

Accessibility Standards Advisory Board

Annual Report 2025-26

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

This document is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact:

Disability Policy Office

Toll Free: 1-888-729-6279

Text: 709-725-4463

E-mail: disabilitypolicy@gov.nl.ca



Chairperson's Message

The Honourable Chris Tibbs

Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

P.O. Box 8700

St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Tibbs:

On behalf of the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board (the Board), I am pleased to submit this Annual Report, which covers the period of April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. The Board has prepared this Annual Report in accordance with its requirements as a category 3 Provincial Government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. It reflects the activities undertaken during the third year of the 2023-26 Activity Plan and aligns with the strategic directions of the Provincial Government and the Department of Social Supports and Well-Being.

The Board remains dedicated to supporting the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility and inclusion across the province. This commitment includes identifying, removing and preventing barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.

My signature below represents the Board as a whole and reflects our accountability for the results contained within this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey Normore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeffrey Normore

Chair

Table of Contents

Overview	3
Vision	4
Mandate	4
Highlights and Partnerships	5
Report on Performance	7
Issue One: Accessibility Recommendations.....	7
Issue Two: Accessibility Standards	8
Opportunities and Challenges	11

Overview

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Board (the Board) was established in June 2022, following the enactment of the **Accessibility Act** in December 2021. The Board advises the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities (the Minister) on the development, content and implementation timelines of accessibility standards. The Board is also responsible for advising government on its measures, policies, and practices to improve accessibility.

As per Section 9 of the **Accessibility Act**, the Board consists of a minimum of seven members to a maximum of nine members, including a chairperson and vice-chairperson. Members are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on the Minister's recommendation. The Board must include at least 50% persons with disabilities or representatives of disability organizations, and at least one Indigenous person. Members serve three-year terms and may be reappointed once. Members are appointed from the public through a merit-based process administered by the Public Service Commission.

As of March 31, 2026, the following members comprised the Board:

- Jeffrey Normore, Chair (St. John's)
- Trisha Rose, Vice Chair (Mount Pearl)
- Leslie Gilholme, Member (Newman's Cove)
- Juanita Ford, Member (Mount Pearl)
- Joshua Menchions, Member (St. John's)
- Allison Noseworthy, Member (Paradise)
- Kathleen Parewick, Member (St. John's)
- Camille Rose, Member (Come By Chance)

The Board holds at least four regular meetings each year and meets with the Minister at least once per year. Board members receive remuneration and reimbursement of travel expenses to attend in-person meetings, which are covered within the budget of the Disability Policy Office (DPO), a division of the Department of Social Supports and Well-

Being. DPO also funds costs associated with in-person board meetings, including accessible venue rental, IT support, closed-captioning and ASL interpretation for board members or invited guests, as required. DPO also provides secretariat support to the Board. Costs associated with the Board for 2025-26 were \$19,669.76.

Table 1: Accessibility Standards Advisory Board Expenditures 2025-26

Category	Expenditures
Remuneration	\$ 7,310.00
Travel	\$ 531.77
Purchased Services	\$ 11,827.99
Fiscal Year Total	\$ 19,669.76

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Board is not required to submit audited financial statements.

Vision

Newfoundland and Labrador will be a province that is committed to improving accessibility and inclusion for all persons, and to ensure equity, respect, and the prevention and removal of barriers impacting persons living with disabilities.

Mandate

The Board advises and makes recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on:

- Priorities for the establishment of accessibility standards, the content of accessibility standards, and the time periods for their implementation;
- Measures, policies, practices, and other requirements that may be implemented by the Government to improve accessibility;

- Long-term accessibility objectives for furthering the purpose of the **Accessibility Act**; and
- Any other matter relating to accessibility on which the Minister seeks the Board's advice.

Highlights and Partnerships

In 2025-26, the Board provided information and advice to the Provincial Government regarding standard development and opportunities to improve accessibility in policies, programs and initiatives. The Board also continued to collaborate with key stakeholders, both internal and external to government.

The Board provided guidance and feedback to Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee on its work plan to draft recommendations for the accessible customer service standard.

Key activities of the Board included:

- Sought Ministerial approval to add two in-person meetings to the 2026–27 schedule.
- Sought Ministerial direction to designate a Board vice chair.
- Sought approval to integrate accommodations into current and future accessibility standards and to designate employment as the third standard for development.
- Discussed and prepared correspondence to the Minister on how the proposed built environment standard under the **Accessibility Act** aligns with and complements the **Buildings Accessibility Act**.
- Met four times with the Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee Lead to discuss progress and draft recommendations including technical and economic considerations (May 2025, September 2025, November 2025 and January 2026).

