



**Accessibility Checklist and Funding  
Guidelines for Businesses and Building  
Owners**

In 2017, the Nova Scotia government passed the Accessibility Act to cultivate a more equitable and barrier-free province for all Nova Scotians. The Act recognizes accessibility as a human right and sets a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. The legislation outlines what we need to do as a province to improve accessibility and ensure that every Nova Scotian can participate in our society. The Accessibility act has designed its definition and standards of accessibility through public consultation with persons with disabilities and community organizations. Consultation revealed that an accessible province must have the following characteristics:

- **Inclusive and Equitable** – Persons with disabilities have access to the same resources, services, and infrastructure as other Nova Scotians, are able to participate in society, and lead meaningful, fulfilling lives.
- **Barrier-Free** – Persons with disabilities do not face barriers to buildings, sidewalks, or outdoor spaces. They have equitable access to education, health care, employment, affordable housing, communications, and transportation. There are enough services for the people who need them.
- **Safe and Respectful** – Persons with disabilities feel safe in their communities. They do not face stigma or discrimination.
- **Educated and Aware** – Nova Scotians are aware of issues related to accessibility and disability.
- **Proactive** – Accessibility is considered at all stages of developing a program or policy information, and facilities are universally accessible.

This document provides a checklist for businesses for fostering an accessible space and will provide guidance for funding opportunities for businesses who wish to become more accessible. The checklist will be guided by the three principles of accessibility found in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces: **Whole Journey Approach, Universal Design and Seasonal Maintenance**



## Of Nova Scotians Have some form of Disability

- **Whole journey approach**—all parts of a journey are interlinked and equally important. A single obstacle can make it impossible to complete the journey, even if the rest of the way is accessible.
- **Universal design**—any environment should be designed to meet the needs of anybody wishing to use it, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.
- **Seasonal maintenance**—seasonal conditions, such as snow and ice, can create barriers to accessibility; seasonal maintenance can help to ensure that public spaces are accessible at all times

Building Exterior	Yes	No	Suggestions
Are there accessible parking spaces in your parking lot?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check with the municipality for regulations of accessible parking (Call 311)
Are accessible parking spaces clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Purchase a sign and post in a visible location
Is there an accessible parking space to accommodate vehicles equipped with a mechanical lift or a wheelchair ramp?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that designated parking space 3400 mm or larger Identify it with an "Accessible Van" sign
Is there a curb ramp from the parking onto the sidewalk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check with the municipality to determine steps for retrofitting
Is the route to the building entrance slip and fall resistant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repair uneven paving Replace gravel with asphalt
Is the entrance route at least 36 inches wide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Widen route or change landscaping
Do you use salt outside your building when there is ice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure the area is salted frequently throughout the winter months
Is there a direct continuous path free of obstacles connecting building entrance to a pedestrian route, parking, and/or public transit?			Remove obstacles or cultivate a different path

Building Entrance	Yes	No	Suggestions
Is the main entrance easily seen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paint entrance doors in a colour that contrasts with surrounding surfaces
Is the entrance well-lit at night?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Install automatic lights
If the main entrance is accessed by steps, is there a ramp?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Install a ramp that is that is at least 59 inches wide and has no more than 354 inches between landings
Does the main entrance door have an automatic door opener?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Install an automatic door opener
Where an exterior door to a vestibule is automatic, is the interior door also equipped with an automatic door opener as well?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Install an interior automatic door opener
If there are two doors in a series, e.g. vestibule, is the distance between the doors at least 48 inches plus the width of the doors when swinging into the space?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remove inner door Change door swing
Are door handles 48 inches high or less and operable with a closed fist?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower handles Replace inaccessible knobs or latches with lever or loop handles Install power-assisted or automatic door openers

## Accessibility Checklist

Can doors be opened without too much force (5 lbs maximum for interior doors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjust or replace closers Install lighter doors Install power-assisted or automatic door openers
Are carpets or mats no higher than 1/2 inch thick?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace or remove mats
Are edges of carpets or mats securely attached to minimize tripping hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secure carpeting or mats at edges
On the pull side of doors, next to the handle, is there at least 18 inches of clear wall space so that a person using a wheelchair or crutches can get near to open the door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reverse the door swing if it is safe to do so. Move or remove obstructing partitions.
If the main entrance is not accessible, is there an alternative accessible entrance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Designate an entrance and make it accessible
If an accessible entrance is not obvious, does signage exist?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Install signage to indicate where entrance is
Is the International Symbol of Accessibility (Appendix Figure 2) displayed at entrances that are accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Display International Symbol of Accessibility at accessible entrances
Is the accessible entrance close to a drop off zone or designated accessible parking space?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Designate area outside of accessible entrance as a pickup and drop off zone or as accessible parking

