

# **Inclusive Public Engagement Policy**

**Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**



Available in alternate formats.

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## Overview

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Access.Inclusion.Equality: A Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities is a broad policy framework that guides government actions enabling citizens with disabilities access to the same opportunities and services as citizens who do not have disabilities. The framework is founded upon several principles including 'Nothing About Us Without Us.' This means it is essential for people to be involved in the decisions which most closely affect them.

This policy has been informed by the community of people with disabilities and provides:

- Information on conducting inclusive public engagement sessions including
  - planning for the event;
  - what to look for in choosing an accessible venue;
  - promoting, conducting and evaluating the event; and
  - checklists, templates, information sheets and tips.

This policy provides instructive guidance to ensure public engagement processes are accessible to and inclusive of everyone, including persons with disabilities. It is a resource for preparing, planning, and holding public or targeted engagement sessions that are barrier-free. The policy applies to all departments of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The policy will be reviewed regularly and revised as required to reflect current standards and needs.

People are diverse and may require any variety of accessibility features, services or accommodations to enable full participation in a public engagement session. This could include an assistive listening system, barrier-free access, sign language, plain language, interpreting services or a decision-making supporter. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for more information. Consideration of accessibility requirements should begin in the planning process to ensure there are no barriers limiting participation in a public engagement session.

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## **1.0 Planning**

Accessibility considerations are essential throughout the planning stages to ensure public engagement sessions and meetings are inclusive and barrier-free for participants.

### **1.1 Venue**

Ensure the venue is accessible. Consider:

- Building and meeting room accessibility, for example:
  - entrance, ramps, elevators
  - clear lighting
  - accessible washrooms
  - visual alarms
  - audio systems
  - signage (clear, descriptive, Braille)
  - accessible parking and barrier-free route to building entrance.
- Transportation
  - access to public transit (St. John's and Corner Brook)

See Appendix B: Twelve Accessibility Basics for Public Engagement.

An on-site visit is the best way to confirm accessibility of the venue. The organizer or someone in the community who is familiar with accessibility standards and features can do the site-visit.

### **1.2 Consultant**

Consultants contracted to organize or facilitate must be familiar with accessibility features; disability-related accommodations that could be requested; and be able to respond appropriately.

These expectations should be included in Request for Proposals (RFPs) and contracts, as relevant. See Appendix C: Sample Tag Lines.

### **1.3 Disability-related Accommodations**

Public engagement sessions may require the provision of a variety of accessibility features, services or accommodations to enable participants to fully engage in the consultation process. This could include technical aids or devices, personal supports or disability-related accommodations. See Appendix D: Disability-related Accommodations, Alternate Formats and Accessible Features.

Planners must be prepared to provide accommodations as requested. Disability-related Accommodation Providers will need to be booked in advance of the event. See Appendix E: Disability-related Accommodation Providers.

Promotional material must include information that disability-related accommodation is available upon request. See Appendix C: Sample Tag Lines.

Presentation and meeting materials should be available in advance for alternate formatting, interpreters and caption providers. See Appendix D: Disability-related Accommodations, Alternate Formats and Accessible Features.

Note: For larger events and or events targeted to people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, consider providing American Sign Language interpreting and captioning regardless of whether it is requested.

## **1.4 Exemptions**

There may be occasions when an accessible venue or disability-related accommodation service cannot be secured. Should this happen, every effort must be made to ensure people have equitable opportunity to participate. Contact the Communications and Public Engagement Branch to discuss and determine next steps. The Disability Policy Office is available to help problem solve.

## **2.0 Promoting**

Potential participants must be aware of the provision of disability-related accommodations and accessible features of the event. See Appendix F: Sample Accommodation Form.

### **2.1 Promotional materials**

- Use clear (plain) language.
- Advise that disability-related accommodations are available upon request.
- Advise if sign language interpreting or captioning is provided.
- Advise that it is a scent-free event.
- Give clear directions and offer support:
  - Consider including a map and public transportation information;
  - Provide contact name, mobile number, and email for more information.
- Provide options to receive submissions (e.g. email, telephone, websites, mail).

## 2.2 Promoting the event

Use various promotional methods appropriate for public engagement. Consider:

- Radio, TV, provincial and regional newspapers;
- Email, Social media and websites that are accessible and compatible with assistive technology software; and
- Direct invitations to organizations of and for persons with disabilities.

## 2.3 Communication

When referencing persons with disabilities it is important to put the person first, for example:

- Person who uses a wheelchair...
- Person who is blind...
- Person who does not have a disability...

The use of words like 'impaired', 'suffers from', 'normal people', 'those people' or 'the disabled' are not appropriate and often interpreted as derogatory and take away from individuals self-worth and power. See Appendix G: Words with Dignity and Appendix H: Communication.