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

- Reviewed and advanced Accessible Customer Service Standard recommendations through Board meetings (September 2025, November 2025 and January 2026).
- Prepared and submitted Accessible Customer Service Standard recommendations, including technical and economic considerations, for Ministerial review (February 2026).
- Developed and finalized terms of reference and expression of interest for the Information and Communication Standard Development Committee for Ministerial approval.
- Participated in a presentation by Accessibility Standards Canada on the status of, and key information related to, the federal employment standard (January 2026).
- Developed the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board's next three-year activity plan 2026-2029 (February 2026).
- Initiated the process of preparing for the employment standard by starting a jurisdictional scan across Canada (March 2026).

Report on Performance

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Board identified the two objectives below to assist in monitoring and evaluating the success of the 2023-26 Activity Plan. Both objectives remained a focus throughout the three-year planning period. Throughout the past year, the Board met to discuss and determine recommendations regarding accessibility and accessibility standards.

Issue One: Accessibility Recommendations

Accessibility standards help identify, prevent and remove barriers and improve accessibility. These standards require individuals, private organizations and public entities to identify, prevent and remove these barriers. The Board is responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Minister regarding proposed accessibility standards.

When making these recommendations, consideration is given to the following:

- content related to the accessibility standard;
- how, and who, should implement measures, policies, and practices;
- time periods for implementation; and
- alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2025-26 Objective:

By March 31, 2026, the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board will have provided accessibility recommendations to the Minister, as required.

Indicator	Report on Activities
Met to discuss accessibility issues at least four times per year.	During 2025-26, the Board met five times to discuss accessibility issues. Three meetings were held virtually and two were

Indicator	Report on Activities
	held in-person. In January 2026, the Minister approved the Board's request for two additional in-person meetings for the 2026-27 schedule.
Provided accessibility recommendations to the Minister, as required.	In January 2026, the Board met with the Minister on the progress of standard development. During this meeting, the Board raised other accessibility-related topics including: • barriers accessing condominium board services; • the need for funding options to retrofit housing for accessibility; and • the possibility to allocate funding for small businesses to support their adherence to accessibility standards.

Issue Two: Accessibility Standards

When the Minister determines that an accessibility standard will be developed, the Board will be directed to establish a standard development committee of technical experts. This committee will assist in making recommendations regarding the content and implementation of the accessibility standard, in accordance with sections 11 and 12 of the **Accessibility Act**. At least one half of the committee members will be persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities, and members will also represent organizations, public bodies and departments that will be affected or responsible for matters relating to the standard being developed.

2025-26 Objective:

By March 31, 2026, the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board will make recommendations regarding the content and implementation of the accessibility standard, as required.

Indicator	Report on Activities
Upon Ministerial direction, the Board will establish a standard development committee.	During 2025-26, the Board was not directed to establish a new standard development committee. While a new committee was not established, the Board provided guidance to the existing Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee in its work to draft Accessible Customer Service recommendations and technical and economic considerations. This aligned with proposed timelines within the Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee work plan. In February 2026, the Board submitted the draft recommendations for Ministerial review and direction. The Board also provided recommendations to the Minister on the next standards to be developed. The advice included:

Indicator	Report on Activities
	• integrating accommodations into current and future standards; • prioritizing employment as the third standard for development; and • ensuring ongoing work to prepare for the development of the built environment standard. The Board also started preparing for the third standard for development, employment, by composing a jurisdictional scan.
Upon Ministerial direction, the Board will develop the terms of reference for Ministerial approval.	In 2025-26, the Board developed the Information and Communication Standard Development Committee Terms of Reference. It was submitted for Ministerial approval in March 2026 and received approval in April 2026.

Objectives for 2025-26:

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Board achieved the three-year objectives as set out in the 2023-26 Activity Plan.

Opportunities and Challenges

In 2025-26, the Board continued to build its knowledge and understanding of accessibility and inclusion. Key opportunities and challenges included:

- The Board ensured meaningful engagement and collaboration with entities such as Accessibility Standards Canada and the Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee.
- The Board provided guidance to the to the Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee to support the development of recommendations for accessible customer service standards. The Committee's lived experience, technical expertise, dedication, and volunteer contributions were highly valued by the Board.
- While Board vacancies have posed challenges in previous years, the appointment of a vice-chair in January 2026 strengthened the Board's capacity to advance the development of accessibility standards.