



Develop your municipal accessibility plan

Scope it out

In accordance with the act, your municipality must develop an accessibility plan, in consultation with people with disabilities and organizations representing people with disabilities. The plan must be updated every three years.

Your accessibility plan must be publicly available online. If you are asked to provide the plan in an accessible format (such as large print or braille), you must do so at no charge within a reasonable period of time.

★ *Required steps are marked with a star.*

Your plan must include the following:

- ★ achievements to date in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- ★ how you will identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- ★ processes in place to assess the effect of your policies, programs, practices, and services on accessibility

Consider all areas of accessibility when developing your accessibility plan, such as:

- ▶ **Awareness** – promoting awareness throughout your municipality about the importance of accessibility
- ▶ **Goods and Services** – ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to the goods and services provided by your municipality
- ▶ **Information and Communication** – ensuring all people can receive, understand, and share the information provided by your municipality
- ▶ **Transportation** – making it easier for everyone in your municipality to get where they need to go
- ▶ **Employment** – making your municipality an accessible workplace, and supporting people with disabilities in finding and maintaining meaningful employment
- ▶ **Built Environment** – making buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all

Also consider including an Implementation section, outlining who has responsibility for the plan (council, staff, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee); a timeline for implementation; how the plan will be monitored and evaluated; and a mechanism to respond to questions and complaints.



The Town of Wolfville piloted Nova Scotia’s first municipal accessibility plan, beginning in April 2018. Check it out at www.wolfville.ca/accessibility-advisory-committee.html, under Reference.

Figure 1 shows a sample outline (page 14). This is adapted from the structure that the Town of Wolfville used for its accessibility plan. For each area of focus (e.g., Built Environment, Employment, etc.), consider:

- ▶ What is the vision or **commitment**?
- ▶ What is the **starting point**—the current situation?
- ▶ What **policies** are already in place or under development? These are the rules that outline how your municipality interacts with employees and stakeholders. An example of a policy could be that all employees have access to assistive devices so they can succeed at their job.
- ▶ What **actions** will your municipality take to remove accessibility barriers? An example of an action could be to establish a centralized accommodation fund to pay for assistive devices.



Success Story

The Town of Pictou and the Nova Scotia Community College are working together to enhance accessibility at the community pool. Initiatives include the installation of an accessible change room, upgrades to current change room facilities, policy development, and aquatic staff training.

Figure 1. Sample outline for an accessibility plan

	<p>Welcome message</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What We Believe ▶ Promoting accessibility awareness ▶ Glossary of Terms 	
Areas of Focus	<p>Goods and Services [ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to the goods and services provided by your municipality]</p> <p>Information and Communications [ensuring all people can receive, understand, and share the information provided by your municipality]</p> <p>Transportation [making it easier for everyone to get where they need to go]</p> <p>Employment [making your municipality an accessible workplace, and supporting people with disabilities in finding and maintaining meaningful employment]</p> <p>Built Environment [making buildings and shared spaces accessible to all]</p>	<p>For each area of focus, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Commitment ▶ The Starting Point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview - Achievements - Barriers ▶ Policies ▶ Actions ▶ Top Priorities ▶ Other Priorities
	<p>Implementing the Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Responsibilities (for example: council, staff, Accessibility Advisory Committee) ▶ Schedule or timeline ▶ Monitoring ▶ Evaluating ▶ Responding to Questions and Complaints ▶ Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessibility Advisory Committee Members - Community Barrier Mapping Results - Community Meeting Results 	

Figure 2 provides an overview of the planning process. ☆ All of the steps in Figure 2 are required. Each step is described in more detail on the following pages. As long as you comply with the required steps, you are free to adapt the details and sample tools to suit local needs.

Figure 2. Highlights of the planning process

Gather information:

- ☆ Consult with people with disabilities—for example by hosting an in-person consultation or conducting a survey.
- ☆ Review your municipality's accessibility achievements, barriers, and opportunities, to help identify priorities for your plan.

Draft and approve the plan:

- ☆ Develop the draft plan and seek feedback from the community, especially those with disabilities.
- ☆ Approve the plan within one year of being prescribed as a public sector body.

Implement and maintain the plan:

- ☆ Make the plan publicly available online. If requested, also provide the plan in an accessible format.
- ☆ Implement the plan. This includes complying with provincial accessibility standards when they apply to public sector bodies. (Refer to Figure 1 for implementation timelines.)
- ☆ Monitor and evaluate progress on the plan.
- ☆ Review and update the plan every three years. *Note:* In addition, the Accessibility Directorate recommends that you update your plan as new provincial accessibility standards are implemented (refer to Figure 1).

