

Minister's Annual Report on
Accessibility

2019–20



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Minister's Annual Report on Accessibility

2019-2020

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Message from the Minister

In 2017, our government committed to Nova Scotia becoming an accessible province by 2030 through the proclamation of the Accessibility Act. Our ambitious goal will only be achieved with the collaboration of all Nova Scotians, and, over the past three years, we are proud to see efforts to increase accessibility throughout the province. I am pleased to share this report on our accessibility accomplishments in 2019–20.

However, 2019–20 came to an end like no other year, as the impacts of COVID-19 arrived in Nova Scotia. This pandemic has shone a light on the barriers facing Nova Scotians with disabilities. We have come together as a province to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 and we will continue to work collaboratively to ensure that all Nova Scotians are able to participate fully in work, school, and play in our communities.

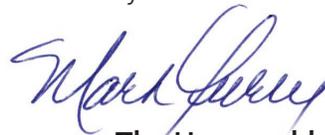
In 2019–20, Nova Scotia has moved into action mode to advance our accessibility goals across sectors.

The first phase of accessibility standard recommendations is well underway for both education and built environment with leadership from the standard development committees and input from community, including persons with disabilities. In December 2019, our government established prescription dates for public bodies and developed tools and resources to support them as they work toward developing accessibility advisory committees and accessibility plans.

The post-secondary education sector has advanced their work with the development of a draft provincial post-secondary accessibility framework, which establishes a shared vision for accessibility across the sector. This is the first post-secondary accessibility framework in Canada and is far reaching for Nova Scotia, as it will advise the development of each post-secondary institution's accessibility plan moving ahead.

In 2019–20, government continued to demonstrate our commitment to lead by example, with all lead departments named in the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan taking a leadership role to action accessibility commitments. Departments have trained public servants, conducted accessibility audits of provincial parks, beaches and provincially operated buildings, and continued building community capacity to remove barriers to accessibility.

Nova Scotia faced unprecedented times in March 2020 with COVID-19. The Accessibility Directorate worked in partnership with the Accessibility Advisory Board and disability organizations to identify how the pandemic is impacting Nova Scotians with disabilities, to support government in its response. By working together across the province, with all of our partners, we will continue to understand and address these issues as we make progress toward removing and preventing barriers to accessibility for Nova Scotians with disabilities.



The Honourable Mark Furey

Minister of Justice

Introduction: An Accessible Nova Scotia by 2030

Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability in Canada, with 30.4 per cent of Nova Scotians identifying as having a disability. On September 18, 2017, Nova Scotia became the third Canadian province to pass accessibility legislation, called the Accessibility Act. The act recognizes that accessibility is a human right and commits our province to being accessible by 2030.

Under the act, we will achieve accessibility by

- preventing and removing barriers with respect to
 - the delivery and receipt of goods and services
 - information and communication
 - public transportation and transportation infrastructure
 - employment
 - the built environment
 - education
 - other activities
- involving persons with disabilities and other interested parties (stakeholders) in developing accessibility standards. "Standards" are requirements that government, businesses, organizations, and others must meet to prove they are accessible
- putting those standards into action and ensuring they are met
- monitoring, reviewing, and enforcing compliance to ensure those standards are being met
- creating the Accessibility Directorate within government, responsible for supporting accessibility initiatives and advancing broader disability-related issues
- creating the Accessibility Advisory Board, external to government, to provide recommendations and advice to the minister related to accessibility matters

Accessibility Directorate

The Accessibility Directorate was established within the Department of Justice in summer 2017. The Accessibility Directorate is government's main source for hearing about and acting on the concerns of people with disabilities. It also

- helps ensure the act is put into practice, along with any future accessibility regulations that come from the act
- addresses broader disability-related initiatives

By March 31, 2020, Accessibility Directorate staff included

- one executive director
- one manager
- three senior policy analysts
- two research and statistical officers
- one program coordinator
- one administrative assistant

Accessibility Advisory Board

The Accessibility Advisory Board was established in February 2018 to advise the Minister of Justice on matters related to accessibility and make recommendations on those matters. Most of the board's members are persons with disabilities. Board members have expertise and experience in many areas of accessibility and live in various communities across the province. See Appendix B for a list of the board's membership.

