

# Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Goods and Services

## Plain Language Summary

*Submitted to the Minister of Justice  
by the Accessibility Advisory Board*

*May 2025*

This is a plain language summary. It describes 10 accessibility recommendations. These were made by the Goods and Services Standard Development Committee. The committee gave the recommendations to the Accessibility Advisory Board in March 2025. The Board has reviewed the recommendations. They made some changes. The Board then approved the recommendations. The Board gave them to the Minister of Justice.

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# Introduction

Nova Scotia has a law called the Accessibility Act. This law helps the government make standards, or rules, about accessibility in different areas. One of these areas is goods and services. Goods are usually physical items that people buy. Goods include things like food, clothes, books, cars and furniture. Services are activities provided by others that people pay for. Services include things like haircuts, going to the hospital, financial advice, carwashes, computer services, and restaurant meals. Goods and services need to be accessible to everyone. The Accessibility Advisory Board develops recommendations on accessibility rules. The Board gives these to the Minister of Justice. A committee was created to help the Board. It is called the Goods and Services Standard Development Committee, or SDC.

The recommendations are meant to address barriers. These can be barriers in the systems that people use to get goods and services. These barriers can also be in physical places and online. The recommendations have specific actions and conditions. Service delivery providers have to make sure there is accessibility in the following areas.

- When services are disrupted
- Getting feedback from people
- Communicating
- Events
- Staff training
- Use of assistive devices
- Guide and service dogs
- Support persons
- Sign language interpreters
- Making inclusive policies and procedures

These rules are for all businesses and groups that provide goods and services in Nova Scotia. The rules cover services in physical places and online.

There are some exceptions. Very small businesses may not have to follow all the rules. This could mean businesses that have less than 10 employees, or businesses that make less than \$500,000 a year. The committee talked to people to get feedback on the recommendations. They spoke to the following groups.

- People with disabilities
- Groups that support people with disabilities
- Goods and services providers
- Government departments
- Prescribed public sector bodies (PPSBs) like municipalities, libraries, health authorities, education organizations and crown corporations

Below is a short summary of each recommendation.

# Recommendations for a Goods and Services Accessibility Standard

## **Recommendation 1 – Disruptions of Service Delivery**

This recommendation is about when services stop working. Sometimes services stop working for a short time or a long time. This can make things hard for people with disabilities. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do when a service is not working.

- Let the public know when a service is not working.
- Provide information about different ways people can get the service.

## **Recommendation 2 – Service Delivery Feedback Processes**

This recommendation is about giving feedback about services. It is important to get feedback from people with disabilities. This will help to improve the accessibility of the service and how it is delivered. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Create a way to get feedback.
- Create a way to respond to feedback.
- Create a way to check to see if the feedback process is accessible.

## **Recommendation 3 – Service Delivery Communications**

This recommendation is about communicating with service delivery providers. Some people with disabilities have barriers to communication. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Share information in different ways, like in writing, pictures, through spoken words, or sign language.
- Make sure signs and displays are easy to read and understand.
- Train staff to understand different ways of communicating.
- Train staff to recognize different communication needs.

## **Recommendation 4 – Service Delivery Events**

This recommendation is about service delivery events. Public events should be easy for people with disabilities to join. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Make sure event posters and sign-up forms are accessible and easy to use.
- Make sure the place where the event happens is easy to get to and move around in.
- Make sure there are other ways to join the event, like online or in person.
- Make sure there are different ways to communicate at the event, and that people can ask for what they need.
- This does not apply to small, private gatherings.

## **Recommendation 5 – Service Delivery Training**

This recommendation is about training. People who give services need to know how to include and support everyone. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Staff, volunteers, and leaders must get training to help them serve people with disabilities better.
- The government should help by giving tools and resources in accessible formats.
- People with disabilities must be involved in developing or providing the training.

## **Recommendation 6 – Use of Assistive Devices**

This recommendation is about assistive devices. Some people with disabilities use special tools to help them. This includes equipment, software, and apps. It includes things like wheelchairs, screen readers, and voice to text apps. These tools help remove barriers so people can access and use services. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Make sure people with disabilities can use their tools or devices when getting services.
- Service providers must have rules and ways to support the use of these devices.

## **Recommendation 7 – Guide Dogs and Service Dogs**

This recommendation is about guide dogs and service dogs. Some people with disabilities use guide dogs or service dogs to help them. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Service providers must understand that people may bring a guide dog or service dog with them.
- There must be rules and ways to support people who use guide dogs and service dogs when they are getting services.
- People with guide dogs and service dogs must be treated fairly and get the help they need.

## **Recommendation 8 – Support Persons**

This recommendation is about support persons. Some people with disabilities need someone to help them when using services. The person who helps is called a support person. Support persons help make sure people with disabilities can use services fully and safely. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Allow people with disabilities to bring a support person with them.
- Service providers must have rules that make this possible.
- Make sure there are no extra costs or rules that make it hard to bring a support person, unless it is a really big problem for the service provider.

## **Recommendation 9 – Sign Language Interpretation**

This recommendation is about sign language interpreters. Some Deaf people use sign language to communicate. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Make sure that sign language interpreters are available for Deaf people.
- Make sure the service is free for the Deaf person.
- Some public service providers must have a plan to offer sign language interpreters when needed.
- The government must give money to some public service providers to help pay for these services, so they are available when people need them.

## **Recommendation 10 – Policies, Practices, and Procedures**

This recommendation is about policies, practices, and procedures. Policies are like rules. Practices and procedures show people what they have to do step by step to follow the rules. Service providers need clear rules and plans to make sure all the other recommendations happen. Here is what we recommend service providers have to do.

- Service providers must make rules and steps to follow for recommendations 1 to 9.
- These rules must include what to do, how often to check or update the rules, and how to share the rules with others.
- Very small businesses may not have to follow all of these rules.

Having clear plans helps keep things fair and accessible for people with disabilities.