



# Accessibility Plan

April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2029

# Acknowledgements

Invest Nova Scotia operates in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

We are all Treaty people. This territory and our relationship are based on the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" signed with the British Crown.

We also acknowledge that people of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years, and we honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors who came before us to this land.

What's more, as business leaders and Treaty people we can actively practice our allyship, being equal opportunity employers, and building long term, meaningful economic, social, and environmental relationships.

This is important work for a just future.



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# A Note on Language

Invest Nova Scotia recognizes that language is deeply personal and that each person may have a preferred way of choosing to use either identity-first or person-first language. In this plan, we use person-first language, which places a person before a disability or condition, for example: “people with disabilities.”

We respect and are committed to using the preferences of each person and community who identify differently.

Our intention is to use language that is inclusive, clear, and grounded in dignity. Language evolves and we remain open to adapting ours as we continue to learn from community partners, people with lived experience, and emerging best practices.



# Introduction

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In 2023, the first Invest Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan was published, laying the foundation for the work towards Invest Nova Scotia's commitment of accessibility and equity.

Our Accessibility Committee has continued to work collaboratively in pursuit of the goals and commitments of the first Accessibility Plan.

Our updated plan outlines 33 commitments across built environment, employment, goods and services, information and communication, and monitoring and evaluation. These commitments reflect both the progress we have already achieved and the work ahead. As we continue this journey, we remain focused on creating physical, digital, organizational, and cultural environments that allow everyone to participate fully and equitably in all aspects of our operations.

Invest Nova Scotia is proud to serve the diverse populations of those accessing our programs, services, and facilities. We will continue to seek to make our offerings more inclusive and accessible for all Nova Scotians.



**Chris Morrissey**  
CEO, Invest Nova Scotia

# Definitions

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## **Accessibility**

Accessibility is when the needs of people with disabilities are specifically considered and information, products, services, and environment are built or modified so that they can be used by people of all abilities.

## **Accessibility Act**

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act is the provincial legislation enacted in 2017 to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities.

## **ASL**

American Sign Language (ASL) is a natural language that serves as the predominant sign language of Deaf communities in most of Anglophone Canada. ASL is a complete and organized visual language that is expressed by employing both manual and non-manual features.

## **Barrier**

A barrier is defined as anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities.

## **CART**

Communication Access Real-Time Translation, which delivers captions remotely to any screen in real-time. Also known as Live Captioning.

## **CSA B651-18**

Guidelines from the Canadian Standards Association that outline a set of recommended technical requirements for accessible design within built environments, including sidewalks, buildings, signposts, etc.

## **Disability**

A term of self-identification used by those with a broad range of disabilities, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

## **Inclusion**

The process whereby every person, regardless of age, ability, gender, income, education, religion, sexuality, and culture, who wishes to, can access and participate fully in all aspects of the activity just as any other person.

## **Plain Language**

Clear, conversational communication that is easily understood by the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audiences can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information.

## **Systemic Barriers**

Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of social, economic, and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but are built into the way society works.

## **TAI**

Tactile Attention Indicators (TAI) are textured ground surface indicators found on footpaths, stairs, bus station platforms and more, to assist pedestrians who are visually impaired.

## **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1**

Guidelines that cover a wide range of recommendations for making web content more accessible to a wide range of individuals with disabilities, including blindness, low vision, deafness, and hearing loss. Recommendations include easily read fonts, simpler layout for website content, and making all functionality available from a keyboard.

# Developing Our Plan

Since publishing our first Accessibility Plan in 2023, Invest Nova Scotia has continued to strengthen and evolve its approach to accessibility.

The early years of this work focused on establishing the foundational structures required under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, including forming an Accessibility Advisory Committee and identifying the initial standards most relevant to our operations.

With these foundations now firmly in place, our focus has shifted from building the framework to advancing implementation, expanding commitments, and improving how we measure and evaluate progress.

