



Accessibility Plan

2024 - 2027

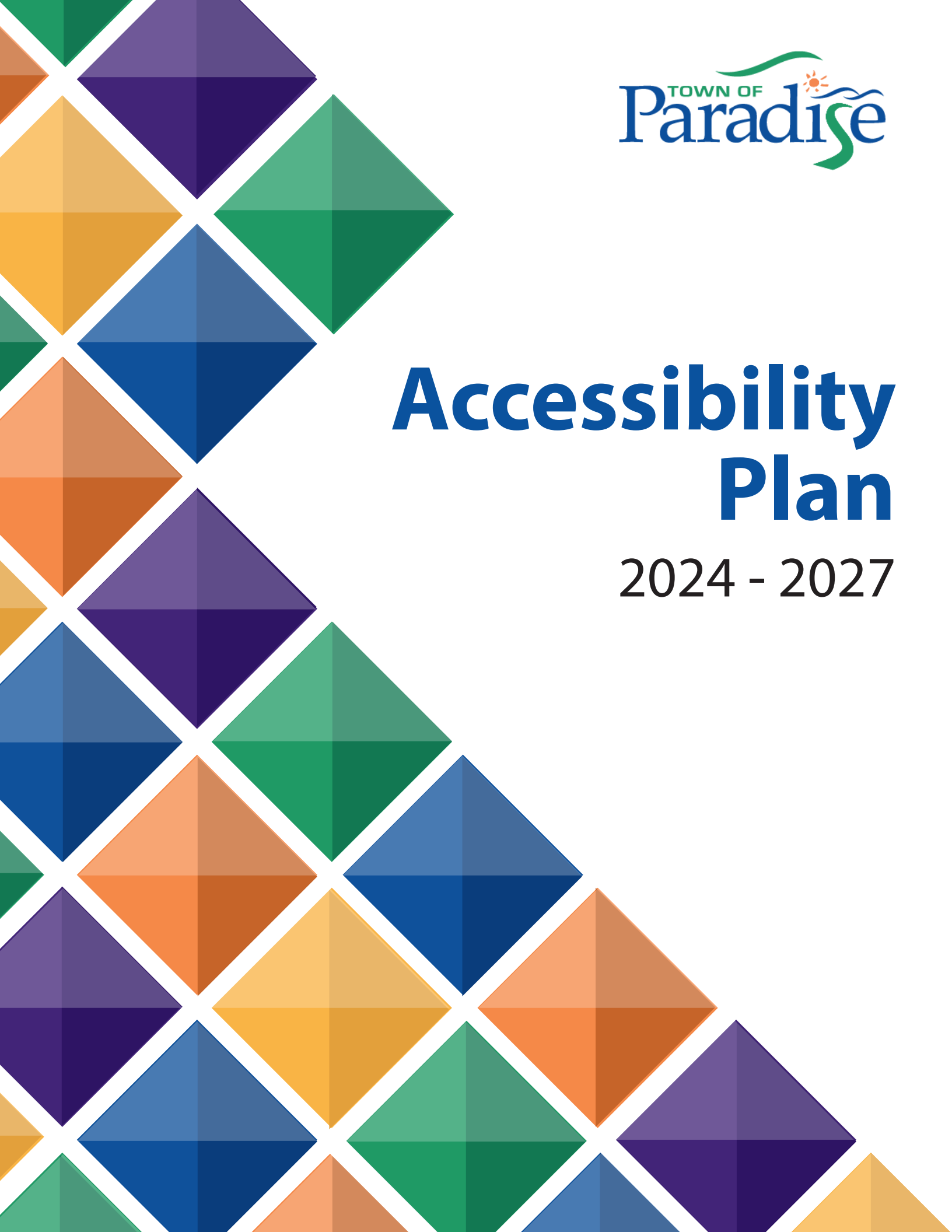


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Statement of Commitment



The Town of Paradise is committed to fostering an open, inclusive, and collaborative community that will contribute to an enhanced sense of acceptance and belonging. As one of the fastest growing municipalities in Atlantic Canada, we are proud to continue to build an inclusive, healthy, and safe community in which all can feel meaningfully included. We also recognize that having a diverse, talented workforce that is reflective of this vibrant community strengthens the Town's capacity to identify and address barriers, especially systemic barriers, to overall participation.

