



# Community engagement and updating Accessibility Plans

Prepared by the Accessibility Directorate, August 2024

## Community engagement with persons with disabilities is an important aspect of developing and updating your accessibility plan.

“Nothing about us without us” is a key principle of the Accessibility Act. This means no policy or decision should be decided without the participation of the group(s) affected by that policy or decision. Seeking input from persons with disabilities and organizations that represent persons with disabilities is a legislative requirement under the Accessibility Act and provides your planning process with expert, lived experience that will help your plan meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Community engagement is working with partners and community members to shape decisions. Consider how you can collect a wide range of ideas, views, and insights from the public, your key partners, and internal staff and leadership in your community engagement process.

For more information on community engagement, review the [Engaging with Persons with Disabilities Webinar](#) developed by the Accessibility Directorate.

## ■ Reflective questions for your community engagement process

- 1. What did you learn from your previous community engagement processes?**
  - Reflect on how successful previous community engagement processes were. Identify challenges and how you might do things differently this time. Identify what worked well, and what you might try to do again.
- 2. What engagement practices do you want to use?**
  - Consider how you can engage the community in creative ways, such as participatory tours of facilities, kitchen table conversations, focus groups, idea boards, surveys, art projects, storytelling, attending community meetings and events, photographs, door to door conversations etc.
- 3. What can you learn from other PPSBs' engagement processes?**
  - Connect with other PPSBs to discuss community engagement practices and learnings.
- 4. How will you consider the diversity of people with disabilities in your engagement process?**
  - Consider how identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, and age, overlap. Ensure you take an intersectional approach and include a broad range of people and organizations when seeking input into your plan.
- 5. Who will coordinate your engagement processes?**
  - Will a staff person undertake this work, or will you engage the support of an accessibility consultant?
- 6. How will you ensure your engagement process is accessible?**
  - Consider the accessibility of your engagement communications, processes, and materials.
  - Refer to the [Guide to Accessible Meetings and Events](#) and the [Guide to Accessible Online Meetings and Events](#).

## ■ Reflective questions for engaging the public and internal staff

Seek to build sustainable relationships with various groups and individuals through your community engagement process.

- 1. What relationships have you developed so far?** Who else can you connect with during this next phase of work?
  - Consider working with your existing network to build new relationships and expand your network.
- 2. What role will your accessibility advisory committee** play in community engagement?
  - Consider engaging existing members to hear their perspectives and to expand your engagement reach.
- 3. How will you communicate to the community** about the status and progress of your accessibility work?
  - Some options include websites, community events, newsletters, social media, news releases, and annual reports. You are encouraged to work with your accessibility advisory committee to look at ways to best communicate in your organization's context.
- 4. If you are updating a joint plan in partnership with another PPSB, will you hold a joint community engagement process?**
- 5. Who in your organization should be engaged to provide ideas, views and insights?**
  - Consider your plan's priority areas and actions, and what expertise would help to shape your plan. What functions of your organization (e.g. positions or business units) could help inform your plan? Consider engaging senior leaders (e.g. boards of directors/boards of governors, councillors, executive directors or senior management, wardens, chief administrative officers), staff from a variety of business areas (e.g. policy, public works, human resources, etc) and any internal volunteers and students.

6. **Sample questions to ask.** Questions may differ when engaging the public versus engaging internal staff and leadership and could include:
- What barriers are people experiencing?
  - What are their current accessibility priorities?
  - What has changed since the first accessibility plan?
  - What are some success stories?
  - What changes need to be made to organizational policies, programs, services, procedures, bylaws, etc. to improve accessibility?
  - What are the organization's current accessibility priorities? What opportunities are there to align accessibility plan commitments with other organizational business plans? What changes could be made to policies, procedures, bylaws, etc. to improve accessibility?



**Consider methods to consult specifically with people with disabilities at your organization. Everyone brings a perspective from their role in your organization, however, people with disabilities at your organization may offer unique insight into barriers and actions to address them in your accessibility plan.**