



Strategic Plan on Accessibility

2025-2030



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Province of New Brunswick
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Message from the Minister

As the Minister in charge of making New Brunswick more accessible, I'm excited to share our first Strategic Plan on Accessibility.

This plan is a starting point. It lays out what we'll focus on over the next five years to make our province more inclusive for everyone.

I want to thank the Accessibility Office for all the hard work they put into creating this plan, and the Accessibility Advisory Board for their thoughtful advice and vision, which helped shape this plan.

I'm looking forward to seeing the positive changes this plan will bring. Making progress will take all of us working together. As you read through the plan, please think about what you can do—big or small—to help remove barriers and make New Brunswick more accessible.



Hon. Jean-Claude D'Amours

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Minister responsible for Military Affairs

Minister responsible for Immigration

Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

Introduction

- New Brunswick established the *Accessibility Act* in 2024. This new law sets clear rules to make our province more accessible.
- Most Canadian provinces have some form of accessibility laws – New Brunswick will learn from their experience and create rules that work for New Brunswick.
- This is New Brunswick's first strategic plan on accessibility. It lays out how government will work with all sectors **and** all New Brunswickers to make New Brunswick more accessible.
- Government can't do it alone. Everyone – the public, businesses, non-profits, and post-secondary institutions – has a part to play in making New Brunswick more accessible.
- There is a lot of work ahead. Government is calling on all New Brunswickers to work together to remove barriers and to build a more accessible New Brunswick.

Current State

- New Brunswick has one of the highest rates of disability in Canada.
- Disability rates are growing across all age groups 15 years old and up. There are gaps in data related to children who live with a disability (under 15 years old).
- New Brunswickers living with a disability come from all backgrounds and communities.
- People who live with one or more disabilities are more likely to face barriers in daily life – at work, school, in their communities, and when accessing services.
- Many people face barriers, even if they don't identify as living with a disability.
- Improving accessibility means removing all kinds of barriers – physical, communication, technological, and more.

A More Accessible New Brunswick

- **Everyone** has a role to play in improving accessibility – the public, governments, businesses, non-profits, and post-secondary institutions.
- **Government** will lead by example.
- Creating a more accessible province takes time, commitment and investment.
- Improving accessibility requires increasing awareness, education, working together, resources and enforcing the rules.
- Government will approach this work with transparency, and will share progress, listen to feedback and be accountable.



Accessibility Legislation

The Accessibility Act (June 2024)

- Applies to **everyone**: the public, governments, businesses, non-profits, and post-secondary institutions.
- Focuses on **identifying, removing** and **preventing barriers** to achieve greater **accessibility** in **New Brunswick**.
- There are many types of barriers. **Examples** of different types of **barriers** include:



Built environment – stairs with no ramp, narrow doorways, no tactile indicators;



Information – documents not written in plain language or not available in accessible formats;



Communications - lack of sign language, no captions, or fire alarms with no visual alerts;



Attitude - invisible disabilities not recognized;



Technology - websites that don't work with screen-readers;



Policies or programs - forms that can only be filled out in person.

- Involves **eight priority** areas for developing accessibility standards (minimum legal requirements)

Eight priority areas

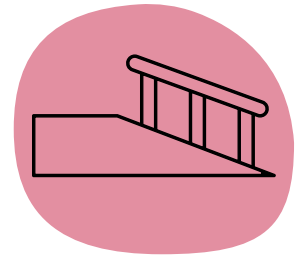
**Information and
Communications**



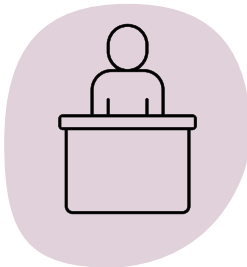
Employment



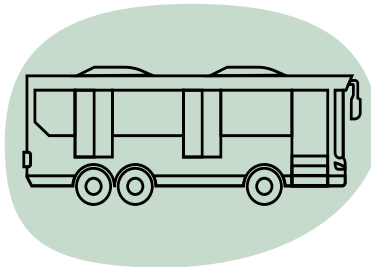
**Built
Environment**



**Government
Services**



Transportation



Education



Housing



**Sports and
Recreation**



Accessibility Governance

Minister responsible

- The Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour is responsible for making sure the *Accessibility Act* is put into action.
- So far, the Minister has:
 - Set up the **Accessibility Office**;
 - Appointed the **Accessibility Advisory Board** and its Chair;
 - Established an information-sharing agreement with Accessibility Standards Canada.
- Going forward, the Minister will:
 - Support the development of accessibility standards;
 - Establish regulatory standards based on the Board's recommendations;
 - Oversee enforcement of accessibility rules;
 - Report progress to the public and the Legislature.

