

**WEST HANTS MUNICIPALITY**

**Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda REVISED**

**November 4, 2021, 5:30 p.m.**

**Sanford Council Chambers 76 Morison Dr, Windsor, NS**

**(also held virtually via Zoom and Facebook livestreamed)**

*Agenda is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting*



- 
1. Group Agreement Discussion – facilitated by Staff Member Craik
  2. Call to Order
  3. Attendance  
Voting: Debbie Francis, Denise Long, Jordan Stephens, Roseanna Boyd, Jennifer Davison, Michel Bourgeois, Kelly Ann Jobson  
Staff Support (non-voting): Mark Phillips, Tina McKay, Bekah Craik, Troy Burgess, Shelleena Thornton, Carmen Dewar-Miller  
Welcome and introduction to our newest committee member, Kelly Ann Jobson
  4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
  5. Announcements
  6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – August 23, 2021
  7. Unfinished Business
    - a) Accessibility Plan Consultant and Request for Proposals
  8. Presentation
    - a) Equity Language Guide (information only, attached)
  9. New Business
    - a) Successful Accessibility Consultant and Committee Expectations Discussion
    - b) Communications - Tactile Surface Walking Indicators (TSWI) **Power Point**, Accessible Events Guide
    - c) Meeting Venue
    - d) **Age Friendly in Focus – Virtual Community Engagement Workshop**
  10. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

**WEST HANTS MUNICIPALITY**  
**Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda**  
**August 23, 2021, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Sanford Council Chambers 76 Morison Dr, Windsor, NS**  
**(also held virtually via Zoom and Facebook livestreamed) Agenda**  
*is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting*



- 
- 1. Call to Order**
  - 2. Attendance**

Voting: Debbie Francis, Denise Long, Jordan Stephens, Roseanna Boyd, Mike Colter, Jennifer Davison, and Michael Bourgeois.  
Staff Support (non-voting): Mark Phillips, Tina McKay, Bekah Craik, Troy Burgess, Shelleena Thornton, Carmen Dewar-Miller
  - 3. Approval of the Agenda** (including additions or deletions)
  - 4. Approval of Minutes** – April 29, 2021
  - 5. Unfinished Business**
    - a) Accessibility Plans of other Municipalities
      - i. Town of Kentville
      - ii. Municipality of East Hants
    - b) Experiential Learning Planning and Follow-up
      - i. Committee information gathering (attachment to follow)
      - ii. Experiential learning community experience (Bekah/Jordan)
    - c) Accessibility Plan Consultant and Request for Proposals
      - i. Draft Scope/Specs of proposed Request for Proposals (RFP) (attached)
  - 6. New Business**
    - a) Presentation(s) – None
    - b) Draft Accessibility Survey Review and for Committee Discussion (attached)
  - 7. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment**



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes

August 23, 2021 – 1:00p.m.

In-Person Sanford Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS  
(Meeting is also held via Zoom and Facebook livestream)

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**1. Call to Order**

Chair, Councillor Francis, called the meeting to order at 1pm

**2. Attendance**

Voting:

Debbie Francis - Councillor, District 5, Chair

Denise Long - Resident Member

Jordan Stephens - Resident Member

Roseanna Boyd - Resident Member

Michael Bourgeois – Resident Member

Staff Support (non-voting):

Tina McKay – Building & Fire Official

Bekah Craik – Active Living Coordinator

Troy Burgess – Mgr., Public Works Operations

Deanna Snair – Executive Assistant

Shelleena Thornton – Mun. Operations Supervisor

Carmen Dewar-Miller – Admin Assistant

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

No additions or deletions.