Building Interior	Yes	No	Suggestions
<p>Do doors and door frames have good color contrast with surrounding wall surfaces and floors?</p> <p>Does the edge of color contrast with the rest of the step?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Redesign areas to ensures good color contrast</p>
<p>Do all objects on circulation paths through public areas, e.g. fire extinguishers, drinking fountains, signs, etc., protrude no more than 4 inches into the path?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Remove object</p> <p>Add tactile warning such as permanent planter or partial walls</p>
<p>Are aisles and pathways to goods and services at least 36 inches wide?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Rearrange goods, equipment and furniture</p>
<p>Are tripping hazards clearly marked and have a cane-detectable floor finish?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Mark all tripping hazards</p> <p>Install cane-detectible floor (Appendix Figure 1)</p>
<p>Do you have background music? Is it low enough in volume so that customers can hear conversations clearly?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Eliminate or lower in volume any background music</p>
<p>Is there a 5-foot circle or T-shaped space for turning a wheelchair completely at the end of each thoroughfare?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Rearrange furnishings to clear more room</p>

## Accessibility Checklist

---

Can controls (light switches, security and intercom systems, emergency/alarm boxes, etc.) be operated with one hand and without tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist?

Replace control

Do you provide low sensory shopping hours? (dim lights, no music, etc.)?

Schedule specific and consistent blocks of time throughout the week for a low sensory shopping experience

Do you have sufficient lighting to ensure colors, patterns, and signage are all clearly identifiable?

Check key locations for lighting quality and adjust as needed.

Ensure light is non-glare

---

Signage	Yes	No	Suggestions
Is there signage and wayfinding along interior routes—entrances, exits, washrooms, and service areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjust wayfinding routes and signage to all routes of the building.
Are there sufficient visual clues to help orientation, such as directional indicators in large open areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In large open areas install directional cues for bathrooms, shopping isles, exits and checkouts
Is there is an alternate system to communicate information on signs to consumers with visual impairments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer alternative formats such as large print, electronic format, or braille
Are the characters in permanent signage (e.g. building address, room numbers and names, exit signs, and directional information) on a contrasting background?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Change signage</p> <p>Install tactile sign</p> <p>Relocate sign</p>
Are text characters raised (sized between 5/8 and 2 inches high, with high contrast)?			
Is there Braille?			



Washrooms	Yes	No	Suggestions
Do washroom doors have Braille lettering? Raised (tactile) male/female symbol? Raised letters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Install Braille and tactile signage
Is there clear space to maneuver on both sides of the doorway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remove obstacles on either side of the doorways
Is the washroom well lit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Install better lighting
In accessible stalls and washrooms, is the internal dimension between walls at least 1700 mm (67 in.), preferably 2500 mm (98 in.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retrofit a standard stall to align with accessible washroom dimensions (at least 1700mm)
Is there a clear turning diameter of at least 1700 mm within the universal washroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remove obstacles if possible, otherwise provide indication that the washroom is not accessible.
Are washroom amenities accessible from a wheelchair—mirror, soap dispenser, paper towel dispenser, automatic hand dryer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See appendix 1 figure 3 to see minimum requirements for bathroom amenities
Are there grab bars installed in accordance with Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See appendix figure 3 to see minimum requirements for grab bar

## Accessibility Checklist

---

Is the toilet seat located within 400–460 mm (16–18 in.) of the floor?   Adjust height of paper towel dispenser

---

Does the toilet have either hand operated flushing controls that are easily reachable to a wheelchair user or automatic flushing?   Install automatic flushing

---

Is the toilet paper dispenser placed within 600–800 mm (24–31 in.) of the floor, located in front of the toilet seat, and easily reached?   Move location of paper towel dispenser

---

Does the toilet stall door swing outwards?   Adjust door swing

---

is there an accessible toilet within the universal washroom?   Retrofit stall and toilet to align with accessibility standards (Figure 3 in Appendix)

---

## Business ACCESS-Ability Grant Program

Businesses can apply for a cost-shared grant through Nova Scotia's department of Communities, Culture and Heritage (CCH) to make accessibility-related improvements. Improvements can be for clients and customers, for employees, or both. The provincial government will pay 66% of the improvement and businesses will take on 33% of the cost. There is 100,000 dollar cap per

The province will consider categories of funding for improvements:

### **Built Environment:**

Removing physical barriers for persons to access business services, by installing ramps, accessible washrooms, door openers, and other projects.