Accessibility Office

- Supports the **Minister** and the **Accessibility Advisory Board**;
- Leads the **implementation** of the *Act*;
- Gives policy advice and does **research**;
- Supports the Board with policy and administration;
- **Creates** tools and resources to **raise awareness** about accessibility.

Accessibility Advisory Board

- The Board was established under *The Accessibility Act*.
- Members of the Board were **appointed** by the Minister in August 2024 for terms lasting up to five years.
- The *Act* requires that most members be people with lived experience of disability or people who are working with or on behalf of people with a disability in New Brunswick.
- All Board members appointed in August 2024 have **lived experience** or **experience working with** or on behalf of **people with a disability**.
- The Board has met four times, helped shape this Strategic Plan, and identified priority standards for development.
- The Board will:
 - Advise the Minister on accessibility issues;
 - Create Advisory Committees to help develop accessibility standards;
 - Recommend standards that can become regulations (enforceable rules).
- **The Board follows five core values:**



Collaboration: work with people with a disability to improve accessibility



Equity: ensure equal access for all New Brunswickers



First voice: value the personal experiences of people with a disability



Human Rights: promote dignity, fairness, respect and independence



Universal Design: create spaces, products, and services that work for everyone

Strategic Plan on Accessibility

- New Brunswick's **first** strategic plan is shaped by:
 - Advice from the Accessibility Advisory Board;
 - Feedback from individuals and organizations in New Brunswick;
 - Research and lessons learned from other provinces.
- Guiding Principles for the first strategic plan on accessibility are:
 - ***Nothing Without Us*** – people with lived experience of disability must be involved in decisions that affect them. Their voices and experiences are essential.
 - ***Shared Responsibility*** – everyone has a role to play in making New Brunswick more accessible.
 - ***Equal Opportunity*** – accessibility is achieved when all people can fully participate in all parts of life – work, learning, community and services.

This plan outlines what Government will do over the next five years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers.

Strategic Plan Goals

- Over the next five years, Government will:
 1. **Work with all sectors to identify and remove barriers;**
 2. **Create a strong culture of accessibility;**
 3. **Develop and enforce accessibility standards.**



Goal 1

Work With All Sectors To Identify And Remove Barriers

To make New Brunswick more accessible, government will work with people, businesses and organizations in every part of society. The goal is to find, fix and prevent barriers in the places where people live, learn, work and play.

How will we get there?

1. Listen to people who experience barriers to learn what needs to change.
2. Develop a government-wide accessibility plan to guide improvements across departments.
3. Help public organizations (like municipalities and schools) create their own accessibility plans.
4. Support small businesses and community organizations in identifying and removing barriers.
5. Make sure emergency plans across sectors have accessible emergency measures.

What actions will we take?

- **Listen to people with lived experience**
 - Make it **easy** for New Brunswickers to **share feedback** and ideas about barriers and **solutions**.
 - Use what we learn to shape actions and standards.
- **Create and publish Government Accessibility Plans**
 - Release the first accessibility plan by December 2025.
 - Publish an updated plan by December 2028.

- These plans will include all government departments and agencies listed in Part 1 of the First Schedule of the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*.
- Each plan will:
 - Describe how people with a disability were consulted;
 - List actions already taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility;
 - Set out future actions for the next three years;
 - Show how accessibility was considered in new policies, programs or services.
- Engage other sectors to plan for accessibility
 - Consult with health care, education, crown corporations, post-secondary institutions, and other public-serving organizations.
 - Work with them to understand how they can create their own accessibility plans and meet future requirements and timelines.
- Support small organizations
 - Provide a guide to help organizations (such as small businesses and non-profits) create accessibility plans.
 - Offer training to help understand what accessibility means and why it matters.
 - Launch a grant program to help small organizations make accessibility upgrades.
- Improve accessibility in emergency planning
 - Review all government emergency preparedness plans to ensure they consider people with different needs and barriers.
 - Share tools and resources with all sectors to help them make their emergency preparedness plans more accessible.