**MOVED by Resident Members Bourgeois and Boyd that the agenda be approved.**

**Motion Carried.**

**4. Approval of Minutes – April 29, 2021**

**MOVED by Resident Members Long and Bourgeois that the April 29, 2021 meeting minutes be approved.**

**Motion Carried.**

**5. Unfinished Business**

a) Accessibility Plans of other Municipalities

Kentville and East Hants plans were included in the package as information only.

b) Experiential Learning Planning and Follow-up

i. Committee information gathering – Verbal report

An individual diagnosed with an intellectual disability (cognitive delay) provided an evaluation of the municipal website, reporting back on the challenges they encountered as well as aspects that worked well, as they navigated through the menus, pages and links.

Takeaways from this exercise - less is more, stick to clear, factual, short and to the point when providing information, reducing anxiety and

misinterpretation. “Click here” icons appreciated. Suggested as an effective option for the Contact Us page.

#### Discussion Points

- Use icons to access simpler menu subsets
- Accessibility being taken into consideration as part of region’s branding project (icons)
- Next steps beyond information gathering include a survey and RFP, to be discussed later in the agenda

#### ii. Experiential learning community experience

Staff Member Craik and Resident Members Stephens and Boyd met to create a video of Resident Member Stephens’ experience navigating the Causeway Trail, accessing Pesiquid Park, Falmouth Mini-Park and the Coach House public washrooms.

#### Key Takeaways

- Potholes were an issue, need to be fixed
- Terrain was steep in at least one area
- Walkway to the public washroom was inaccessible due to a piece of equipment parked in front of the access point
- Education and mindfulness required for all

Once the video is edited, it will be shared. A great deal of good information included, describing each area and the accessibility challenges.

#### c) Accessibility Plan Consultant and Request for Proposals

Draft Scope/Specs of proposed Request for Proposals (RFP) (attached)

Staff Member Thornton was able to connect with many other municipalities varying in size and review their plans. She spoke with accessibility coordinators, seeking input based on their experience

Staff Member Thornton reviewed the go-forward plan for the Consultant RFP. The goal is to post to the procurement site by the end of this week, closing at the end of September, or sooner and award by the end of October.

#### Discussion Points

- Council allocated money in the budget for a consultant
- An Accessibility Coordinator will be considered eventually, as part of the process
- The Accessibility Committee can help champion this once the direction is determined
- There needs to be an in-house resource
- Between Sep. 23 and next COTW, allow for enough time to evaluate and score the proposals for Council to review the recommendation report and approve, with ratification at the end of October

## 6. New Business

- a) Presentation(s) – None
- b) Draft Accessibility Survey Review and for Committee Discussion (attached)

Staff Member Thornton screen-shared the draft survey, stating that we don't need to wait for a consultant to put this survey out, she is bringing it forward for committee members' review and feedback.

### Discussion Points

- Suggestions for distributing the survey included:
  - sending as an insert with water bills
  - doing a mass mail-out
  - distributing via Windsor Township / local business,
  - public outreach such as setting up a table at the farm market, sports complex or rink
  - working in partnership with Active Transportation, New Boundaries and Kings Meadows, Schools Plus
  - connecting with local tourism for visitor feedback
  - Don't limit ourselves to computers and social media

### c) Washroom Photo

A photograph of one of the West Hants recreation site's public washrooms was included as part of the agenda. Raises washroom accessibility concerns throughout the region at different recreation areas. A sign states that the washroom is "accessible", but the step built to access the washroom is prohibitive.

### Discussion Points

- Resident Member Stephens sees this constantly
- Wider doors are good but access to the doors is not being well considered
- There are multiple reasons why this washroom is not wheelchair friendly. Are there bars for the toilet? Can everyone reach the light switch? Is there a ramp?
- Resident Member Stephens can get in the door because of his experience, but the platform is too small for the door to be opened with room to wheel in
- It was noted that the doors for the Coach House washrooms are heavy. Bekah is going to take a measurement of the door in the photo
- Large, powered wheelchairs need to be considered as do automatic doors for those who do not have use of their hands
- Qualify accessibility using standards that should be applied before the sign gets put on the washroom door. We don't need to reinvent standards, just follow them.