This 2026 update builds upon the goals and commitments established in the original plan while introducing new measures that reflect our growing understanding of accessibility needs across the province.

It places greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation, recognizing that accessibility requires continuous learning and consistent accountability.

The Invest Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Committee has reviewed each of the existing commitments and recommended enhancements to ensure our actions remain aligned with the evolving Accessibility Act standards and community expectations.

The Committee was formed with a goal to identify, prevent, and eliminate barriers to people with disabilities in their programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. The Committee identified the following accessibility standards to be addressed based on the type of work conducted by the Crowns:

- Built Environment
- Employment
- Goods and Services
- Information and Communication

Subcommittees were created to develop accessibility goals and commitments in each of these areas. These goals and commitments were revisited in 2025 as the development of the updated accessibility plan began. Within this updated plan, the Committee sought to create a process of monitoring and evaluating the progress made towards the goals and commitments outlined in the accessibility plan.

Invest Nova Scotia is pleased to present our updated accessibility plan.

## Purpose

The purpose of this accessibility plan is to establish a vision and commitment for accessibility in all business offerings, including programs, services, employment, and physical spaces provided by Invest Nova Scotia, and to inform the development of future accessibility plans and actions.

## Vision

A culture that supports full and equitable access for people of all abilities in all aspects of our environment, service offerings and information, and is reflected in the attitudes, behaviours, and endeavours of all Invest Nova Scotia employees.



# Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles have shaped the development of our accessibility plan:



## Awareness

We will promote accessibility awareness with our employees to provide better service.



## Inclusion

We commit to ensuring the public and our employees are treated with respect and dignity.



## Equity

We believe in the quality of being fair and reasonable in a way that gives equal treatment and opportunity to everyone.



## Innovation

We believe that being innovative, proactive, and flexible is essential to advancing accessibility.



## Human Rights

We recognize that people with disabilities face barriers that hinder them from fully participating in society. We understand accessibility is a fundamental human right and we will reflect this in our programs, services, and policies.



## Intersectionality

We understand that a person's identity, life circumstances, and experiences can overlap with their disability. This increases barriers that prevent them from fully participating in society. We will reflect this understanding in our programs, services, and policies.



## Diversity

We understand that individuals possess a variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics that make us different. We will respect and appreciate our differences.



## First Voice

We value the contribution of Nova Scotians with disabilities in the development of this plan and the advancement of accessibility through their lived experiences.