In 2019–20, the Accessibility Advisory Board

- worked with the two committees developing recommendations for accessibility standards (Education and the Built Environment committees)
- held discussions with provincial deputy ministers on how to implement the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan (2018–21)
- provided advice on how to develop a multi-year communications campaign to raise public awareness about accessibility
- met with Nova Scotians with disabilities and community organizations about
 - independent living options for persons with disabilities
 - accessible transportation in rural Nova Scotia
- met with the federal government to discuss the Accessible Canada Act and Accessibility Standards Canada

COVID-19 Impact

The fiscal year ended with COVID-19 arriving in our communities.

While the pandemic is having a significant effect on all Nova Scotians, it is affecting persons with disabilities at a higher rate than the general population.

In March, the Accessibility Directorate worked with the Accessibility Advisory Board and other organizations to identify the impact COVID-19 is having on the disability community, to inform how government can support Nova Scotians with disabilities during the pandemic. Other government departments also took action by enhancing the accessibility of programs and services in response to COVID-19. This report includes a section outlining efforts related to removing barriers for persons with disabilities, recognizing there is more work to be done.

Accessibility Accomplishments 2019–20

Access by Design 2030

Nova Scotia's strategy to make the province accessible by 2030 is called *Access by Design 2030*.

The purpose of the strategy is to make all Nova Scotians aware of the rights of persons with disabilities and sets priorities and actions to remove barriers that will ensure Nova Scotians with disabilities can fully participate in their communities. The strategy was publicly released in September 2018 and is based on the following principles:

- human rights and social justice
- engagement and collaboration
- coordination and harmonization
- innovation and modernization

Access by Design 2030 outlines six priority areas for achieving an accessible Nova Scotia. Accessibility standards will be developed for each.

1. **Built Environment**—standards in this area will address how to make buildings, streets, sidewalks and shared spaces accessible to all. These standards may address gaps in current regulations.
2. **Education**—standards in this area will help to create learning environments in which all students can participate. These standards could address how students with disabilities get the instruction and learning materials they need. The standards will apply to primary, secondary, and post-secondary education.
3. **Employment**—standards in this area will support persons with disabilities in finding meaningful employment. The goal is to ensure equal access to employment for persons with disabilities.
4. **Goods and Services**—standards for delivering and receiving goods and services may address how service providers interact with and are trained to serve persons with disabilities. This may include how persons with disabilities access goods and services, including the use of assistive devices.
5. **Information and Communication**—standards in this area will help to ensure all Nova Scotians can receive and share the same information. They may consider accessible formats (for example, braille, American Sign Language, or large print), accessible websites and technologies, and standards for communicating with persons with disabilities.

6. **Public Transportation and Transportation Infrastructure**—standards in this area will help make it easier for everyone to travel in both rural and urban Nova Scotia. These standards will not apply to forms of transportation regulated by the federal government, such as travel by air and rail.

Access by Design 2030 Accomplishments: 2019–20

Accessibility Standards Development

In March 2019, the Accessibility Advisory Board established standard development committees for the first two priority areas: built environment and education.

The majority of the standard development committee members are persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations that support persons with disabilities. Members have expertise in relevant sectors and include representatives from government departments with responsibilities related to the standard areas. (See Appendix B for a list of 2019–20 standard development committee members.)

The committees held their first meeting in April 2019 and work is well underway to develop recommendations for accessibility standards for education and the built environment. The work of drafting initial recommendations included

- conducting jurisdictional research, attending presentations, and reviewing existing resources, codes, and best practices
- engaging community stakeholders for input, including feedback from
 - persons with disabilities
 - individuals from organizations representing persons with disabilities
 - public sector staff (such as municipalities, universities, regional centres for education)
 - specialists with expertise in the built environment and education
 - community members
- facilitating community sessions to inform revisions of the draft recommendations. Community input was collected through
 - conducting an online questionnaire in May 2019, where 1,096 Nova Scotians provided input on issues and barriers to be addressed by the standards
 - facilitating in-person sessions in five communities in March 2020, where 235 individuals provided feedback on draft recommendations in the built environment and education.