## 3.0 Providing Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Accessibility features decrease physical and technological barriers. Potential participants must be aware of the accessibility features; provision of Disability-related accommodations; include a tag line in promotional material. See Appendix C: Sample Tag Lines. Be prepared to respond to such requests.

Features and accommodations can include: interpreting services, assistive listening devices and material in alternate formats. See Appendix D: Disability-related Accommodations, Alternate Formats and Accessible Features.

## 3.1 Interpreting Services

Interpreters enable two-way communication. There are many different types of interpreters:

- **Sign language interpreters** facilitate communication between people who use sign language (i.e. American Sign Language) and people who use spoken languages (i.e. English or French).
- **Plain language interpreters** interpret information and reframe the information into plain (clear) language.
- **Oral interpreters** facilitate communication in group situations for individuals who are hard of hearing.

- **Intervenors** facilitate the interaction of a person who is deafblind with other people and the environment.
- **Decision-making supporters** assist an individual to communicate his/her will and intent to inform decisions.

Disability-related Accommodations Providers will need to be booked in advance of the event. See Appendix E: Disability-related Accommodations Providers.

For additional information on interpreting services see Appendix D: Disability-related Accommodations, Alternate Formats and Accessible Features.

### 3.2 Hearing Assistive Technology or Assistive Listening Devices

There are many auditory and non-auditory devices that are collectively known as Hearing assistive technology or assistive listening devices:

- Wireless **transmitting systems/devices** transmit sound directly to the listener requiring equipment such as: personal listening receivers and transmitters, headsets and neck-loops.
- Real-time **captioning** translates the spoken word into text remotely or on-site; to provide remotely a phone and internet jack or Wi-Fi are required.
- **Computerized Note-taking**: note-takers augment the information presented, not verbatim, relaying information by print/text to the individual(s).
  - Computerized note-taking is not a replacement for captioning requests.
- **Telephone communication devices**:
  - **Teletypewriter (TTY)**: sends text messages through a phone line.
  - **Relay service**: operator assisted communication between person who is Deaf or hard of hearing using a TTY and a person using a phone (voice).
  - **Mobile Applications**: video call (face-to-face sign language conversation) or text to speech and speech to text.
  - **Telephone amplifiers**: in-line amplifiers replace or attached to the handset.

For additional information on Hearing Assistive Technology or Assistive Listening Devices, see Appendix D: Disability-related Accommodations, Alternate Formats and Accessible Features.

### 3.3 Alternate Formats

Alternate formats are ways of publishing information other than standard print. Promotional material, presentations, documents or reference materials may be requested in an alternate format and should be made available in a timely manner. Alternate formats include:

- Electronic text formats (HTML, .txt, .doc, .pdf)
- Large print



- Braille
- Audio format (MP3)

For additional information on creating accessible information for alternate formats see Appendix D: Disability-related Accommodations, Alternate Formats and Accessible Features.

### **3.5 Other Considerations**

Other areas to think about include:

- Buffet style lunches present barriers for some participants. Consider other arrangements or having volunteers available to assist with meal take-up and transport; and
- Access to a couch or cushioned chair can be helpful for individuals who experience chronic pain and can enable continued participation.

## **4.0 Conducting the Event**

It is important to maintain consideration of accessibility and communication requirements throughout the event. See Appendix I: Role of a Chairperson/Facilitator and Presenters.

### **4.1 Disability-related Accommodations**

Be prepared to provide disability-related accommodations as requested. This may include:

- Visual Language Interpreter such as an American Sign Language interpreter;
- Hearing Assistive Technology such as FM loop or audio system;
- Real-time Captioning;
- Alternate format of materials such as large print, or Braille;
- Personal supports such as a clear (plain) language interpreter or decision-making supporter; and
- Individuals may bring service animals as a disability-related support. Providing a water bowl is considerate.

For additional information see Appendix D: Disability-related Accommodations, Alternate Formats and Accessible Features.

## 4.2 Room Set-up

- Keep a clear sight line between participants and speakers, interpreters or screens.
- Reserve seating near the front for people who require a closer view or use visual cues.
- Ensure adequate clear space for individuals using wheelchairs or scooters to move easily throughout the room.

## 4.3 Presentation

- If dimming lights, ensure there is enough light for people to see speakers and interpreters. Dim only behind the screen or check with participants on what works best.
- Describe visuals and have speakers identify themselves at all times when they speak and if possible casually identify when people enter or leave the room.
- Provide handouts in requested formats to supplement oral presentations.
- If using clicker technology, have access to Braille and large font units.
- When using overheads or PowerPoint slides:
  - Follow slide format guidelines (see Appendix J);
  - Read verbatim the information on each slide or overhead; and
  - When making a visual reference to specific information on a slide describe what it is you are referencing (e.g. instead of pointing to it and saying “Over here...”, say “Figures from the 2010 fiscal year indicate...”)