# Accessibility Standards

## Built Environment

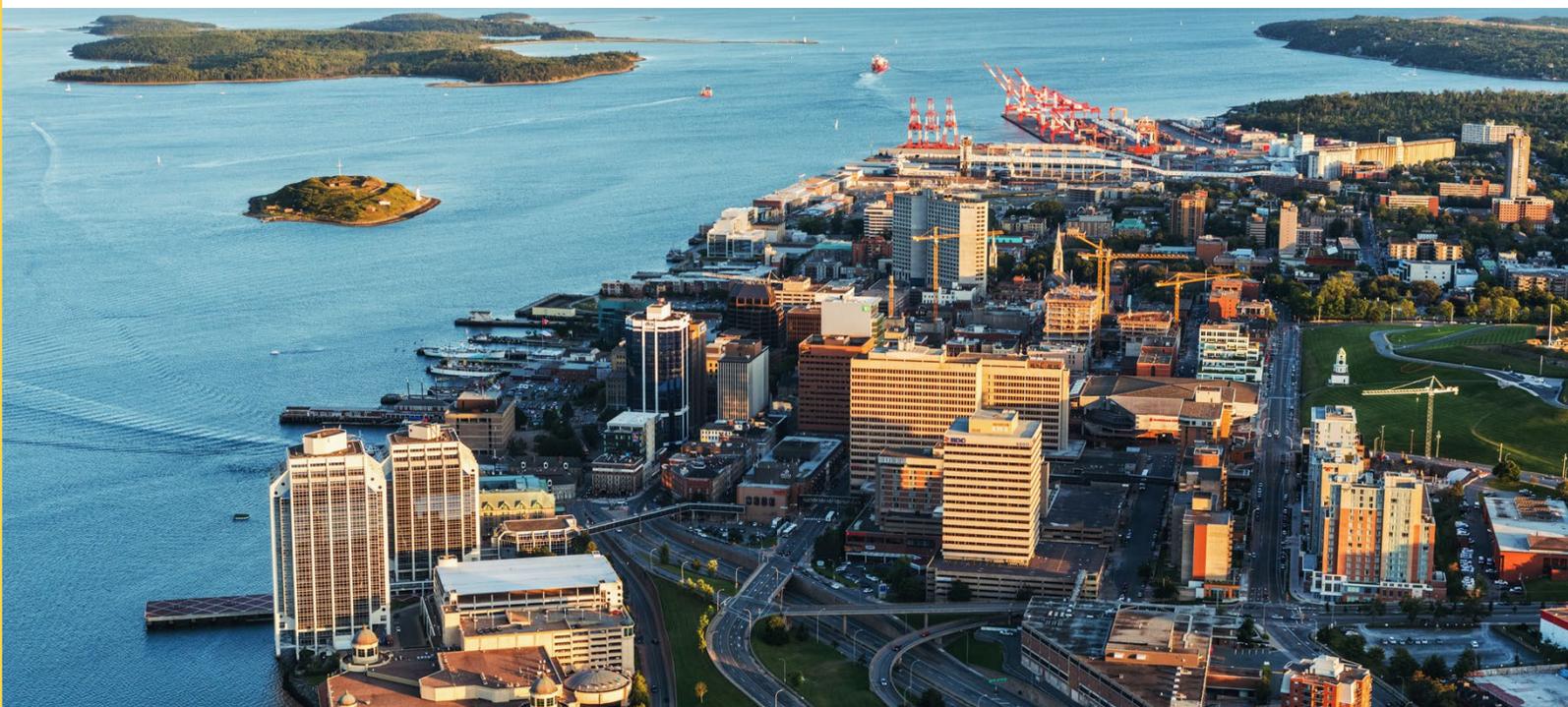
### Goal

We will endeavour to ensure buildings and public spaces – whether owned, leased, or operated – are barrier-free and offer design features to enhance the experiences for people of all ages and abilities.

### Commitments

1. During the planning and design for new construction or major renovations, apply and evaluate the design using the principles of universal design, which are:
  - Equitable use: Design that is functional and appealing to all users, which avoids segregating, stigmatizing, or isolating any users.
  - Flexibility in use: Provides choice in methods of use.
  - Simple and intuitive use which eliminates unnecessary complexity in design.
  - Perceptible information where the design provides necessary information effectively and simply.
  - Tolerance for error that minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
  - Low physical effort so that the design can be used efficiently and comfortably with minimal effort by all.
  - Space is provided for approach, reach, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.
2. Actively engage and inform our clients and all other key parties affected, about infrastructure updates and new infrastructure projects to ensure there is a collaborative dialogue on the identification and removal of barriers and the improvement of access of our buildings.

3. Undertake an accessibility audit of all owned, leased, or operated assets.
4. Develop an implementation plan that includes timelines and a reporting tool to track progress.
5. Seek a partnership with government to develop a system-wide cost and benefit assessment for complying with the Accessibility Act's built environment standard.
6. Collaborate with local partners, abutting property owners, and municipalities to integrate accessibility in all spaces where feasible.
7. Where possible, maintain access, safety, and wellbeing for clients and any other visitors during temporary disruptions such as construction or seasonal challenges while providing proactive communication about any disruptions that occur.
8. Ensure all emergency evacuation systems, policies, procedures, communications, and training enable persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility to safely and efficiently evacuate during an emergency and ensure a dedicated support person is available for those who request one.