## 7. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

To be decided via Doodle poll and held before Consultant RFP is awarded.

### End of Meeting Discussion Points

- The survey questions will be made available in electronic and paper format, posted online and included as an insert in next mail-out
- Look at sharing the survey at upcoming Community Development events
- Once wider open from COVID, look at community meetings, respecting gathering limits
- Public participation is important. Once we have RFP, consultant and staff involved, we will have a better-oiled machine with direction to go out to the public
- Regarding the weight of municipal metal doors, code-wise. Do they have to be a certain weight? Has to do with the closing mechanism. Some are made to withstand a heavy wind
- Staff Member McKay can look up to see if there must be a certain way it closes and look up some door standards under NS building code regulations for accessibility

**MOVED by Resident Member Bourgeois and Staff Member McKay that the meeting be adjourned.**

**Motion Carried.**

*The meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm.*

X

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Committee Chair

Last updated October 15, 2021

# EQUITY LANGUAGE GUIDE

Glossary of Terms



NATIONAL  
RECREATION AND PARK  
ASSOCIATION



*Photo of rainbow bench by Jose Maria Ruiz via Dreamstime.*

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## About This Guide

The words we use matter — language has the power to uplift as well as marginalize. From the time we start learning how to communicate, we unconsciously take in the implicit biases in our language. We may not realize certain words, and how we use them, can be damaging to others. With so many ways to convey a single thought, finding the “right” word can be difficult.

With the constant evolution of language, personal preferences and changing contexts, the “right” word rarely exists. However, understanding which words may be more appropriate than others in certain situations can reinforce our values of diversity, equity and inclusion while inviting others into our work. Most importantly, when we make thoughtful word choices, we can be part of creating a more inclusive environment.

As the creators of community, park and recreation professionals can especially benefit from using language that is inclusive and welcoming for all people. This guide can help those in the field of parks and recreation use consistent and appropriate terms related to diversity, equity, inclusion, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability and more.

Developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), this guide includes content from leading language guides, as well as resources from multiple organizations, associations, researchers and more. It is meant to reflect terminology most applicable to parks and recreation and related professions; however, it is not an all-encompassing equity glossary. Additional resources are listed at the end of each definition, as well as at the end of this guide.

NRPA hopes this guide will inspire more inclusive communication throughout the park and recreation profession — helping create communities where everyone feels welcome to participate fully as their true selves.

## How to Use This Guide

- Words are capitalized or not based on how they should be used. If capitalization varies, an explanation has been given for which one to use.
- Read descriptions and usage carefully. Using one word in a certain situation may not make sense in another situation, even if they seem similar.
- In all instances when dealing with someone’s race, identity and culture, it is **imperative that you ask how people prefer to be identified**.
- When citing research reports or legal cases that use different terms than those suggested here, you may use the original language, in quotes, for clarity. If you need to reference the same idea or term outside of quotes, use the language suggested in this guide. If possible, include a note about why a different term is being used — it may even be a teaching opportunity.



*Park and recreation professionals take part in an activity during a 2019 community engagement workshop hosted by NRPA.*

## General Writing Advice

- Be as specific as possible. Always use a more specific term, if possible. If you find yourself relying on generalizations, do some research into the groups of people, topics or locations you are writing about. This [Vox article](#) provides a good background.
- Use people-first language. For example, say “person with a disability” instead of “disabled person.”
- Use active voice when writing (versus passive voice). You can typically identify the use of passive voice by looking for “to be” verbs (is, was, are, etc.). Active voice places the emphasis on the person doing the action. [Learn more here](#).
- In most cases, write with a sixth- to eighth-grade reading level in mind to ensure clarity in your message. Simple words and phrases usually create a stronger message than long-winded sentences and phrases. Avoid jargon. The [Hemingway App](#) is a useful tool to simplify your writing.
- Keep in mind that terminology can change frequently. One major news event can change the meaning of a previously innocuous word. Please refer to the cover of this document to see when it was last updated. The most recent version can be found at [nrpa.org/equity](https://nrpa.org/equity). If you have a suggested update, please email [customerservice@nrpa.org](mailto:customerservice@nrpa.org).
- Remember, “progress not perfection.” Sometimes, you will get it wrong or forget and that’s OK. Take a moment, acknowledge it, and commit to doing better next time. Change is a process, and it is important that we hold each other accountable in a supportive way.

