



Creating your Accessibility Plan: A Template for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies

As a prescribed public sector body (PPSB), your community or organization is required under the Accessibility Act to develop and update an accessibility plan. Writing your accessibility plan lets you highlight your work toward a more accessible Nova Scotia.

How you write your plan is up to you. This template has been designed to help you break down the plan into sections that work best for you. Review each section of the template, then decide what to include in your plan.

There are three mandatory sections that must be included:

- **Progress Made**
- **Priority Areas and Actions**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

All other sections in this template are optional.

Your plan may not need all sections. It is up to you what optional content to include. Leave out sections you do not need or want.



This icon shows what your plan must include according to the Accessibility Act. These steps are called legislative requirements.

■ Front Cover

A **front cover** can set the tone of your plan. You may want the title of your plan to include key information, such as

- your community or organization's name
- words like *accessibility* or *accessibility plan*
- the years this plan covers

You may also want the title to highlight key values or goals. For example:

- Meaningful Access: Town of New Glasgow Accessibility Action Plan 2022–2025
- Setting the Stage: A Social Justice Approach to Accessibility (NSCC 2022–2025)
- Accessible Cumberland: Joint Accessibility Plan

Logos, branding elements, and photos can help to visually represent your PPSB. Contact the Accessibility Directorate to access photos of Nova Scotians with disabilities.

An inside cover page offers an optional space for details like a publication date, copyright information, and contact and social media information for your community or organization.

■ Table of Contents

A **Table of Contents** can help readers quickly find the information they need. Using section headers in the main body of your plan is another way to help readers navigate your plan.

■ Acknowledgements

Consider putting an **Acknowledgements section** right after the Table of Contents. You may want to include

- an Indigenous land acknowledgement
- an acknowledgement of the presence and role of African Nova Scotians
- a dedication in memory of a late colleague
- a statement on your approach to inclusive language

Check if your PPSB has already prepared such statements. You may want to refer to them as you write your plan's Acknowledgements. Take care to get the wording right.

■ Message

You may want to include a **Message section** with a high-level summary outlining senior leadership's commitment to accessibility. For example, a message from the Executive Director, Mayor or President.

Using first-person perspective, such as *I* or *we*, can create a welcoming tone, even for uncredited messages. For these, consider a less specific section title, such as Welcome.

You may want to use this section to build awareness about your PPSB and its commitment to accessibility. Consider mentioning elected officials and partners supporting this work.

■ Introduction

An **Introduction section** can also help readers navigate your plan. You may want to include an overview of the plan, the areas of focus for the plan, and the purpose and key goals of the plan.

Consider sharing details that mattered most to your community or organization in writing the plan, such as taking a multi-community approach, or listing key contributors to the plan. If you do not want an Introduction, these details also fit well in a Message.

■ About

You may want to include a section called **About [insert name of your PPSB]** to describe your community or organization. Consider adding details such as

- historical origins
- the meaning of your PPSB's name
- location in Nova Scotia
- what your PPSB is most known for
- who your PPSB supports or serves
- how many people live or work there

You may also want to include a section called **About the Accessibility Act**. You can briefly describe the legislation and include a hyperlink to it. You can also add details about support for the act. Review the [Inverness County Accessibility Plan 2022](#) and the [Minister's Annual Report on Accessibility 2022–2023](#) for examples of these kinds of details.

You may want to explain what accessibility means for your PPSB in a section called **About Accessibility in [insert name of your PPSB]**. You can describe how you are working to identify, remove, and prevent barriers. Consider adding details about governance structure, such as rules, processes, roles, and responsibilities related to this work.

■ Values

You may want to include a **Values section** to identify the values, guiding principles, and key priorities of your community or organization.

This may include your equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism priorities. You may want to align your accessibility priorities with guiding principles found in provincial policies such as Access by Design 2030 and the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act. These include

- human rights and social justice
- engagement and collaboration
- coordination and harmonization
- innovation and modernization
- equity, anti-racism, and intersectionality

Consider using an intersectional accessibility lens as you write your plan. Persons with disabilities have many different identities, experiences, and backgrounds that may connect and overlap. You may also want to include facts about disability and accessibility.