## 4.4 Communication

People have varying abilities to receive, express or process information. If you are unsure, ask the person how they would like you to interact with them.

Patience, respect and a willingness to communicate are your best tools. See Appendix H for sample communication guidelines.

## 4.5 Participant Feedback

Feedback forms should include:

- A question regarding the level of satisfaction with accessibility features; and
- Various avenues for providing feedback i.e. email, phone, text, Facebook.

## **5.0 Evaluating the Public Engagement Process**

Where relevant, post-public engagement evaluations should consider the following:

- Participation of persons with disabilities;
- Inclusion of disability-related advocates and service providers; and
- Availability of disability-related accommodations and supports.

**For more information or problem solving, contact the [Disability Policy Office](#).**

# Appendixes

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## Appendix A: Glossary

### Accessible

- A general term used to describe something that can be easily accessed or used.

### Alternate Formats

- A format of publishing information other than standard print. Common alternate formats include: electronic, large print, MP3, Braille, CD/DVD, descriptive video, signed video, on-screen text / e-text or clear language. A tactile diagram or pictogram may be a component of an accessible format document.

### Assistive Technology (AT)

- An umbrella term that includes assistive devices, adaptive technology and rehabilitative devices. Includes a range of devices, equipment and software such as mobility devices, magnifying devices, visual alarms, hearing aids and speech software.

### American Sign Language (ASL)

- A visual language with unique vocabulary, grammar, syntax and social rules of use. Meaning is conveyed through signs that are composed of specific hand shapes; palm orientation; movement and location of the hands; and signals on the face and body.

### Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) or Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT)

- Wireless Systems: use FM technology (radio waves): infrared (IR) or audio loop (induction) systems to transmit sounds wirelessly to the listener's hearing aids or head set.

### Barrier

- Anything that prevents people with disabilities from participating on an equal basis as others. Barriers can be physical, attitudinal, systemic or technological.

## **Braille**

- A series of raised dots that can be read by touch, usually fingertips.

## **Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART)**

- A specially trained caption provider transcribes voice to text with 1-2 second delay through use of specialized technology. Also used in very specific situations are:
  - Computer-Assisted Note taking: limited information; does not capture everything being said; and
  - Caption Display Board: manually transcribes what is being spoken into displayed captions.

## **Clear or Plain Language**

- A set of principles that focus on requirements of the reader and includes sentence length, sentence structure and the use of headings, fonts and white space. Information is presented in a logical order using common, everyday words and expressions familiar to the culture of the reader; avoids jargon and uses a minimum of technical language.

## **Clear Print**

- A design approach that considers design elements, such as font style, type size, contrast, page navigation, words, graphics and white space. Considered in all forms of written communication including flyers, notices, newsletters, pamphlets, application forms and web site pages.

## **Consumer**

- People who self-identify as having a disability.

## **Described Video**

- The use of an audio 'voice over' describing what is being portrayed visually, such as on a screen, monitor or television program.

## **Decision-making Supporter**

- A person (or persons) who support an adult to communicate his/her will and intent to inform decisions. Supporters know the person well and have a relationship of trust that brings an understanding to the person's unique way of communicating and understanding. Supporters do not make decisions for the person and are not substitute decision makers. Supporters may assist the adult throughout the decision making process or for a specific purpose.

## **Disability-related Accommodation/ Supports**

- Any technical aid or device, personal support, disability-related support or other accommodation a person may require. This can include, but is not limited to: accessible meeting rooms; accessible formats such as Braille and clear language; mobility supports to attend a meeting; visual language interpreters or decision-making supporters.

## **Disability**

- The Disability Policy Office uses language of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which does not define disability but rather describes it as "...an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and active participation in society on an equal basis with others." The Convention describes people with disabilities as including people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

## **Induction Loop**

- A system that transmits an audio signal directly into a hearing aid via a magnetic field, greatly reducing background noise, competing sounds, reverberation and other acoustic distortions that reduce clarity of sound.

## **Inclusion**

- Meaningful participation in all aspects of society with access to services and opportunities for persons with disabilities equal to that of people without disabilities; this requires active removal of barriers and provision of disability-related supports.

## **Infra-red Hearing System**

- An assistive audio system which typically consists of an audio source, an infrared radiator (transmitter) and infrared listening receivers. Used with a lightweight headset, a hearing aid or a direct audio input cord. Infra-red systems are more secure as they do not use radio bands like FM systems.

## **Sign Language Interpreters**

- Visual Language Interpreters who facilitate communication between people who use sign language (for example: ASL) and people who use spoken languages (English or French).

## **Intervenor**

- An individual who provides a professional service, paid or voluntary, to facilitate the interaction of a person who is Deaf-blind with other people and the environment.