## Glossary of Terms

Listed in alphabetical order within the categories.

### [diversity, equity and inclusion](#)

**accessibility/accessible:** Capable of being used or accessed. Often when we talk about accessibility in parks and recreation, we mean that something is, at its basic level, legally accessible to people. Accessibility of playgrounds and facilities, for example, is often determined by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Accessible is not the same as inclusive. Accessibility of spaces is an important first step and is often followed by looking at how to make those space more equitable and inclusive. ([NRPA](#))

**ally:** Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and works in solidarity with oppressed groups to elevate these other voices above their own in the struggle for justice. ([Washington Environmental Council](#))

**anti-racism:** The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, established in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))

**citizens/Americans:** **Use caution with this word.** When we talk about parks and recreation serving communities, we are usually talking about how they serve all people whether or not they are a U.S. citizen. Referring to “residents” or “members” of a community is a more inclusive approach. Likewise, avoid using the term “Americans” generically for a group (because it limits the group to those who have citizenship status as Americans). ([Sierra Club](#))

**community engagement:** The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs and practices. ([The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \[CDC\]](#), [NRPA](#))

**cultural humility:** A lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique where we not only learn about another’s culture, but also start with an examination of our own beliefs and cultural identities. It is the ability to be open to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to another person. “Cultural humility” is distinct from “cultural competency” and “reflexivity.” (National Institute of Health, [Hogg Foundation](#), [American Psychological Association \[APA\]](#))

**disparities:** The quantity that separates a group from a reference point on a particular measure of health, access or other measure that is expressed in terms of a rate, proportion, mean or some other quantitative measure. ([CDC](#))

**diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI):** DEI is NRPA’s preferred abbreviation for work that includes diversity, equity and inclusion. Use over JEDI (justice, equity, diversity and inclusion) and other abbreviations or acronyms. Spell out on first reference when needed for explanation. ([NRPA](#))

## NRPA Equity Language Guide

**diversity:** Differences in racial and ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic and academic/professional backgrounds; people with different opinions, backgrounds (degrees and social experience), religious beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientations, heritage, mental or physical ability, learning style, gender identity and life experience. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))

**dominant culture:** Organizational culture that is heavily influenced by the leadership, management and organizational development as defined by white men and women. Dominant cultures do not embrace diversity of any kind beyond representation, and they promote assimilation over integration. ([Equity in the Center](#))

**dominant vs. non-dominant groups:** A dominant group is a group with power, privileges and social status; a social group that controls the value system and rewards in a particular society. A non-dominant group (sometimes called minority or oppressed group) is typically defined by the dominant group. It is a category of people whose physical appearance or cultural characteristics are defined as being different from the traits of the dominant group and that result in their being set apart for different and unequal treatment. ([Social Science LibreTexts](#), [Inclusion Solution](#))

**environmental justice:** The fair and equitable involvement of — and outcomes for — all people in environmental policies, practices, attitudes and actions. Due in large part to the environmental movement being historically white-led, there have been unequal benefits of environmental protection with most benefits experienced by white communities. This has led to a present-day landscape of environmental injustice where communities of color, Indigenous communities, and low-income communities bear the most burden of pollution and environmental degradation. Communities of color and tribal nations often lead environmental justice work, while historically white-led organizations have an important role to play. ([Washington Environmental Council](#), [Environmental Protection Agency \[EPA\]](#))

**equality:** Ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. Health equality refers to allocating resources equally among beneficiaries. Equality = Same. ([The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#))