Both the Built Environment and Education Standard Development Committees are finalizing their first phase of recommendations and continuing their work on the second phase.

Awareness and Capacity Building

We are making progress in building our capacity and increasing awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and barriers to participation. Efforts in 2019–20 included the following:

Awareness Building

- Rick Hansen Foundations' Everyone Everywhere campaign was delivered across the province with support from the Accessibility Directorate. The campaign builds awareness around accessibility and the impact barriers have on persons with disabilities.
- Communications Nova Scotia and the Accessibility Directorate started development on a multi-year public awareness campaign that will
 - highlight the barriers that exist for people with disabilities
 - create awareness around the rights of persons with disabilities
 - provide information about the Accessibility Act and Nova Scotia's commitment to accessibility

The target audience for the campaign is the public, the business community in Nova Scotia, as well as persons with disabilities and those who support persons with disabilities.

- Accessibility Directorate staff delivered 62 presentations at conferences and workshops across the province to raise awareness about
 - the Accessibility Act
 - standards development
 - barriers to accessibility
 - opportunities to improve accessibility for Nova Scotians with disabilities
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development made progress to integrate information about disability rights and accessibility into relevant school curriculum areas through reviewing and linking Rick Hansen Foundation materials and content to support P-12 curriculum outcomes.

Support and Capacity Building for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies

Under the Accessibility Act, municipalities, universities, and other organizations—including villages, regional libraries, and government agencies—may be prescribed as public sector bodies. That means government considers them to be public bodies. Once they are prescribed, they are required to

- establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee
- develop an accessibility plan within one year of their prescription date

In 2019-20, the Accessibility Directorate developed resources and delivered workshops to help prescribed public sector bodies improve accessibility in their organizations and meet their obligations under the Accessibility Act. These efforts included the following:

- Developing the Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities and the Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies. These toolkits offer a recommended approach to forming an Accessibility Advisory Committee and developing an accessibility plan.
- Delivering regional accessibility training in 5 communities to 117 municipal officials. This training was modelled after the accessibility toolkits and provided tips on how to comply with the Accessibility Act. Presentations were also made to the CEOs of provincial libraries, and the annual conferences of the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia, and the Association of Nova Scotia Villages.
- Delivering 10 presentations to university leadership, staff, faculty, and students about improving accessibility and meeting their obligations under the Accessibility Act.
- Creating a new staff position at the Accessibility Directorate to support public sector bodies by collaborating to develop and deliver presentations, workshops, and resources.

Collaboration and Support

Becoming an accessible province requires all Nova Scotians—as well as all sectors, organizations, communities, and areas of government—to collaborate, innovate, and transform. We continue to build partnerships and collaborate with stakeholders to achieve our goals.

We have been working with public sector partners across Nova Scotia to advance our common goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. In December 2019, government announced that the following entities are now considered prescribed as public sector bodies under the Accessibility Act.

PRESCRIBED APRIL 1, 2020
Municipalities, towns, and villages
Universities and NSCC
Regional libraries

PRESCRIBED APRIL 1, 2021
Housing Nova Scotia
Develop Nova Scotia
Events East
Conseil scolaire acadien provincial
Regional centres for education
Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
Nova Scotia Health Authority; IWK Health Centre
Nova Scotia Business Inc.
Nova Scotia Innovation Corporation
Tourism Nova Scotia
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation
Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation

Post-Secondary Education Accessibility Framework

- In 2019–20, in collaboration with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, the Accessibility Directorate continued to support the Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group. The group is made up of representatives from each university and the Nova Scotia Community College.
- In consultation with sector stakeholders, the Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group developed a provincial post-secondary accessibility framework to create a shared vision for accessibility across the sector, and to help each institution develop their accessibility plan. The draft framework has been submitted to the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents for endorsement.