# Employment

## Goal

We are an accessible and equitable employer. We will support our employees by preventing and removing barriers to employment for persons with disabilities across the span of one's career.

## Commitments

1. Ensure job advertisements are available in accessible formats and clearly indicate that persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility are encouraged to apply.
2. Develop fair and equitable policies and practices that encourage the recruitment, selection, retention, and advancement of persons with disabilities.
3. Provide full transparency about the hiring process within job postings and empower applicants to request and receive accommodations.
4. Work with selected job applicants and employees to identify accessibility barriers, review accessibility requirements, and provide appropriate individual accommodations.
5. Support the development of a culture of respect and inclusion for persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.
6. Work toward increasing the employment of persons with disabilities.
7. Include lived-experience criteria in procurement evaluation processes when selecting external vendors to deliver training on disability, inclusion, and accessibility, enabling higher scoring for facilitators with relevant lived experience.
8. Ensure all employees are aware of the accommodations and supports that are available to them and are supported to use them.
9. Ensure all employees are aware of mental health supports and services that are available to them and are supported to use them.

# Goods and Services

## Goal

There is equal opportunity and ability for all persons to access goods and services offered or delivered through Invest Nova Scotia.

## Commitments

1. Design and deliver goods and services without bias, ensuring that accessibility requirements are not used to assume who can or cannot be the recipients of goods and services.
2. Ensure there is an opportunity for event registrants and program applicants to request accessibility accommodations upon their initial registration/application.
3. Accommodate persons with disabilities in the best possible way to ensure they can access goods and services offered.
4. Provide physical spaces that deliver a positive and accessible client-service experience.
5. Provide employee training to increase accessibility awareness, ensure the appropriate and respectful treatment of persons with disabilities, promote an inclusive and accessible work environment, and remain current with accessibility legislation.
6. Upon request, ensure all documents used in the delivery of goods and services (such as program materials, guidelines, and application forms) are available in an accessible format.
7. Undertake continuous improvement efforts to ensure accessibility needs for all users of our goods and services are met. We will achieve this through a multi-layered feedback collection process.
8. Ensure there is a designated person available to respond to the accessibility needs of attendees at events hosted by Invest Nova Scotia, as well as events where Invest Nova Scotia is bringing clients, as needed.

# Information and Communication

## Goal

All persons can receive, consume, and share information communicated by our organization publicly and through the programs, activities, and facilities we operate.

## Commitments

1. Provide digital communication, corporate documents, and other promotional material through our website, social media, email, and other digital information sharing that is accessible to all using plain language, dictation, compatibility with screen readers, and other best practices.
2. Ensure our website and all other key digital interactions with users have an accessibility request functionality allowing users to share their accessibility needs with us. We will route all such requests to our Accessibility Advisory Committee, ensuring they are actioned in a timely manner.
3. Ensure our clients and key parties accessing our goods and services have a feedback mechanism available in an accessible format that includes an auto-generated response to acknowledge receipt when feedback is shared. All feedback received on accessibility-related matters will be routed to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, ensuring it is addressed, where relevant, in a timely manner.
4. Offices and public facilities can be accessed and navigated by all through inclusive signage and wayfinding tools. This may include ensuring information is readily available online or through assets to support planning in advance.
5. The terms and language we use in our communication will align with best practices to reflect the community and people we serve. We will consistently review and update materials as language and best practices evolve.
6. When planning events such as conferences, engagement sessions, and other organization-led events, consideration will always be given to help maximize participation and access for all, including but not limited to, on-site interpreters, providing a map ahead of time, online access, and recording content for later use.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