**equity:** The absence of avoidable, unfair or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically, or by other means of stratification. Equity = Fairness and Justice. ([The World Health Organization \[WHO\]](#))

**health equity:** Fair and just opportunities afforded to everyone, so that all people can attain their highest level of health; valuing everyone equally with sustained efforts and resources heavily focused on addressing unjust, unfair and avoidable historical, social and political injustices, and eliminating health disparities. Allocating resources on the basis of need. ([The Root Cause Coalition](#), [NRPA](#))

**health inequity:** Systematic differences in health status or the distribution of health resources between different populations arising from the social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. They are unfair and avoidable and have significant social and economic costs to both individuals and societies. ([WHO](#))

**historically marginalized, marginalized:** Being treated as insignificant or peripheral. **Avoid this term in general when describing people** because it can come across as condescending and have negative connotations when used in a broad way. However, it may be necessary and appropriate in context. If you do use it, avoid “the marginalized,” and don’t use marginalized as an adjective. Don’t say “marginalized people” or “marginalized populations.” Other terms that may work instead, if accurate in context:

- Specific terms for the makeup of the communities discussed, and how they are marginalized
- Partial listings if some populations are known, with language showing how the groups were marginalized (Hispanic, Black and other people in the neighborhood)
- Underrepresented groups or underrepresented racial and ethnic groups (if race or ethnicity applies)
- Disenfranchised
- Excluded or historically excluded people ([American Heart Association](#))

**holidays:** (*see also, religion*) When writing about holidays, remember to consider and include those outside the Christian-majority holidays that typically dominate in the United States. Be cautious about messaging around Columbus Day, which NRPA does not celebrate because of its association with and connection to the genocide of Native peoples. Thanksgiving can be a helpful hook to obtain press coverage, however, be careful not to promote inaccurate cultural narratives about “the first Thanksgiving.” The tradition of giving thanks for a successful harvest dates back millennia and is shared across many cultural traditions — focusing on themes of harvest and gratitude can help to avoid the violent associations that many people have with Thanksgiving. ([Sierra Club](#))

**implicit bias:** The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases are activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control and are not accessible through introspection. ([Kirwan Institute](#))

**inclusion:** Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into the processes, activities and decisions/policymaking in a way that shares power, recognizes and celebrates differences, ensures people feel welcome, and makes sure everyone has equitable access to opportunities. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))

Inclusion means removing barriers, both physical and theoretical, so that all people have an equal opportunity to enjoy the benefits of parks and recreation. ([NRPA](#))

**immigrants:** Never use the term “illegal” to describe a person. If a person lacks legal permission to live or work in the United States, you can refer to them as an “undocumented” immigrant or someone with a complex immigration status. ([Sierra Club](#))

**inequities:** A difference in the distribution or allocation of a resource between groups. ([CDC](#))

**native/invasive/alien plants:** When we take terms that are often, or have been historically, used to describe people and extend those terms to plants and other non-human things, we can inadvertently minimize the meaning these terms have for people. When we talk about native versus invasive plant species, we often assume one is better than another, which is not always true. Instead of using the terms native and invasive, we can use other terms — introduced, Indigenous, non-Indigenous, long-established, weeds, etc. — that better describe a plant’s relationship with its environment. ([Smithsonian Magazine](#), [Meridians](#))

## NRPA Equity Language Guide

**oppression:** When an agent group, whether knowingly or unknowingly, abuses a target group. This pervasive system is rooted historically and maintained through individual and institutional/systematic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry and social prejudice, resulting in a condition of privilege for the agent group at the expense of the target group. ([The National Conference for Community and Justice](#))

**park access:** The just and fair quantity, proximity and connections to quality parks and green spaces, recreation facilities, as well as programs that are safe, inclusive, culturally relevant and welcoming to everyone. When people have just and fair access, our health and social well-being improve, and our communities can protect and better recover from environmental, social and economic challenges. ([NRPA](#))

**privilege:** Unearned access to resources (social power) that are only readily available to some people because of their social group membership; an advantage or immunity granted to or enjoyed by one societal group above and beyond the common advantage of all other groups. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it but, nevertheless, puts them at an advantage over those who don't have it. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))

**racism, racist:** Racism is racial prejudice — an unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude based on someone's race — plus the power to carry out discrimination through social and institutional power. Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

A racist is someone who supports racist policy through their actions and interactions or through expressing a racist idea.