## **Oral Interpreters**

- An individual who facilitates communication in group situations where individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing rely on speech reading. The oral interpreter mouths the words of the speaker, changing them when necessary to synonyms that are more visible on the lips.

## **Plain or Clear Language Interpreter**

- A person chosen and directed by an individual to explain information in clear language.

## **Screen Enlargers**

- Software used to make text and images larger.

## **Screen Readers**

- Software programs that read out loud what is displayed on the computer monitor. JAWS is a popular screen reader software used primarily by people who are blind and Kurzweil is a popular software for people with learning disabilities.

## **Tele-typewriter (TTY)**

- A telephone communication device that sends typed messages through a phone line via a TTY to a TTY communication or a TTY to a phone with the use of a relay service where an operator facilitates the conversation between two parties by relaying the information between typed message and spoken language (type message to voice; voice to type message). Note: "Texting" (mobile devices; social media; messenger technology) is increasingly preferred over the use of the TTY.

## **Universal Design (UD)**

- The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design. Universal design principles can be applied to any product, environment or communication, including built environment, web pages and education curricula.

### **USB (or Memory Stick)**

- Data storage device integrated with a USB (universal serial bus) port on a computer.

### **Video Relay Services (VRS)**

- A telecommunications service that enables people to use an operator to facilitate conversation between two parties by relaying the information between sign language and spoken language.

### **Voice Recognition Systems**

- Computer software programs that are operated by voice instead of a mouse or keyboard.

### **Way-Finding**

- The process of using spatial and environmental information to find one's way in the built environment.

### **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0**

- Internationally recognized standards (ISO/IEC 40500:2012) that define how to make web content accessible, including making websites accessible for screen reader software.



## **Appendix B -1: Twelve Accessibility Basics for Public Engagement**

### **Location / Venue**

1. Accessible entrances - same entrance as used by other participants and level entry or ramped. If ramped, the slope should be between 1:16 and 1:20 (if necessary 1:12 is minimal acceptable slope); door width of minimum 36”.
2. Accessible parking available (blue zone parking).
3. Accessible washroom(s), including min 32” door opening and 5” turning space. If there is an elevator, ensure it is working and does not require a key to operate.
4. If main entrance and washrooms do not have automatic door openers, assign a volunteer to assist.
5. Check for barriers in entrance, hallways, meeting rooms and washrooms, including obstacles, debris, waste containers, loose cords or tiles.

### **Communications**

6. Include tag line indicating that publications / documents are available in alternate format.
7. Use clear (plain) language and clear print (minimum 12 point font size, sans serif font with clear contrast between text and background).
8. Make electronic documents and web sites accessible (WCAG version 2.0 Level AA).

### **Disability-related Accommodations**

9. Include tag line on all notifications and invitations asking people to let you know of any requirements for disability-related supports; provide contact name and phone/text number.
10. Include tag line that the event is scent free.
11. For large events; automatically provide audio, captioning and sign language interpretation.

### **Safety**

12. Designate a person(s) to assist with evacuations and ensure all staff/volunteers know the location of accessible evacuation routes.

## Appendix B -2: Accessibility Checklist

The accessibility checklist should not be used as a prescriptive or exhaustive list, but rather as a reference point to help identify barriers.

A more detailed checklist used for accessibility auditing is available from the Disability Policy Office [www.gov.nl.ca/DisabilityPolicy](http://www.gov.nl.ca/DisabilityPolicy)

<b>Accessibility Checklist</b>		
<b>VENUE</b>		
<b>Access and Parking</b>		
	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Is accessible or Blue Zone parking available?		
Is the entry level or ramped? If ramped, the acceptable gradient slope should be between 1:16 and 1:20.		
Is there a hand-rail on ramp and steps?		
Is the path of travel clear of barriers, for example, snow or construction materials? Is it smooth with no bumps greater than 13mm (1/2 inch)?		
Do exterior paths of travel have stable, firm and slip-resistant surfaces?		
Is there enough space next to the door for a person using a mobility device to open the door safely? There should be 300mm (12 inches) beyond the latch on the push side of the door and 600mm (24 inches) on the pull side.		
Is there a curb ramp? If so, does it have a gradient of no more than 1:16 and a level space at the top that is clear of obstacles?		
Curb ramps should never extend into the roadway or parking lots.		
Are door entrances at least 810 mm (32 inches) wide?		
If relevant, are elevating devices operational without the assistance of personnel or a key? (for example: chair lift)		
If relevant; is the venue close to public transport?		
<b>Inside the Venue</b>		
	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Can the event be held on one floor, i.e. meeting rooms, refreshment area and washrooms?		