Other ways academia, government, and communities collaborated in 2019–20 include

- ongoing discussions with researchers and Change Lab Action Research Initiative to establish a research collaborative group that will advance research and knowledge sharing related to accessibility. This includes organizing a meeting with Accessibility Standards Canada, academia, and disability organizations.
- continuing partnerships that will help build accessibility in the built environment. For example, offering the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Assessor Training Program at Nova Scotia Community College. In 2019–20, Dalhousie University School of Architecture and Planning offered this training to its students. These courses are offered in collaboration with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

Libraries Accessibility Framework

- The Nova Scotia Provincial Library, Accessibility Directorate and the regional library systems initiated the development of a Regional Library Accessibility Framework, which will establish shared vision, goals, principles and commitments for accessibility in public libraries across the province. Once completed, it will be used as a tool to guide regional libraries in developing their accessibility plans.

Hiring, Training, and Employment

- Labour and Advanced Education, through Employment Nova Scotia, began piloting a policy change in their Skills Development Program to remove barriers and promote easier entrance opportunities for individuals underrepresented in Nova Scotia's labour market, including persons with disabilities. This program helps individuals in equity groups to access the program by providing them with support, such as a living allowance, tuition, books, childcare etc. Individuals can enter the program after seeking employment or working for two years as opposed to three. In 2019–20, 306 persons with disabilities participated in the program.

Government of Nova Scotia: Leading by Example 2019–20

As an employer, and as Nova Scotia's largest program and service provider, government must lead by example. The details of how we will take our first actions to do that are in the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan (2018–21), which was released publicly on September 21, 2018.

The plan outlines commitments and actions for government to improve accessibility and remove barriers for persons with disabilities and grouped them into five main topics.

1. Awareness and Capacity Building—creating a culture of accessibility across government
2. Information and Communications—ensuring persons with disabilities can equitably receive and understand information and communications delivered by government
3. Buildings, Infrastructure, and Public Spaces—ensuring government-owned, leased, and operated buildings, offices, and public spaces are accessible
4. Employment—ensuring our workforce reflects the province's diverse population, and our employment practices and workplaces are more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities
5. Delivery of Goods and Services—ensuring equitable access to goods and services delivered by government

Government of Nova Scotia Accomplishments 2019-20

1. Awareness and Capacity Building

Government departments continue to increase awareness about the Accessibility Act and build their abilities to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that keep people with disabilities from fully participating in their communities.

Building Government's Ability to Become Accessible

Training for Public Servants

- The Public Service Commission developed a new diversity training course for senior leaders, managers, and supervisors that incorporates accessibility topics such as unconscious bias and workplace accessibility supports. In 2019–20, approximately 400 public service leaders were trained through both in-person and virtual sessions.

Building Communities' Ability to Become Accessible

In 2019–20, government continued collaborating with communities to help them move forward on their accessibility goals and priorities.

- Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage (CCH) invested \$1 million to assist 96 community organizations and municipalities to make their facilities more accessible and

invested \$1 million to help 44 businesses to improve accessibility. Examples of accessible upgrades include retrofitting entrances and installing barrier-free washrooms at Bras D'Or Lakes Inn and Coldbrook Community Association, and developing an accessible climbing space at UpEast Climbing that includes equipment that can be adapted for people with disabilities.

- Department of Seniors awarded \$390,000 in Age-Friendly Community Grants that help to ensure physical and social aspects of a community are designed to improve the health and well-being of older adults, including providing funding to CNIB to recruit sighted volunteers in rural Nova Scotian communities to provide one-to-one assistance to people with sight loss with everyday activities.
- CCH supported accessible transportation by investing \$750,000 in funding to assist 11 organizations, including CHAD Transit in Pictou County and Handi Transit in Cape Breton Regional Municipality, to purchase accessible vehicles.

2. Information and Communications

We continued to work toward ensuring persons with disabilities can equitably receive and understand the information and communications delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia.