Aligning with our strategic plan, an Accessibility Plan contributes to Social and Cultural Health Pillar by ensuring equal opportunities for individuals, promoting inclusivity, and reducing barriers to participation. It aligns with governance principles by advancing policies that prioritize diverse needs. Additionally, increasing accessibility can positively impact economic growth through what others have to offer, bringing a wide range of skills and perspectives that will further enhance productivity.

We look forward to the positive changes the Provincial Accessibility Act will bring to our municipality and remain confident that these standards and regulations will continue to ensure equitable access to services and initiatives for all.

Message From The Mayor

On behalf of Council, I am pleased to present the Town of Paradise Accessibility Plan. As one of the fastest growing municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador, we understand the importance of building a fully inclusive community that addresses the challenges and perspectives of all individuals and groups. Whether you are a resident or visitor to Paradise, we want you to feel represented and welcomed when you access our information, services, programs, and facilities.



Our commitment to accessibility is outlined in our strategic plan, *Your Paradise - Plan 2027* under the Social and Cultural Health Pillar. Our goal is “to advance inclusive social and cultural health in Paradise, building community inclusion and belonging for all community members”. Based on input from residents, community groups, staff and our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisory Committee, we have an Accessibility Plan, tailored to our Town which supports our strategic plan and enables us to meet provincial requirements. I extend my sincere thanks to all of those who put forth their expertise, knowledge, and invaluable input in the development of this important document.

With our new accessibility plan in place, we are ready to move forward as a vibrant Town that embraces inclusion and places the needs of a changing and diverse community as a top priority.

Sincerely,

Dan Bobbett
Mayor of Paradise

Message From The Chief Administrative Officer

As Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Paradise, I look forward to guiding the Town's work under the new Accessibility Plan. Over the past several years, we have been working to make Paradise more accessible for all and our achievements to date provide a foundation for that work.

Over the next three years, staff will focus on meeting the goals and implementing the actions in four key areas outlined in the plan: built environment, programs and services, information and communication, and transportation and access.

Using our staff expertise, industry best practices, and input from the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisory Committee, we will work to advance our Accessibility Plan and improve accessibility in Paradise. Our focus is to take the necessary steps to achieve more balance, diversity, fairness, sustainability and corporate responsibility in all of the Town's policies, developments, and decisions.

Together with our dedicated and talented employees, I look forward to implementing the Town's Accessibility Plan and working to make Paradise more inclusive and accessible for all.

Sincerely,

Lisa Niblock

Chief Administrative Officer of Paradise



Message from the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisory Committee

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisory Committee is pleased to be involved in the ongoing development and implementation of the Town's first Accessibility Plan. This plan will allow the Committee to make further informed recommendations regarding accessibility, while also nurturing fresh ideas within program and service delivery that will coincide with the Town's goals and action plans.

The EDIA Advisory Committee, formerly known as the Diversity Committee, was established in 2023 and is comprised of no less than six (6) community members, supported by Town staff and one member of Council and / or additional designate(s). This Committee seeks to have diverse representation to ensure a well-balanced Committee, including but not limited to: Indigenous peoples, faith-based groups, racialized individuals, individuals of diverse or cultural origin, newcomers, new Canadians, 2SLGBTQI+, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members, and / or individuals with a disability. Individuals with professional knowledge, and / or living or lived experience in any of these areas are considered.

The Accessibility Plan is a living document, meaning it should be continually reviewed and updated as appropriate to ensure it is current with best practices. As this document continues to evolve, the EDIA Committee, Council and Town staff encourage residents to review the plan annually and continue to participate in public engagements and consultations pertaining to the Town and accessibility.

As a Committee, we look forward to seeing further development within the Provincial accessibility standards under the *Accessibility Act*, and contributing to a more accessible Paradise.

Sincerely,

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisory Committee

About The Accessibility Act & Plan

The Accessibility Act was passed on December 3, 2021. It outlines the principles and goals that will improve accessibility in Newfoundland and Labrador and identifies key focus areas, where barriers often exist that prevent individuals with disabilities from participating in society. As a municipality, the Town of Paradise is considered a public body within the *Accessibility Act*.

