusive, and easy to understand.

A picture of a public washroom sign that says, “all gender restroom” in text and braille at the Dartmouth Crossing store.

Accountability (Monitoring & Evaluation)

To keep the NSLC accountable for our 2026-2029 Actions we will commit to the following monitoring and evaluation activities:

- Tracking through the Accessibility 2026-2029 Roadmap & Project Plan
- Quarterly Accessibility Steering Committee Meetings
- Quarterly Consultations with Community Accessibility Advisory Group
- Feedback gathered through NSLC Team Member Engagement Survey
- Publishing an Accessibility Progress Overview in NSLC Annual Reports
- Tracking through the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan Annual Reports and Scorecard

Feedback

The public is encouraged to reach out to our Service Excellence Centre with any questions, comments, or feedback on the Accessibility Plan. They can reach out via email at contactus@myNSLC.com or call at **1(800) 567-5874**.

Resources

[Canadian Accessibility Network Resources](#)

[Nova Scotia Accessible Events Guide](#)

[Nova Scotia Human Rights Act](#)

[NSLC 2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#)

[NSLC Workplace Accommodation Policy](#)

Appendix

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