### **Accessible Communications Services:**

Ensuring that all customers, clients, and employees can access information related to a business.

### **Assistive Devices:**

Ensuring that employees and consumers who are person with disabilities have the devices they need to effectively do their jobs and access places of business.

### **Universal Design Capacity Building:**

Training in the field of Universal Design, both for technical services professionals and for persons with disabilities wishing to better understand its value.

### **Accessible Transportation:**

Providing support for businesses to improve access to transportation services.



COMMUNITIES,  
CULTURE, AND HERITAGE

## Community ACCESS-Ability Grant Program

In the same vein as the Business ACCESS-Ability Grant, the province will cover two thirds of an accessibility improvement for one of the five categories. However this grant program allots money for not for profit organizations.

### **Who can apply?**

- Registered non-profit society/ cooperative in good standing
- Federally incorporated non-profit organization
- Nova Scotian Mi'kmaw Band Councils
- Municipalities

## Nova Scotia Health Authority Wellness Funds

The Nova Scotia Health Authority has started a grant program through Community Health Boards to fund programs and projects that better the health of communities. Applications can be submitted at <https://www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca/wellness-funds>



### Who is eligible?

- Not for profit organizations

## Federal Enabling Accessibility Fund

The Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) provides funding for projects that make Canadian communities and workplaces more accessible for persons with disabilities. EAF aims to create more opportunities for persons with disabilities to take part in community activities, programs and services, or to access employment. Grants can be used for creating a more accessible built environment and will fund up to up to 100,000 dollars

### Who Is eligible?

- not-for-profit organization
- business
- small municipality
- Indigenous organization (including band councils, tribal councils and self-government entities)



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada

# Appendix 1



Figure 1: Cane-detectable Flooring



Figure 2: Universal Symbol of Accessibility

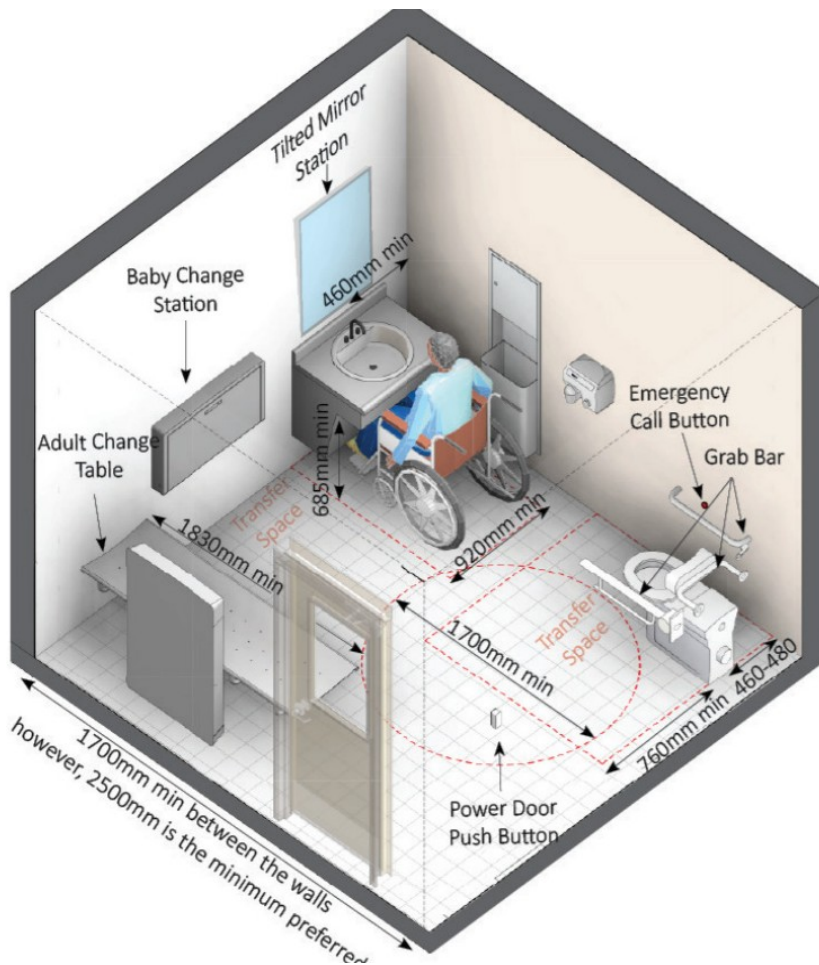


Figure 3: Building dimensions and standards for accessible bathrooms (Retrieved from Nova Scotia Interim Design Guidelines for Public Buildings)