The key focus areas specific to municipalities include:

- The design and delivery of programs, services and goods that ensures equitable access.
- Built environment that ensures buildings, shared spaces, public transportation and transportation infrastructure are accessible.
- Information and communication that ensures everyone can receive, understand, and share the information provided.
- Accommodations that ensures accessible and inclusive options are available for equitable access.
- Procurement processes that ensure equitable access to goods and services that are sourced and purchased.
- Employment that ensures an accessible workplace and support for persons with disabilities to find and maintain meaningful employment.

The Act requires that public bodies create an accessibility plan within two years of the Act coming into force and every three years after that. Accessibility Plans must address prevention, identification, and removal of barriers in public body operations and be publicly available. Public bodies must consult with persons with disabilities or representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities in preparing a plan. The Act allows the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop accessibility standards and provide inspection and enforcement power to ensure those standards are met. The first accessibility standard approved to be developed is the Accessible Customer Service Standard.

The Town of Paradise Accessibility Plan will pave the way for a clear, concise pathway towards becoming a more welcoming and accessible community to live, work and play. The intention of this plan is to grow and evolve with the growing needs of our community, as well as with any further advancements within the Provincial Accessibility Legislation.

This plan will be reviewed by the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisory Committee yearly, with the Accessibility Plan undergoing a full, extensive review every three (3) years, as outlined in the *Accessibility Act*. The Manager of Recreation and Community Services is the designated lead on the plan.

Achievements to Date

The Town of Paradise has undertaken many initiatives to make our community more accessible and inclusive. We strive to meet the needs of residents and visitors in a manner that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. Some highlights of the achievements to date include:

Programs and Services

- Implementation of the Town's first-ever Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisory Committee
- Completion of specialized training in areas such as Indigenous cultural diversity with First Light, Mental Health First Aid, as well as critical components of diversity, inclusion, and belonging with Diversity NL
- The Town is an Equal Opportunity Employer, providing a more balanced representation of qualified applicants
- Planning and implementation of current programming encompasses best practices to have inclusion and accessibility at the forefront, including offering specialized programming such as sensory-friendly components such as skating time slots and dedicated sections in Town parades.
- Adaptable fitness equipment available in the Town's Fitness Centre
- Celebrating Pride Month and the 2SLGBTQI+ community through community events and initiatives
- Offering inclusion services within the Town's Summer Day Camp programming with designated Inclusion workers for more individualized and meaningful participation
- Supporting ongoing inclusive programming within the community such as sledge hockey and parahockey, and supporting organizations and groups through the Annual Donation Program
- Implementation of the Town's Accessible Transit Pilot Program

Build Environment

- Completion of an Accessibility Audit of the Town Hall by the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities Newfoundland and Labrador
- Facility access improvements to existing facilities, including: automatic door buttons, visual aids and contrast improvements for improved depth perception, elevator access, gender-neutral washrooms and change spaces, accessible parking, and adjustable lighting features
- Improvements to park amenities including; accessible picnic tables, accessible features on playground equipment at Paradise Park and Woodstock Gardens, accessible garden beds at Lanark Community Garden, and an accessible lookout platform on Adam's Pond Trail
- Recent workstations and facility furniture ordered with accessibility needs considered

Information and Communication

- The Town's website uses alternative tags, accessible formats, adjustable font sizing, and is both screen reader and mobile-friendly

Accessibility Goals, Focus Areas, And Actions

The Town Accessibility Plan focuses on actions that address the principles outlined in the Accessible Canada Act, including:

- Everyone must be treated with dignity
- Everyone must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the life they are able and wish to have
- Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in society
- Everyone must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire
- Laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the ways that different kinds of barriers and discrimination intersect
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures, and
- Accessibility standards and regulations must be made with the goal of achieving the highest level of accessibility
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With these principles in mind, we have organized focus areas informed by JW Consulting, public feedback, and priority items identified by members of EDIA Advisory Committee.

Accessible Built Environment: Strive to maintain and improve Town facilities and parks to reduce barriers and improve equitable access to amenities.

Accessible Programs and Service Delivery: Plan, implement, and evaluate both existing and new programming to meet best practices that are adaptable to diverse, individual needs.