In writing, avoid using terms like “racially charged” or “racially motivated.” Instead, be specific about the type of discrimination. If the term racist/racism is appropriate, use it. Don't try to gloss it over. ([Racial Equity Tools](#), [Dismantling Racism](#), [Ibram X. Kendi](#))

**racial equity:** Providing everyone what they need to be successful by taking race and the impacts of racism into account. This is distinct from racial equality, which is treating everyone the same. Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if someone's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how they fare. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, so it also includes work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or that fail to eliminate them. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))

**racial justice:** The work to uproot historically racist systems and replace them with fair, just and equitable policies and practices. The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures. ([Washington Environmental Council](#), [RacialEquity.org](#))

## NRPA Equity Language Guide

**religion:** Religion can be an important factor to someone’s identity and culture. Like many other facets of our identities, someone’s religion should only be mentioned if relevant to the story. One way to demonstrate respect for cultures other than one’s own is to recognize religious and cultural traditions other than those that typically dominate the U.S. media landscape (usually Christian holidays). It’s a good idea to check calendars for major holidays and observances you may be unaware of. When writing about seasonal events, either avoid writing about a specific holiday (i.e., the Christmas season) or be inclusive of the many holidays happening at certain times during the year. ([Sierra Club](#))

**social justice:** A concept in which equity or justice is achieved in every aspect of society rather than some aspects or for some people. A world organized around social justice principles affords individuals and groups fair treatment and a fair share or distribution of society’s advantages and disadvantages. ([University of Tennessee, Knoxville](#), [National Education Association \[NEA\]](#))

**social power (also known as power):** Access to resources that enhance someone’s chance of getting what they need, in order to lead a comfortable, productive and safe life. ([The National Conference for Community and Justice](#))

**structural racism:** The normalization of many systems and dynamics that routinely advantage whites while producing inequities among racial and ethnic groups and cumulative, chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of white domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society — including its history, culture, politics and economics. It involves reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))

**white supremacy:** The ideology that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs and actions of white people are superior to people of color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, inhuman and “undeserving.” Drawing from critical race theory, the term “white supremacy” also refers to a political or socioeconomic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not — both at a collective and an individual level. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))

**under-invested:** Refers to the fact that neighborhoods, schools, institutions and communities have been historically excluded from equitable distribution of resources. This term, or a variation, can help ensure we are not using language that places blame on communities or populations. ([American Heart Association](#)) Examples:

- These neighborhoods are struggling with access to healthy food because of under-investment.
- Because of a lack of investment, access to healthy foods is a problem.

**underrepresented:** Often an effective term when discussing communities and populations. As always, specificity and context guide the best usage, but this term often works well when discussing less-specific groups. Make sure there truly is underrepresentation when using, and when possible, say specifically how people are underrepresented. ([American Heart Association](#)) Examples:

- Black and Hispanic people are underrepresented in the field of parks and recreation.
- Underrepresented racial and ethnic groups were considered in these statistics.

## NRPA Equity Language Guide

**under-resourced:** This refers to communities lacking in income, employment opportunities, educational opportunities, access to care, access to healthy foods, access to safe places to exercise and other resources. **Use only in a literal sense:** When an area lacks resources, be specific about what is lacking. Exercise caution and carefully consider context; some usages can inaccurately imply race or ethnicity. ([American Heart Association](#)) Example:

- The community is under-resourced in terms of quality healthcare.