The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services (SNS-IS) continued to improve accessibility in the way information and communication technology services are designed, developed, and put into action. In 2019-20 these efforts included

- developing services to ensure government employees with disabilities and limitations have access to tools and other supports needed to perform daily job functions, including supports around flex work options, assistive devices, interpretation services, and modifications to workspaces
- creating forms and tools to support accessible use of technology across government, such as
 - developing an assistive technology request form to monitor and include feedback from employees around assistive technology needs and use
 - creating accessibility checklists that will help remove barriers to using government technological platforms
- designing accessibility options in new computer hardware procurement contracts so employees can order computer equipment and accessories that work for them.

Communications Nova Scotia continues to champion, promote, and improve accessibility in government information and communications. This includes

- reviewing provincial brand and design standards for print products with a focus on accessibility and removing barriers

- demonstrating, through web analytics, improved access to the newly updated Beta.novascotia.ca site, which meets international accessibility standards for website accessibility. Website visits increased by 40 per cent in comparison to 2018–19
- improving social media accessibility through use of photo captions, high-contrast images, and by reducing the amount of text online.

3. Buildings, Infrastructure, and Public Spaces

In 2019-20, government continued efforts across departments to ensure government-owned, leased, and operated buildings, offices, and public spaces throughout the province are accessible.

Housing

- Municipal Affairs and Housing is implementing the first provincial three-year action plan under the National Housing Strategy, which aims to invest \$4.2 million to improve the accessibility of over 100 public housing units, including 30 that will be fully barrier-free. In 2019–20, construction took place to renovate 10 public housing units to full accessibility standards and improve the accessibility of an additional 5 public housing units.
- Community Services supported the opening of eight new small option homes that will house 31 individuals with disabilities to live in their communities. Homes in New Glasgow, Isle Madame, New Minas, and Yarmouth have opened, while homes in Clare and Liverpool will open by 2020. Two homes in Halifax are expected to be completed by March 2021.

Parks and Recreation

- Fisheries and Aquaculture developed two new barrier-free sportfishing sites, increasing the total number of sites to 21 across Nova Scotia. Lake O'Law Provincial Park now includes accessible parking, a connector pathway, and a new accessible fishing platform. A new EZ Dock system and accessible trail system was installed at Shubie Park, allowing access for all to Shubenacadie Canal.
- Lands and Forestry completed accessibility audits in 20 camping and day-use parks and 25 district offices using tools from the Rick Hansen Foundation. Information from those audits was used to make further accessibility improvements at provincial parks, beaches, and campgrounds, including the installation of an accessible swing at the Natural Resource Education Centre in Middle Musquodoboit, and building partnerships with municipalities to incorporate adaptive equipment in public spaces to improve user experiences.
- Energy and Mines, through the Greenhouse Gas Stream of Infrastructure Canada's ICIP grant program, required active transportation (AT) designs to follow "all ages and abilities" criteria, which ensures cycling, walking, and other AT facilities are safe and comfortable for all abilities and experience levels.

Buildings

- Municipal Affairs and Housing launched new adaptability requirements in the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations that require all new residential dwellings, which were previously exempt from requirements, to have adaptable features. This includes things such as wider doors and corridors, reinforcement in the wall to allow for grab bar installation, lower plumbing for kitchen sinks, and electrical switches and receptacles that are at accessible heights etc.
- Labour and Advanced Education completed accessibility assessments in over 50 Nova Scotia Works locations across the province to determine what retrofits need to be made to bring the locations up to the new accessibility code.
- Transportation, Infrastructure and Renewal (TIR) began the process of hiring a senior architect to manage their barrier-free program, including reviewing, and updating their Accessibility Handbook to meet current building code and standards to support future accessibility audit processes on public buildings.

4. Employment

Government continues to remove barriers that keep persons with disabilities from gaining employment with the government, including existing and future employees. Government is also supporting accessible employment practices and workplaces. 2019-20 efforts include the following:

- Municipal Affairs and Housing funded six projects through its Community Works Program related to employing individuals in roles that advance accessibility planning in various municipalities across NS.
- Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) continued to remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through
 - revising and promoting their Welcoming Workplaces Toolkit, which aims to help employers create welcoming and inclusive workplaces by identifying core challenges and successes related to recruiting, onboarding, and creating environments where persons from diverse communities are hired and developed
 - adding incentives to co-op and summer job programs through the Skills and Learning branch to encourage employers to hire from equity groups, including those with disabilities
 - expanding their Work Integrated Learning program, through Post-Secondary Accessibility Services, by funding two new institutions to provide paid work experiences to students with disabilities in their fields of study. The support takes the form of a wage-subsidy to employers. This program also builds knowledge of accessibility issues among participating employers.