Accessible Communication and Information: Further review and evaluate Town communications practices and initiatives to ensure critical information is available in various, accessible formats where applicable.

Accessible Transportation and Access: Aim to develop and collaborate on strategies to support accessible transportation and access for various demographics.



#	Action	Sample Measurement of Success	Timeline
Built Environment			
1	Review opportunities to improve accessibility on all retrofit projects, including utilizing universal design	Number of projects implemented with improved accessibility, facility user feedback	1 - 3 years
2	Collaborate with the EDIA Advisory Committee to identify policy options that could improve overall accessibility within Town facilities	Committee participation, Accessibility lens is applied to discussions and changes are proposed as appropriate	1 - 3 years
3	Improve inclusion and consultation with persons with lived / living experience(s) when making proposed changes, aligning with the foundational principle of "nothing without us" under the <i>Accessible Canada Act (ACA)</i>	Participation from persons with lived/ living experience(s) when appropriate	1 - 3 years
4	Continuously review the Town's building and development regulations and permitting processes to ensure they meet current standards and best practices within accessibility	Accessibility lens is applied to discussions and any applicable changes to regulations and processes	1 - 3 years
5	Review and enhance, where applicable, building evacuation plans to include safe and best practice processes for both employees and facility visitors of varying abilities	Plans are reflective of processes and instructions and are communicated to staff responsible for implementation	2 years
6	Compile information about accessible infrastructure and amenities within Town facilities and parks and integrate it into future publications and website integrations to increase public awareness	Increased awareness and usage of applicable infrastructure and amenities demonstrated through feedback and/or increased usage	1 - 3 years
Programs and Services			
7	Review current and best practices for accessible and adaptable programming and continue to update and improve applicable programs and services based on funding opportunities and resources available	Creation of a checklist to determine accessibility, feedback	1 - 3 years



8	Continue to support and / or partner with community organizations serving equity-deserving/denied demographics in their initiatives	Number and value of current or additional partnerships or support levels	1 - 3 years
9	Provide annual assessment and tax notices in alternative formats upon request and further promote this option	Number of requests for alternative formats	2 years
10	Add an award category entitled "Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (EDIA) Recognition Award" to the Town's Municipal Awards to celebrate accessibility efforts occurring within the Town	Award category established, number of nominees	2 years
11	Continue to research and acknowledge annual cultural celebrations and commemorative events / holidays where appropriate	Complete / not complete, resource created	1 - 3 years

Information and Communication

12	Increase representation of persons with lived / living experience(s) in Town publications and communications materials, along with committee, training, and outreach opportunities	Graphics in Town publication and communication materials are reflective of this	1 - 3 years
13	Provide further opportunities for Town Council, staff and volunteers to engage in training opportunities that aim to improve accessible program and customer, and service delivery with the public, as well as an opportunity to learn more about the provincial <i>Accessibility Act</i>	Feedback from those who participate in training	1 - 3 years
14	Establish, evaluate, and update Town communication practices, including social media postings, to establish consistency surrounding plain, person-first language and accessible formats where applicable	Practices developed, feedback	1 - 3 years
15	Formalize and administer accessible public consultation practices to ensure all outreach activities are accessible and inclusive	Practices developed, feedback	1 - 3 years

Transportation and Access

16	Increase public awareness of the Accessible Transit Program, as well as other accessibility services, subsidy programs, and community resources surrounding transportation and access	Public feedback, Increased number of applicants or users	1 - 3 years
17	Continuously review snow clearing procedures to ensure they account for snow removal in primary and accessible areas	Public feedback	Yearly
18	Upgrade traffic signals with more accessible features, such as audible signals, where applicable	Number of signals installed	Per project
19	Research the feasibility of future pilot projects or collaborations addressing accessible transportation barriers	Complete / not complete	2+ years

Conclusion

The Town of Paradise is working to make our community more inclusive and accessible and look forward to working collaboratively with community organizations and residents to reduce barriers while increasing equitable access to Town services, programs, built environment, and transportation.

The Town acknowledges JW Consulting, members of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Advisory Committee, Town staff, Council, and those from the public who provided insightful feedback and suggestions.

The Town is committed to the implementation of the *Accessibility Plan* and continue to welcome feedback on ways to improve accessibility and inclusion within Paradise.

