

Building an Accessible New Brunswick

2026 UMNb Annual Conference

Accessibility Office, Department of Post-Secondary Education,
Training and Labour

October 2026



Background of the *Accessibility Act*

- **2019** - *Accessible Canada Act* (federal)
- **2020** – Accessibility legislation recommended in the Disability Action Plan
- **2021/2022** – Select committee on accessibility heard from interested parties and made recommendations
- **2023** - *Achieving Greater Accessibility Framework* document released
- **2024** - NB passed *Accessibility Act* (9th province in Canada)
- **Goal:** full participation for everyone



Principles and Commitments

Guided by **“Nothing without us”**

Accessibility shaped by the insights of those with a disability and/or those who experience barriers

Engagement with all sectors

Raising awareness and providing education and resources is a priority

A more accessible NB by 2040

- The *Accessibility Act* established June 7, 2024
- Create regulatory standards in eight priority areas
 - Information and Communications
 - Employment
 - Built Environment
 - Education
 - Government Services
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Sports and Recreation

Definitions

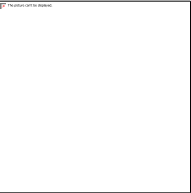
Barrier

- “a **physical** barrier, an **architectural** or **structural** barrier, an **information** or **communications** barrier, an **attitudinal** barrier, a **technological** barrier, a **policy** or a **practice**.”

Disability

“**any impairment**, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — **whether permanent, temporary or episodic** in nature, or evident or not, that, **in interaction with a barrier, hinders** a person’s **full and equal participation** in society.”

Collaborative Approach

- 
- Minister of PETL is responsible for the implementation of the *Act*
- 
- The Accessibility Office established within PETL and supports:
 - Minister of PETL
 - Accessibility Advisory Board
 - Accessibility Advisory Committees
 - Interdepartmental Committee on Accessibility



Accessibility Advisory Board

- Recommends accessibility standards
- Conducts Engagement
- Establishes Advisory Committees
- Advises the Minister
- Publishes Annual Report
- Conducts 5-year review of accessibility standards

Priority Deliverables 2025-2026

- **5-year Strategic Plan** on Accessibility 2025-2030
 - High level priorities for accessibility, focused on shared responsibility and all-sector collaboration
- **Broad and targeted engagement** on accessibility 2025
 - Baseline data on barriers and accessibility in NB
- **GNB's first 3-year Accessibility Plan** 2026-2028 (Part 1 GNB)
 - Builds a foundation for making GNB more accessible (information, spaces, services)

5-year Strategic Plan on Accessibility 2025-2030

1. Work with all sectors to identify and Remove Barriers

- Listen and learn
- Accessibility Plan requirements
- Support small organizations – build capacity
- Assess accessibility in emergency preparedness planning

2. Create a Strong Culture of Accessibility

- Raise awareness and celebrate progress
- Apply an accessibility lens in government decisions
- Report on progress

3. Develop and Enforce Standards

- Develop regulatory standards in 3 priority areas, start 2 more
- Create system to handle complaints
- Build a compliance and enforcement system

Engagement at a Glance 2025

2,347

completed the online
Benchmark Survey on
Accessibility

9

partner organizations
submitted written briefs

77

people participated in online
focus groups

40

people attended an in-person
First Nations gathering on
Accessibility Legislation

400

people responded to online
public perception questions
on accessibility

GNB Accessibility Plan 2026-2028

- 1. GNB Spaces** - Make GNB buildings more accessible
- 2. Information and Communications** - Ensure New Brunswickers can receive information and communicate with Government in accessible ways
- 3. Creating a Culture of Accessibility in GNB** - Build capacity for government to identify, prevent and remove barriers
- 4. Accessing Government Services** - Make it easier for people to apply for and interact with government services
- 5. Investing in Removing Barriers** - Introduce changes to reduce barriers people have experienced

2026-2027 - Priorities

- Launch 2 advisory committees on accessibility
 - Accessible Information and Communications – summer 2026
 - Accessible Employment – fall 2026
- Implement strategic plan and accessibility plan and report on progress
- Raise awareness and Identify barriers
 - Benchmark survey – fall 2026

Raising Awareness and Building Capacity

Awareness

- AccessAbility Week – starts last Sunday in May
- [GNB.ca/accessibility](https://gnb.ca/accessibility)
- [Subscribe me](#) – Mailing List

Engagement and Feedback

- Public Engagement, for example:
 - [Accessibility Survey Panel](#)
- Inventory of barriers
- Contact Accessibility Office
 - toll-free: 1-844-444-5511
 - email ao-ba@gnb.ca

We want to hear from you

- What recommendations do you have for building more accessible communities?
- What are key accessibility barriers identified within local governments?
- How can we best collaborate with local governments?

Questions and Discussion