**underserved:** **Exercise caution with this word.** It can have negative connotations, as if people need to be served to succeed. It can, sometimes, support the negative “savior” idea. Under-resourced is usually a better option. However, underserved may be a necessary and appropriate term in context, often when used specifically. ([American Heart Association](#))

Example: The community is medically underserved.

**vulnerable:** Susceptible to physical or emotional harm, often in need of help or special care or treatment. **Exercise caution with this term** because it can imply some people need someone to save them. However, this term may be necessary and appropriate in context. ([American Heart Association](#)) Other terms that may work instead (if accurate in context):

- Specific terms for the communities discussed, such as Iraqi or Chilean (ideal)
- Partial listings if some populations are known, with language showing how the groups are vulnerable (Hispanic and Black people, and other people of color)
- Underrepresented groups or underrepresented racial and ethnic groups (whichever is correct)
- Disenfranchised
- Excluded or historically excluded people

Examples:

- Acceptable: After the surgery, she felt emotionally vulnerable.\*
- **Not acceptable: People in the Lebanese neighborhood are vulnerable.**  
\* *In context, it can work with economic and social vulnerabilities as well.*

Example:

- Historical redlining leaves members of Black communities vulnerable to housing insecurity.

race and ethnicity

**American Indians, Native Americans, Native:** All of these terms are acceptable. The consensus, however, is that whenever possible, Native people prefer to be called by their specific tribal name. In the United States, Native American has been widely used but is falling out of favor with some groups, and the terms American Indian or Indigenous American are preferred by many Native people. ([National Museum of the American Indian](#))

**First Nation** is the preferred term for native tribes in Canada.

**Indian** is used to describe the peoples and cultures of the South Asian nation of India. It should not be used as a replacement for American Indians.

**Indigenous** is an adjective and refers to the original inhabitants of a place and is not specific to the United States. **Indigenous people** is another term that can be used to describe the original inhabitants of a place.

**Native nation** is a preferred term over Tribe. Native nations are independent nations within a nation. The term nation shows respect for sovereignty and the fact that Native nations each have their own systems of government. Globally, we have trivialized the term Tribe (think “bride tribe,” “political tribalism,” etc.). We don’t recommend using Tribe or Tribes to talk about Native nations. Some phrases or even names of Native nations contain the word Tribe or a derivative (Tribal colleges, for example). It’s OK to use Tribe in these cases. ([Native Governance Center](#))

**Asian American:** Asian American is the proper term for people who come from Asia or descend from people who lived in Asia. Do not hyphenate. When possible, ask people how they identify (Asian American or Chinese American, Japanese American, etc.). ([The Diversity Style Guide](#))

**AAP:** AAP is an acronym for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. **Avoid using the acronym and do not use it as a blanket term when a more specific one is available.** It is OK to spell out when relevant. It is OK to use in direct quotes and in reference to organizations, such as Stop AAP Hate.

Example: The COVID-19 pandemic caused an increase in hate incidents against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The organization Stop AAP Hate is a great advocacy resource. ([Stop AAP Hate](#))

**biracial, multiracial:** Biracial is normally used for someone who has parents from two different races. While multiracial is used when someone has parents from two or more races — such as a child having a half-Colombian, half-Trinidadian mother, and a father who is German, Nigerian and Korean. The terms biracial and multiracial should only be used if it is relevant to what is being written and if someone self-identifies as such. ([Anti-Racism Daily](#))

If cultural background is needed, be specific about heritage. Example:

- She has a Black mother and a Guatemalan father.

These terms are usually better suited for describing large, diverse groups of people than individuals. Example:

- In a research report, biracial women shared how they prefer to be identified.

## NRPA Equity Language Guide

**Black, African American:** The capitalized term Black is a recognition of how language evolves over time. The term reflects a shared identity and culture rather than a descriptor of skin color. African American (no hyphen) is a term used for people who share a lineage that can be traced directly or indirectly to Africa. African American is not necessarily interchangeable with Black. For example, people who live in America of Caribbean heritage may prefer Caribbean American. Always follow a person's preference.