■ Methods Used

You may want to show how you gathered community input as well as what you learned from it in a **Methods Used section**. Consider adding details about public meetings, surveys, focus groups, facility assessments, and other methods used.

It may be helpful to review the Accessibility Act Review Report, submitted by Dr. Katie Aubrecht in 2023. Over 800 Nova Scotians, including persons with disabilities, provided input for this review.



You must seek input from persons with disabilities and representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities when preparing your community or organization's accessibility plan.

■ Progress Made

Your plan must show what you have already done to identify, remove, and prevent barriers. If you are writing an update of your plan, you must identify what actions you have already accomplished. Include this information in a **Progress Made** section.



Your plan must include details on the progress your PPSB has made to date to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services.

You may want to add lists or charts documenting actions and progress. Consider putting supplementary information in an appendix at the end of your plan.

You may also want to set up a process to monitor and evaluate your plan. Tracking your progress can help you understand how your plan is succeeding and how it needs to improve.



You can review how this process aligns with provincial frameworks such as the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework or the Nova Scotia Public Libraries Joint Accessibility Framework.

■ Priority Areas and Actions

Your plan must outline your community or organization's **Priority Areas** for identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility.

You may want to customize your Priority Areas to best reflect your PPSB. You may want to include ones that align with accessibility standard areas as they are enacted or as you prioritize work in the following key areas:

- Built Environment
- Education
- Employment
- Goods and Services
- Information and Communication
- Public Transportation and Transportation Infrastructure

You may not need all of these, or you may need different ways of describing them:

- Libraries might describe Goods and Services as Collections, Programs, and Services.
- Regional centres for education might describe Education as Teaching and Learning.
- Post-secondary institutions might describe Education as Teaching, Learning, and Research.

You may want to add other Priority Areas, such as

- Leadership
- Awareness and Capacity Building
- Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Your plan must also outline the **Actions** your community or organization has committed to under each of your Priority Areas. Consider including a timeline for proposed Actions. What are your immediate, short-term, and long-term commitments? If you can, list general and specific date ranges.



Your plan must include details on actions your PPSB will take to further identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services.

■ **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Your plan must show how you are tracking its impact. Ongoing **monitoring and evaluation** will help you successfully implement your plan. It will also help you measure the effects of your work.

Some PPSBs monitor and evaluate their plan through

- regular meetings
- input from community at town halls
- surveys
- reviewing community inquiries or complaints
- inspections
- reviewing the program to see how it aligns with provincial frameworks

Invite feedback on your accessibility efforts. You may want to set up an online form, a phone number, or a dedicated email address. Document and keep this feedback. It will be helpful when you update your plan, which is a legislated requirement for all PPSBs.

You may want to communicate your progress to key partners. One way to do this is by writing an annual report.



Your plan must include details on processes in place to assess the effect of your community or organization's proposed actions on accessibility.

■ Conclusion

You may want to provide a short summary in a **Conclusion section**, with details such as

- a statement of commitment to accessibility
- the vision for your community or organization over the next three years
- high-level descriptions of outcomes you hope to achieve

■ Contributors

A **Contributors section** can provide a way to acknowledge or thank others who have helped with your plan. You may want to mention members of your accessibility advisory committee, other committees, councils or working groups, and partners or supporting individuals and organizations.

■ Resources

A **Resources section** can help readers find key information such as

- resources that your PPSB has developed or found useful
- frameworks or first accessibility plans from your PPSB
- [Access by Design 2030](#)
- other publications or websites related to the information in the plan

You may want to add details on how to get more information and where to direct queries.

■ Glossary

A **Glossary section** is another accessibility tool. You may want to offer readers short, plain language definitions of key terms used in the plan. List these in alphabetical order. Consider including terms or acronyms unique to your community, organization, or sector, or that may not be easily understood.

Your plan may include terms and acronyms specific to accessibility and related legislation. You may want to highlight these in the main body of your plan where they first appear, in a sidebar or text box.

A partial list of glossary terms with plain language definitions is available in **The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies**, created by the Accessibility Directorate.

■ Appendix

Keeping supplementary information in an **Appendix section** makes the rest of the plan easier to use. Consider putting content that is relevant but more detailed here.

■ Back Cover

A **back cover** offers an optional space for more branding elements and photos. You may want to highlight a quote from your community input or that relates to themes in your plan.