- Community Services provided support to increase workforce participation for persons with disabilities, by
 - supporting 141 individuals who require technical aids and assistive devices, and two individuals requiring workplace attendant support, through their Workplace Support Program, which aims to support persons with disabilities to enter and remain involved in employment and post-secondary pursuits
 - supporting 830 individuals through their Ability Works program to enhance their employability
 - partnering with LAE to support 577 persons with disabilities to engage in work and/or educational training through the Nova Scotia's Work Activity program
- Nova Scotia Environment improved the accessibility of its workplace environment by renovating a washroom and installing automatic doors in two of its eleven main office spaces; as a result, they now have automatic doors in all eleven office spaces across the province.

5. Delivery of Goods and Services

Government continued to build on efforts to ensure people with disabilities have equitable access to the goods and services we deliver.

The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services (SNS-IS) partnered with the Accessibility Directorate to ensure public inquiries operators in their department are equipped with information on services related to accessibility and disability. This includes

- creating resources with information on accessible services and programs so front-line staff who receive public inquiries can help connect individuals to the accessibility resources they need
- training provincial contact centre staff on the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act and information on accessible services and disability support programs
- expanding the "Ask Us" online inquiry form to include an accessibility inquiry field
- monitoring the number of accessibility-based inquiries they receive by creating a line of business code. An estimated 200 accessibility calls were received in 2019–20.

SNS-IS increased efforts to promote accessibility in procurement processes undertaken by government. These included

- adding accessibility content to procurement introductory training
- using internal communication channels to increase staff's awareness of accessible procurement

- building accessibility requirements into the tender development process, as part of specification development. Accessibility requirements have been included in the following tenders:
 - Taxi Service
 - Atlantic Provinces of Canada School Bus
 - Space Leasing
 - Modular Furniture

SNS-IS has embedded inclusion and accessibility into digital service design processes. They have done this by

- working with a senior digital accessibility consultant and trainer who advised and supported SNS-IS on the development of their accessibility and inclusion plan
- integrating accessibility and inclusion messaging and guidance into the new draft formats of the SNS-IS Service Manual and Digital Service Standard
- increasing SNS-IS staff's understanding of inclusion and diversity in digital services by hosting on-going educational sessions with people with disabilities, subject matter experts, and leading jurisdictions.

Community Services are enhancing accessible programs and service delivery by

- delivering pilot programs that aim to enhance in-home supports and innovative services for children and youth with disabilities
- providing services that help Disability Support Program participants across Nova Scotia find respite providers. Four service providers now have a database that can match participants with respite workers.
- testing a new service called the person-directed planning service, which helps people with disabilities access resources and supports to help them develop goals and daily routines.

COVID-19: Efforts to Remove Barriers

In March 2020, government departments took action to improve the accessibility of programs and services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Communications Nova Scotia made efforts to create accessible ways to reach more Nova Scotians every day and deliver critical information about COVID-19 briefings. These efforts included adding American Sign Language interpreters and Communication Access Real-Time Translation services to public briefings.
- The Accessibility Directorate engaged approximately 60 community organizations and the Accessibility Advisory Board and asked them to share issues related to COVID-19

that were arising for persons with disabilities. This information will be compiled into a summary report that will help the Accessibility Directorate, relevant government departments, and other partners respond to the needs of Nova Scotians with disabilities during this unprecedented time.

- During provincial school closures, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education removed barriers to at-home learning by
 - providing at-home learning packages for students across the province and making learning more universally accessible for people who use assistive technology
 - developing online activities and resources for diverse learners to assist parents with at-home learning
 - purchasing a secure, confidential tele-education platform (Zoom Tele-education) to connect resource teachers and other education professionals with families and students with disabilities and other support needs. This service helps to deliver educational programming for students who may not be following the prescribed curriculum.