## Goal

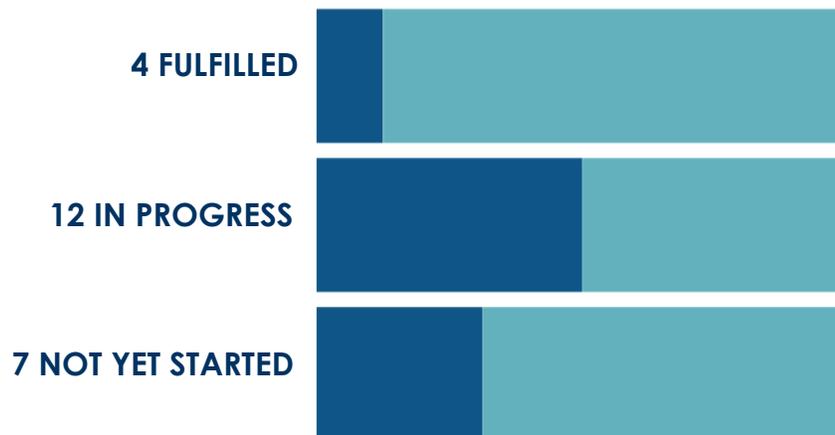
We are committed to continuous improvement and will actively measure and communicate our progress of all commitments.

## Commitments

1. We will measure and report on the progress we are making to achieve the commitments made in this Plan. All future plan updates will provide transparency on our progress.
2. Yearly review will be undertaken to monitor and revise our approach, where needed, to ensure we are making progress.

## Commitment Progress Overview

This graph shows the status of the existing 23 commitments outlined in the original plan. Those that have been fulfilled will be maintained moving forward and those not yet started will gradually be allocated the resources to be fulfilled.



**10 Additional commitments have been added to this plan as part of the 2026 update, resulting in a total of 33 commitments moving forward**

# Progress Made

To ensure accountability to the commitments made within this plan, we have outlined the progress made thus far.

These include:

## **Built Environment**

- CSA Standards are being used in buildings.
- An accessibility audit was conducted on The Bays in 2024. This identified various improvements to be made which will be phased in as part of an overall repairs and maintenance planned repairs schedule over 5-10 years.
- A scope of work has been developed to convert office space into a CSA accessible bathroom at The Bays.

## **Employment**

- Job postings have been reviewed to ensure only pertinent information is on them.
- The Statement of Commitment is on all job postings which states: "Invest Nova Scotia is committed to embracing diversity and fostering a workplace that is reflective of the diverse and global community in which we operate. We welcome applications from Aboriginal people, African Nova Scotian, and other racially visible persons, persons with disabilities and persons who identify in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. If you are a member of one of the groups who reflect the diversity of Canadian society, you are encouraged to self-identify on either your cover letter or resume. If at any point during this process, you require accommodation please let us know."
- A Workplace Accommodation Policy and Accommodation Worksheet have been implemented.
- Mandatory training for all new employees includes: Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion; Diversity and Inclusion Key Concepts; Diversity and Inclusion Moving Towards Action; Respectful Workplace Online Training; Introduction to Accessibility – Barriers and Solutions; Introduction to Disability.
- A Return-to-Work Policy and a Return-to-Work Plan template have been implemented.

## Goods and Services

- Event registration forms include questions around requested accommodations for event attendees. These will be continuously enhanced and standardized.
- Feedback surveys have been updated with additional questions to help determine how events can improve accessibility moving forward.
- All events have a designated person available to provide responsive, person-centered support to those who may require additional accessibility supports and accommodations.

## Information and Communication

- A new Invest Nova Scotia website was launched. The WCAG framework was used for the design of the new website.
- Invest Nova Scotia communication materials comply with current accessibility best practices. The Invest Nova Scotia style guide is a living document that continues to be updated regularly as best practices evolve.

# How to Contact Us

**If you have a question, comment, or concern about anything detailed within this plan or about accessibility at Invest Nova Scotia, we welcome you to reach out to us.**

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(902) 402-1884

**You can also submit feedback on our website by going to:**  
<https://investnovascotia.ca/contact>

# Next Steps

As we continue to advance our commitments and translate our goals into meaningful action, we will continue to monitor and report on our performance to ensure we are championing accessibility for all.