<b>Accessibility Checklist</b>		
If relevant, is elevator in working order?		
Is there adequate circulation space (1500mm x 1500mm or 5 feet by 5 feet) including at the end of dead end corridors, for people who use mobility devices?		
If relevant, are corridors easy to navigate, barrier free and wide enough for people who use mobility devices?		
Is seating space available throughout the seating area for people who use mobility devices?		
Is the flooring non-slip?		
If carpeted – is it securely fastened, low, firm, and level pile or loop? Combined carpet and pad height should not be more than 13 mm. Comment: New carpets can produce off-gassing, which can adversely affect people with environmental sensitivities. Carpets without under padding are preferred.		
Is there a FM or infra-red transmitter system for persons who are hard of hearing? Are headsets and inductive neck loops available?		
If relevant, is there easy access to the stage, i.e. ramp with handrails with the correct gradient? If relevant, is the podium height adjustable?		
Are the washrooms accessible?		
Are eating facilities accessible?		
Is a public phone and TTY available?		
Do items protrude from the wall more than 1100mm (43 inches) that a person could run into? (for example trophy cases)		
Do doorways have at least a 800 mm (32 inch) opening?		
Is there an evacuation or emergency plan in place?		
<b>Meeting Room</b>		
	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Has the room setup allowed space for movement of mobility aids, i.e. wheelchairs, motorized scooters?		
Is there reserved seating near the presenter for sign language interpreters and participants who want to be close to the presenter or screen? Has Hearing Assistive Technology been set up?		
<b>Washrooms</b>		
	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Are washrooms close to the meeting room?		
Are entry doors easy to open?		
Is there a five-foot radius clear space for people using wheelchairs to turn around?		

<b>Accessibility Checklist</b>		
Are there grab bars?		
Are the toilet paper, soap and hand towels within easy reach?		
Is there an accessible washroom stall?		
<b>Lighting</b>		
	Yes/No	Comments
Is the room well-lit and lights in good working order, i.e. not flickering, no glare?		
Is there external lighting (for evening events)?		
<b>Hotel Guest Rooms</b>		
	Yes/No	Comments
Are there accessible guest rooms with accessible bathrooms? How many?		
Is the telephone equipped with a voice amplification system?		
Does the television have closed captioning?		
Is there a visual alarm system?		
<b>Safety and Evacuation</b>		
	Yes/No	Comments
Are corridors and stairwells free of debris and obstacles?		
Is there a designated person to assist with evacuation of participants?		
<b>Printed Materials</b>		
	Yes/No	Comments
Do promotional materials and invitations indicate:		
Disability-related accommodations are available?		
It is a fragrance-free event?		
Contact name, email and phone number?		
Is there a tag line on documents indicating they are available in alternate formats?		
	Yes/No	Comments
Do print documents:		
Use person-first language, i.e. person with a disability rather than disabled person?		
Have short sentences?		
Avoid acronyms, metaphors?		
Use a 12 or 14 point sans serif font (for example: Arial)?		
Avoid blocks of text capitals or italics?		
Have margins the same width and left justified?		

<b>Accessibility Checklist</b>		
Use black text on light coloured background?		
Have a matt finish (not gloss)?		
Electronic documents:		
Do internet web pages comply with accessibility standards (WCAG version 2.0)?		
Do PDF documents comply with accessibility standards (WCAG version 2.0)?		
Do on-line registration forms comply with accessibility standards (WCAG version 2.0)?		
<b>Scheduling - Large Events</b>		
	Yes/No	Comments
Have participants been notified in advance?		
Are sign language interpreters and captioning services booked?		
Is time allotted for conversion of printed material to alternate formats?		
Have audio and assistive listening systems been booked or rented?		
Have their availability been advertised?		
<b>Presentations</b>		
	Yes/No	Comments
Are presenters and organizers informed of requirements for accessible communication?		
Have agendas and materials been provided to interpreters and caption providers one week prior to the event?		
Are handouts of presentations available?		
<b>Other</b>		
	Yes/No	Comments
Are name tags and plates in large font (i.e. 36 point font size)?		
Is there time allotted for set up and testing of audio and assistive listening system before the event?		
Are all electrical cords secured?		
Does venue staff have disability awareness training?		
Have potential participants been informed of the availability of disability-related accommodations?		

## **Appendix C: Tag Lines**

Tag lines are used to let people know about disability-related accommodations that can be made to support their access and participation on an equal basis as others. The following tag line is recommended to provide consistent and clear messages. These should be included as relevant and in a prominent location on all government publications, websites and event notices.

### **Alternate Formats for Website/and Print Publications**

- Available in alternate format upon request.
  - Optional to add: Requests will be processed in a timely manner.

### **eAccess**

- If you experience difficulty in accessing this website or its contents, please contact [insert contact information].
- If you need more information or help accessing website, content please send your question to us at [insert contact information].