Progress and Performance

Government will track progress by measuring:

- How many people and organizations are involved;
- How many barriers are identified and addressed;
- The number of accessibility plans created;
- How often resources are used;
- How much funding is provided through grants;
- The number of accessible emergency plans in place.



Goal 2

Create a Strong Culture of Accessibility in New Brunswick

New Brunswick's *Accessibility Act* became law thanks to the leadership and advocacy of **people with a disability**, their allies and members of the **Legislative Assembly**.

Passing the law is just the beginning. Being able to fully participate where you live, learn, work and play, is a human right. Creating a **strong culture of accessibility** across the province, where accessibility is **prioritized** and **celebrated** means making accessibility part of everyday thinking.

How will we get there?

1. Raise awareness about accessibility rights and responsibilities.
2. Build knowledge and capacity across the province to improve accessibility.
3. Increase use of accessibility impact assessments to inform government decisions.
4. Share progress regularly and in accessible ways.

What actions will we take?

- Raise awareness and celebrate progress
 - Offer public education on accessibility rights.
 - Provide sector-specific training to help organizations understand their responsibilities.
 - Introduce annual accessibility awards to recognize individuals and organizations leading the way.

- Apply an accessibility lens in government decision-making
 - Include accessibility impacts in government budget planning and decision-making processes.
 - Publish reports on how accessibility was considered in key decisions.
- Report on progress in a meaningful way
 - Run a benchmark survey to collect information and public feedback on accessibility across the province.
 - Set clear targets to measure progress.
 - Gather input from people with lived experience to better understand different perspectives.
 - Use accessible formats for all communication about progress.

Progress and Performance

Growth will be tracked in:

- Visits to the accessibility website and return traffic (showing increased engagement);
- Participation in training programs;
- Completion and use of accessibility impact assessments across government.



Goal 3

Develop and Enforce Accessibility Standards

Accessibility standards are legal rules that help make sure everyone can fully participate in daily life. These standards set the minimum requirements for accessibility in key areas like employment, buildings, outdoor spaces and communication.

Over the next five years, New Brunswick will create and enforce new accessibility standards. These will be based on advice from the Accessibility Advisory Board, with help from advisory committees made up of people with lived experience and sector-specific knowledge.

Government will also put systems in place to make sure these rules are followed.

How will we get there?

1. Create and roll out standards step by step, including helping people and involved sectors understand how standards are developed and what they mean.
2. Include enforcement and penalties for those who don't comply.

What actions will we take?

- Develop and enforce standards in three priority areas
 - Information and Communications
 - Employment
 - Built Environment (indoor and outdoor public spaces)

- Begin work on additional areas
 - Government will also support the early development of standards for **two more priority areas**. The Board will create advisory committees for these areas to start gathering information and drafting proposals.
- Create a system to handle complaints
 - Make it easy for people to report barriers they experience.
 - Develop clear processes to review complaints, investigate problems and follow-up.
- Build a compliance and enforcement system
 - Appoint inspectors to investigate non-compliance.
 - Introduce orders with timelines for fixing issues.
 - Use administrative penalties (fines) when necessary.
 - Follow up on serious or ongoing violations to make sure the rules are respected.

Progress and Performance

Measuring progress will be done by tracking:

- The work of advisory committees developing new standards;
- Government's adoption of standards based on the Board's recommendations;
- The number and outcomes of compliance investigations, including:
 - Orders issued;
 - Timelines met;
 - Penalties collected.

Implementing the Strategic Plan on Accessibility

The **Accessibility Office** will lead the coordination of this plan and report on progress over the next five years. This includes:

- Working with all parts of government, the private sector, the community sector and New Brunswickers;
- Helping organizations understand their roles and responsibilities;
- Sharing regular updates that are clear, accessible and easy to understand;
- Tracking what's working and what needs to improve.

Next Steps

Government wants to hear from New Brunswickers to make sure accessibility plans reflect the needs and experiences of people across the province. Input is invited through:

- Surveys;
- Focus Groups;
- Community meetings;
- Submissions from individuals, organizations, and governments.

The first Government of New Brunswick Accessibility Plan will be published in December 2025. This plan will guide actions across all departments and agencies and show how accessibility is being improved across the public service.

The Accessibility Office Wants to Hear From you

The Accessibility Office is a great place to start if you have questions, feedback or insight on barriers and accessibility in New Brunswick.

Office hours are Monday to Friday between 8:15 am and 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays.

Phone: 1- 844-444-5511

Emails: AO-BA@GNB.CA





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