Glossary of Terms

2SLGBTQI+

It is the acronym used by the Government of Canada to refer to the Canadian community. 2S: at the front, recognizes Two-Spirit people as the first 2SLGBTQI+ communities; L: Lesbian; G: Gay; B: Bisexual; T: Transgender; Q: Queer; I: Intersex, considers sex characteristics beyond sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; +: is inclusive of people who identify as part of sexual and gender diverse communities, who use additional terminologies.

Source: Government of Canada

Accessibility

Refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities.

Source: Accessibility Services Canada

Accessibility Act

The provincial law enacted to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Act defines the role and responsibilities of the Disability Policy Office and the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board, and addresses standards, compliance, and enforcement.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Accessibility Plan

A plan developed to address the prevention, identification, and removal of barriers in the policies, programs, practices and services of a public body.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Accessibility Standards

Aim to establish clear, specific, and achievable goals to identify, prevent, and remove barriers. Each standard will be introduced in stages with a time frame for implementation. The standards and timelines would consider all sectors such as government, business, municipalities, and community organizations.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Accessible Canada Act

An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada. S.C. 2019, c. 10. The purpose of the Act is to benefit all persons with disabilities, through the realization within the purview of matters coming with the legislative authority of Parliament, of a Canada without barriers, on or before January 1, 2024, particularly with the identification and removal of barriers, and the prevention of new barriers in a variety of areas.

Source: Government of Canada

Accessible Format

Provide the same information in another form to address the barriers text-based materials can present for some learners.

Source: National Center on Accessible Materials

Accommodation

Any technical aid or device, personal support, or disability-related support of other accommodation a person may require. This can include but is not limited to: accessible meeting rooms; accessible formats such as Braille and plain language; mobility supports to attend a meeting; and, sign language interpreters, captioning or ensuring space has sensory sensitive features.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Alternate Tags

Alternative terms commonly used to describe, including "ALT text"; Meant to convey the "why" of the image as it related to the content of a document or webpage. It is read aloud by screen reader software, and is indexed by search engines.

Alternative tags and text should be clear, concise, and descriptive.

Source: Harvard University

Barrier

Refers to anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, or a barrier perpetuated by an Act, regulations, a policy or a practice.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

The abbreviation “BIPOC” is used to refer to people of color and was designed to emphasize the particular experiences of Black people and Indigenous people with discrimination as contrasted with other non-white groups of people.

Since this abbreviation refers to a grouping of people, expressions such as “BIPOC person” and “BIPOC people” are redundant and should be avoided.

Source: Government of Canada

Disability

Includes a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation that is permanent, temporary or episodic in nature that, in interaction with a barrier, prevents a person from fully participating in society.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Diversity

The variety of identities found within an organization, group or society. It is often expressed through factors such as culture, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, education, ability, family status or socioeconomic status.

Source: Government of Canada

Equity

A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everyone is treated the same; equity means everyone is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Equity-Denied Group

A group of people who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from having the same access to the resources and opportunities that are available to other members of society, and that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes.

In Canada, groups generally considered to be equity-denied groups include women, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people who are part of 2SLGBTQI+ communities, religious minority groups and racialized people. Some people may prefer the term “equity-deserving group” or “equity-seeking group”.

Source: Government of Canada

Inclusion

The practice of using proactive measures to create an environment where people feel welcomed, respected, and valued, and to foster a sense of belonging and engagement. It means being supported and valued within the community and organization.

Source: Government of Canada

Nothing Without Us Principle

An accessibility strategy for the Public Service of Canada (2021) that persons with disabilities should and will be actively involved in the development and the implementation.

Source: Government of Canada

Universal Design

These standards address accessibility requirements for the design and construction of new facilities, as well as the retrofit, alteration or addition to existing facilities. It recognizes the broad diversity of people who use facilities, and is usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Definition

Appendices and Acknowledgments

Appendix A: [WORDS WITH DIGNITY \(GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR\)](#)

Appendix B: [ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST \(GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR\)](#)

Appendix C: [ACCESSIBILITY ACT \(GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR\)](#)

Appendix D: [CANADIAN ACCESSIBILITY ACT \(GOVERNMENT OF CANADA\)](#)