### **Invitation for Requesting Disability-related Accommodations**

Invitations and promotional materials should inform participants that they can identify disability-related accommodations required to attend or participate in the meeting or consultation.

- Disability-related accommodations are available upon request. Please contact [insert contact information].

### **Registration Form**

- Please indicate your requirements to help us plan an event that meets your accommodation and inclusion needs. See Appendix F: Sample Accommodation Form.

### **Scent Free**

- This is a scent free event.
  - Optional to add: Please do not use products that have fragrances.

### **Tenders and Requests for Proposal (RFPs)**

- Procedures and deliverables must meet accessibility guidelines and demonstrate inclusivity of persons with disabilities.

## Appendix D: Disability-related Accommodations, Alternate Formats and Accessible Features

### Interpreting Services

Interpreters enable two-way communication. There are many different types of interpreters:

- **Sign language interpreters** facilitate communication between people who use sign language (i.e. American Sign Language) and people who use spoken languages (i.e. English or French). Sign languages are distinct languages with unique syntax and structure used by persons who are Deaf: a socio-linguistic and cultural group whose primary language is sign language.
- **Plain language interpreters** interpret information and reframe the information into plain (clear) language; chosen and directed by the individual requiring the interpretation.
- **Oral interpreters** facilitate communication in group situations for individuals who are hard of hearing.
- **Intervenors** provide professional services, paid or voluntary, to facilitate the interaction of a person who is deafblind with other people and the environment.
- **Decision-making supporters** assist an individual to communicate his/her will and intent to inform decisions having personal knowledge and understanding of the individual's unique identity, communication method and personal history. The decision-making supporter is able to discern a person's will, preferences and personal intent where others may not. **Duties of decision-making supporters include:**
  - Act diligently, honestly and in good faith for the sole benefit of the individual and be accountable solely to the individual and not to health care, social services or any other authority or person;
  - Be guided by the individual's values, beliefs, wishes; and the cultural, spiritual norms and traditions that the individual holds acting in accordance with all applicable legislation and or any relevant agreements or orders.

### Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) or Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

- Devices that enhance audibility include infrared systems and FM systems. They transmit sounds wirelessly to the listener and can be used with hearing aids, cochlear implants or headsets. Equipment may be required such as personal listening receivers and transmitters, headsets and neck-loops.
- Real-time **captioning**, also known as CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation), is the translation of the spoken word into text by a specially trained caption provider:
  - Text appears within 1-2 seconds on a large screen at front of room or on smaller monitors/tablets.
  - Provided remotely or on-site using computer technology and specialized software.
  - For remote access a phone and internet jack or Wi-Fi are required.

- **Computerized Note-taking:** note-takers augment the information presented; not a verbatim transcript; small monitors or laptop screens are used to relay the information to the individual. Unlike captioning, note-taking may be appropriate for smaller gatherings or at the request of a single individual. Computerized note-taking is not a replacement for captioning requests.

## Telephone Communication Devices

- **Teletypewriter (TTY):** sends text messages through a phone line and used by people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Note: TTY is being replaced by mobile phone texting.
- **Relay service:** operator assisted communication between person who is Deaf or hard of hearing using a TTY and a person using a phone (voice).
- **Mobile Applications (Apps):** Mobile video streaming supports a person who is Deaf to have a face-to-face sign language conversation. Mobile phone apps have text to speech and speech to text, video call and other accessibility features.
- **Telephone amplifiers:** in-line amplifiers replace the telephone handset or portable amplifiers which attach to the handset with or without a hearing aid.

## Alerting Devices

- The use of flashing incandescent or florescent light, a loud horn, or a vibration to send a signal (visual smoke alarm, visual doorbell).

## Alternate Formats

Refers to publishing information in ways other than standard print:

- **Large and Illustrated Print** usually associated with people who have partial vision, it is also helpful to people with other types of disabilities or when English is not a first language.
  - Tips for large print formats, include:
    - Use 16 point font, unless the request is for a specific font size;
    - Use high-contrast fonts;
    - Use sans serif font; i.e. Arial or Franklin Gothic;
    - Use a 1.25 line space (or more) between lines to avoid crowding;
    - Avoid the use of italics or all caps; and
    - Use a left-justified margin.
- **Braille** is used by roughly 10% of individuals who are blind, or have partial or low vision. Transcribing documents into Braille takes 1-5 days; turn-around time can be reduced by having a Braille-ready copy available.
  - Tips to prepare a Braille-ready copy document:
    - Provide text descriptions of important symbols, icons, and graphics;
    - Convert columns to continuous text;
    - Indicate new paragraphs with the use of one tab;
    - Eliminate extra blank lines;



- Eliminate use of bold type, underlined or italicized font;
  - Use hyphens for bulleted lists;
  - Use hard page breaks; and
  - Avoid indentations and flush all text to the left.
- **Clear Print** is a design approach that focuses on design elements such as: font style, type, size, contrast and page navigation allowing for various requirements of the readers including people who have partial vision or people with cognitive disabilities or low literacy. Clear print design is required for all forms of written communication including flyers, notices, newsletters, pamphlets, application forms and web site content.
  - Tips for clear print documents:
    - Use words, graphics and white space that follow simple structures;
    - Choose words that are of common usage and familiar to the culture of the reader.