Moving Forward: 2020–21

Key priorities moving ahead into 2020–21 include the following:

- The Built Environment and Education Standard Development Committees will submit their first-phase standard recommendations to the Accessibility Advisory Board and government. Their recommendations will also be publicly released.
 - The Accessibility Advisory Board and Standard Development Committees will continue to develop their second-phase standard recommendations, and the Accessibility Advisory Board will also make recommendations to the minister on the next priority area(s) for standard development.
- The Accessibility Directorate will continue to work with Communications Nova Scotia to create a public awareness campaign to increase awareness around the rights of persons with disabilities with the message "together we thrive when everyone participates."
- The Accessibility Directorate is developing the frameworks that will monitor, evaluate, and guide both Access by Design 2030 and the government's accessibility plans. Data collected from 2019–20 will be incorporated into plans moving ahead.
- In 2020–21, the Accessibility Directorate will begin research that will be used in the development of a compliance and enforcement framework. This framework will be based on best practices, informed by First Voice perspectives, and will require collaboration across government and sectors.
- The Accessibility Directorate will continue to work with government departments and organizations that support persons with disabilities to offer supports and solutions related to removing barriers the COVID-19 pandemic is creating for persons with disabilities.

Appendix A: Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan (2018-2021)

2019-20 Progress Report

Awareness and Capacity Building

	Planning	In Progress	Completed
Strengthen capacity within Departments to champion diversity and inclusion, including accessibility and disabilities issues across government.		In Progress	
Develop new training offerings within the Public Service Commission Learning Environment specific to accessibility and disability issues.		In Progress	
Continue to enhance policy analysis and program development, including building an accessibility framework for assessment of policy/program development initiatives.	Planning		
Build capacity among Communications Nova Scotia staff to ensure they can support Departmental clients to build accessibility into their communications products and deliverables.		In Progress	
Develop and implement public awareness programs (internal and external) to build awareness around the Accessibility Act, barriers to accessibility, and what an accessible Nova Scotia means.		In Progress	
Work with (support) public sector organizations prescribed under the Accessibility Act, to develop and implement accessibility plans and accessibility advisory committees.		In Progress	

Information and Communications

	Planning	In Progress	Completed
Complete a review of communications policies, procedures, and practices to improve accessibility and ensure they are not creating barriers to accessibility.		In Progress	
Implement a phased launch of more user-centric government website, beginning in 2018–2019. The website will be accessible in line with the international standards (WCAG 2.0 AA), and augmented with user experience best practices.		In Progress	
Conduct a review of industry standards for ICT services, policies, practices, and procedures and leverage this information to promote accessibility in the design, development, and implementation of new ICT services, products, and systems.		In Progress	

Buildings, Infrastructure and Public Spaces

	Planning	In Progress	Completed
Conduct a review of existing occupied spaces to determine accessibility issues and priorities and develop an action plan to achieve accessibility in Government of Nova Scotia owned and leased premises by 2030.		In Progress	
Incorporate clauses into new Government of Nova Scotia leases for occupied spaces that stipulate that landlords must meet the current Nova Scotia Building Code accessibility requirements.			Completed
Initiate standards development processes and develop initial accessibility standards for Nova Scotia (Built Environment).		In Progress	
Make improvements to provincial parks, beaches, and campgrounds to ensure that more services are accessible.		In Progress	

Buildings, Infrastructure and Public Spaces *(continued)*

	Planning	In Progress	Completed
Increase the number of barrier-free sport-fishing sites across the province and advertise sites to the public. This includes expanding support under the Nova Scotia Sportfish Habitat Fund for projects that improve public access to sportfishing areas, including barrier-free access to fishing sites.		In Progress	