### **Electronic Formats**

- May be requested by individuals who use adaptive technology such as software that enables screen reading or enlarges text electronically.
- Refers to documents stored on USB memory sticks, junk/flash drives, CDs or provided electronically through email or downloading from a web site.

### **E-accessibility**

- Accessibility of electronic information and services (websites).
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.0 AA level is the standard for this policy.

For additional information, see [WCAG Homepage](#).

### **Accessible Portable Document Format (PDF)**

- Documents must be accessible to users of assistive technologies, particularly users of text-to-speech software (screen readers).
- Built-in features in Microsoft Word are used to create documents in accessible format. See Accessible Documents Basic Check List to get started.

Additional information on how to make your document accessible is available at: [OCIO Help](#).

<b>Accessible Documents Basic Check List</b>	
Writing	Minimum 12 font point size; sans serif font such as Arial, Veranda, Franklin Gothic. Left-justified margin. Short sentences and straight forward messages.
Highlighting text	Bold the text. Avoid the use of italic, underline and capital letters.
Layout	Balance text and the use of white space on each page. Use bullet points to avoid long uninterrupted paragraphs.
Diagrams and pictures	Insert using “in line with text” function. Ensure diagrams and pictures are large enough to easily see the detail. Provide written descriptions using the “alt text” function. Avoid using text over or watermarks.
Video and audio clips	Provide captioning for video clips and text transcripts of audio.
Contrast	Dark print on white background (black on white) or Light on dark (white on black or dark blue).
Paper	Avoid glossy and colored paper.

**Note:** Legal obligations known as the duty to accommodate requires that supports and accommodations are provided consistent with human rights laws, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## Appendix E: Disability- related Accommodation Providers

### Interpreting Services

- American Sign Language
  - Interpreting Services of NL (ISNL)  
Phone: 709 753-5621/ TTY: 709 753-5620 Email: [info@isnl.ca](mailto:info@isnl.ca)

### Captioning Services (sample providers)

- Real Time Computerized Assisted Transcription (CART) Remote
  - Accurate Realtime Incorporated  
Phone: 604 685-6050 Website: [www accuraterealtime.com](http://www accuraterealtime.com)
  - Realtime STENOvations  
Phone: 780 455-5564
- Captioning (Closed or Open)
  - NIFCO TV/Video  
Phone: 709 754-6121
  - YouTube Automatic feature of YouTube platform

### Alternate Formats

- Empower, the disability resource center (Braille, Large Print, Audio (MP3)  
Phone: 709 722-4031/ TTY: 709 722-7998 Email: [info@empowernl.ca](mailto:info@empowernl.ca)
- Queen's Printer (out-source Braille, Large Print)  
Phone: 709 729-3210

### Hearing Assistive Technology / Assisted Listening Devices

- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – NL  
Phone: 709 753-3224 / Text: 709 725-3224  
Email: [info@chha-nl.ca](mailto:info@chha-nl.ca)
- Disability Policy Office (Portable system for loan)
- Audio-Video companies

### Other Accommodations

- Computerized Note Takers /Transcription (contact Disability Policy Office)
- Plain Language or Oral Interpreting or Intervenor (contact Disability Policy Office)
- Decision-Making Supporter (chosen and brought by the individual)
- Clear (Plain) Language Interpreters (chosen and brought by the individual)

## Appendix F: Sample Accommodation Form

Please indicate your requirements to help us plan an event that meets your accommodation and inclusion requirements.

### A. Mobility

- Physical accessibility (specify):
- 
- 

### B. Language

- Simultaneous interpretation
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Plain language interpreter
- Langage des signes du Québec (LSQ)

### C. Service

- Oral interpreter
- Assistive listening system
- Intervenor
- Decision-making supporter
- Real time captioning

### D. Alternative media

- Large print
- Electronic format
- Braille
- Captioned videos
- Descriptive videos
- Audio MP3

### E. Other – Please specify:

Dietary:

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---

Evacuation:

---

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Overnight accommodations:

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---

Name of attendant accompanying me to event:

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Name of plain language interpreter:

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Name of decision-making supporter accompanying me to event:

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Other:

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[An alternative when seeking accommodation information in the planning stage is to invite participants to request alternative formats, disability-related accommodations, dietary needs or assistance required in the event of an emergency evacuation. Provide contact information.]

## Appendix G: Words with Dignity

Language is powerful. The following words and phrases will help you choose language that is respectful. Most people with disabilities prefer you use these terms.

Terms to use when referencing people with disabilities:

Use	Instead of
person with a disability person who has a disability people with disabilities	the disabled handicapped afflicted with suffering from special deformed differently abled
person with a mental illness person who accesses mental health services	mentally ill mental insane crazy
person who is deaf person who is late-deafened person who is hard of hearing	the deaf deaf mute hearing impaired
person with a developmental disability person with an intellectual disability	developmentally delayed
person who is blind person who is partially sighted	the blind the visually impaired
person with a learning disability	learning disabled
person with a mobility disability	physically challenged
person who uses a wheelchair	wheelchair bound confined to a wheelchair
accessible parking blue zone parking	disabled parking handicap parking
sport for athletes with disabilities	disabled sport
community of people with disabilities	disabled community
People	those people you people
person without a disability	normal

Remember: Always put the person first. Avoid 'us' and 'them'. **If in doubt, ask.**

## Appendix H: Communication

People have varying abilities to receive, express or process information. If unsure, ask the person how they would like you to interact with them.

Patience, respect and a willingness to communicate are your best tools.

### Sample Communication Tips:

- Identify yourself when approaching; speak directly to the person.
- If you offer assistance, wait until you receive permission or direction.
- If you cannot understand what is being said, do not pretend. Instead, ask the person to repeat him/herself.
- Check to see if the person understands what you have said.
- Rephrase information, using different words if person does not understand, or pose questions that can be answered "yes" or "no".
- If helpful, provide information in different formats.
- People may be accompanied by an intervenor, interpreter or support person; speak directly to the person, not to the intervenor, interpreter or support person.
- Sit down when speaking to an individual who uses a wheelchair or is of short stature; or stand several feet away so they do not have to strain their neck to see you.
- Listen carefully; wait for the person to finish their thoughts.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.
- For large groups, arrange chairs with intermittent spacing to provide opportunity for people using wheelchairs to choose where to sit.
- When assisting someone with low vision: offer your arm (elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly; be precise and clear when providing information (e.g. instead of "Over there" use "By your left knee"); describe the layout of the room including seating arrangements and exits; and inform the person when people are entering and exiting the room. It is okay to use words such as 'look' and 'see'.
- When providing information to someone with hearing loss, keep your voice natural, speaking loudly distorts sounds; attract the person's attention before speaking (it is okay to gently touch someone's shoulder or to wave your hand); face the person as they may be lip reading; ask if they prefer other ways of communicating (e.g. pen/paper).

Of note: People who are Deaf with a capital 'D' are members of the Deaf culture and use American Sign Language (ASL).

## **Appendix I: Role of Chairperson/Facilitator**

The following tips will facilitate accessibility and inclusion.

- Inform participants of the nearest accessible emergency exits and accessible washrooms.
- Briefly describe the content of the agenda and handout materials.
- Remind participants to use microphones and ensure only one speaker at a time.
- Remind participants to say their name before speaking.
- Remind participants that the event is fragrance-free.
- Ensure PowerPoint presentations are read verbatim by the presenter.
- Ask participants periodically throughout the event if their needs are being met.
- Check in with interpreters, intervenors, caption providers and note-takers to ensure the pace is appropriate.


### **Role of Presenters**

The following are suggestions to help present information at events.


- For large public engagement sessions and meetings, make arrangements in advance to convert materials to alternative formats (Braille, large print, electronic format and MP3). If alternative formats are not available, refrain from providing conventional handouts.
- For smaller meetings, ensure alternate formats are available as requested by participants.
- When distributing handouts before the event, ensure requested alternative formats are sent at the same time.
- Prepare audio/visual aids with clear (plain) language using at least 24 point font size, sans serif font with high contrast backgrounds (black on white or white on black). Ensure video material is captioned.
- Ensure video is in descriptive narration format for people who are blind or have partial or low vision, or provide description of the video as it is playing as required.
- Speak clearly and face the audience during the presentation.
- Periodically verify if the message and material is being understood.
- Allow adequate time for attendees to process onscreen messages, for interpreting services to translate (for example: American Sign Language), and captioning services to transcribe.
- Allow time for an attendant, plain language interpreter or decision-making supporter to convey the information.



## Appendix J: Sample PowerPoint Slides

**Accessible PowerPoints** 

- **High contrast between background and text**
  - **Black text on white background is best**
- **24 font size or larger**
- **4-5 bullets per slide**

**Accessible PowerPoints** 

- **Read all content verbatim**
- **Dim lights, if agreeable to group**
- **Ensure sight line for interpreters and audience**
- **Have some hard copies available**