Employment

	Planning	In Progress	Completed
Investigate establishment of a centralized system within the Government of Nova Scotia to better support to managers and employees across the public service with respect to accessibility and disability. This will also include analysis of re-establishing a centralized accommodations fund within the Government of Nova Scotia.		In Progress	
Review recruitment and selection training materials for hiring managers and ensure that content reflects topics specific to the recruitment, selection, and hiring of persons with disabilities into the public service of Nova Scotia.			Completed
Work with the Nova Scotia Works employment services system to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan that will incorporate accessibility into the provision of employment programs and service delivery. In addition, build the capacity of Employer Engagement Specialists to provide support to employers in developing inclusive and accessible workplaces.		In Progress	
Support the development of an Accommodations Application for employers, developed by Saint Mary's University's Inclusion by Design partnership.		In Progress	

Delivery of Goods and Services

	Planning	In Progress	Completed
Develop a government-wide Accessible Customer Service Policy with aim to ensuring consistency in accessible customer service across Government of Nova Scotia.		In Progress	
Ensure our public inquiries operators are equipped with information on services related to accessibility and disability.			Completed
Embed inclusion and accessibility into digital service design processes and ensure an inclusive and accessible by design approach.		In Progress	
Promote accessibility in procurement processes undertaken by the Government of Nova Scotia. This will include developing resource materials for Departments to assist in identifying and including accessibility requirements in tenders for goods and services purchased by the Government of Nova Scotia.		In Progress	
Explore the establishment of accessibility navigators to assist persons with disabilities in accessing information and services.		In Progress	

Appendix B: Accessibility Advisory Board and Standard Development Committee Members

Accessibility Advisory Board (2019-20)

Douglas Foster, Chair

Barry Abbott

Linda Campbell (as of November 2019)

Alexander Peeler

Kevin Russell

Anne Sinclair

Rosalind Penfound, Vice-Chair

Cynthia Bruce

David Caswell

Warren (Gus) Reed

Marcie Shwery-Stanley

Education Standards Development Committee (2019-20)

Rosalind Penfound, Chair

Vice-president, Organizational Development, Nova Scotia Community College, Dartmouth

Cynthia Bruce, Vice-chair

Instructor II, Faculty of Education, Acadia University, Kentville

Annie Baert (as of September 2019)

Director, Student Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Dartmouth

Denise Cameron

Department Head, Learning Centre and Resource, Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education, Truro

Linda Campbell

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Ann Power (until September 2019)

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Matt Walsh

Accessibility Mentor and Advocate, Subway Employee, Upper Tantallon

Barbara Welsford

Assistive Technology Specialist, South Shore Regional Centre for Education, Mahone Bay

Built Environment Standards Development Committee (2019-20)

Laurie Cranton, Chair

Councillor, Municipality of the County of Inverness, Margaree Centre

Ramzi Kwar, Vice-chair

Director, Greening and Sustainable Business Practices

Paul Burt

Manager, Building, Planning and Licensing, Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Sydney

Douglas Foster

Planning Specialist, New Dawn Enterprises, Sydney River

Mohammad Harb

Trained Architect, Community Volunteer, Halifax

Donna Hoar

Vice-president, Grey Cardinal Management Inc., Mineville

Andrew Jantzen

Research Assistant, Electronic Technologist, Nova Scotia Community College, Halifax

Megan Lloyd

Intern Architect, RHAD Architects, Dartmouth

Earl MacKenzie

Director, Public Works, Town of New Glasgow, New Glasgow

Sheena Moore

Senior Architect, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, Halifax

Allison Moz

Way-finding Partner, Co-owner, eyecandy SIGNS Inc., Halifax

Peter Polley

Founder and President, POLYCORP Group, Halifax

Jennifer Powley

Urban Planner, Halifax

Joseph Rogers

Building Code Co-ordinator, Department of Municipal Affairs, Timberlea

Ross Sampson

Retired Production Supervisor, Beaver Bank

Saira Shah

Planner, Municipality of the District of West Hants, Lower Sackville

Gordie Snook

General Manager, Facilities and Operations, Town of Port Hawkesbury, Port Hawkesbury

Johanna Stork

Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Vision Loss Rehabilitation Nova Scotia, Halifax

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