Black can be used as an adjective in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense: Black people, Black culture, Black literature, Black studies, Black colleges. ([Diversity Style Guide](#))

**Black should not be used as a singular noun.**

The term "white" should be lowercase.

**brown:** **Avoid this term** as a racial, ethnic or cultural descriptor unless it is part of direct quote or how someone prefers to be identified.

**dual heritage:** When noting someone with dual heritage, a hyphen is not needed. Always follow a person's preference.

Example: African American, Mexican American, Turkish German

**Hispanic and Latino:** In all instances when referring to persons from primarily Spanish-speaking cultures, be as specific as possible. Always ask how someone prefers to be identified, which could include multiple identifications such as "Latina and Mexican American." If a broader term is absolutely necessary, use "*Hispanic and Latino*." For example, "The grant will be focused on identifying play deserts in primarily *Hispanic and Latino* neighborhoods." See examples below for specific definitions.

**Chicano:** A term that Mexican Americans in the U.S. Southwest sometimes use to describe their heritage. Use only if it is a person's preference.

**Hispanic:** An umbrella term referring to a person whose ethnic origin is in a Spanish-speaking country, as well as those living in the United States with Latin American ancestry, except for those from Brazil, which is not a Spanish-speaking country. ([Diversity Style Guide](#))

**Latino, Latina:** Umbrella terms referring to those living in the United States with Latin American ancestry. Latina is the feminine form of Latino. Latino is the masculine form. ([Diversity Style Guide](#))

**Latine:** a gender-neutral form of Latino/Latina, currently more popular in locations outside the United States. Benefits of "Latine" include that it is easier to pronounce in Spanish and can be applied to other gendered terms in Spanish (i.e., "elle" instead of "ella" or "el"). Use if it is a person's preference. ([Washington Post](#))

**Latinx:** a gender-neutral term form of Latino/Latina which is more popular in California. Some people from Hispanic and Latino cultures have not adopted it for several reasons, one including that it is hard to pronounce in Spanish. Use if it is a person's preference. ([Washington Post](#))

**Indigenous land acknowledgment:** A land acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous people as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous people and their traditional territories. It is important to understand the history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. ([Northwestern University, Native Governance Center](#))

**minority, racial minority:** **Avoid using this term** and instead opt for specificity. Be specific whenever possible. It is OK to use in a direct quote or as part of the name of an organization or group.

Example: The National Recreation and Park Ethnic Minority Society is an affiliate of NRPA.

**people of color:** **Use caution with this term.** It can be acceptable in broad references to multiple races other than white. Be aware, however, that many people object to the term for various reasons, including that it lumps together anyone who isn't white into one monolithic group. As always, be as specific as possible. Other terms may be more appropriate, such as:

- People from various racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Diverse groups
- Different cultures

**Avoid using the term Black, Indigenous and people of color,** which some see as more inclusive by distinguishing the experiences of Black and Indigenous people, but others see as less inclusive by diminishing the experiences of everyone else. **Do not use the shorthand POC or BIPOC** unless necessary in a direct quotation.

**Do not use person of color** to describe an individual. ([Vox](#))

### [gender and sexual orientation](#)

**ally (LGBTQ+):** “Ally” is a term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ+ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender “allies,” as well as those within the LGBTQ+ community who support each other (e.g., a lesbian who is an “ally” to the bisexual community). (Human Rights Campaign [[HRC](#)])

**cisgender:** A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. ([HRC](#))

**gender expression:** External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine. ([HRC](#))

**gender identity:** One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither — how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth. ([HRC](#))

**LGBTQ+:** An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.” The acronym is acceptable to use on its own without spelling out on first instance. You also may see “LGBTQIA+” used, however, for the purposes of the NRPA Style Guide, we use LGBTQ+.

## NRPA Equity Language Guide

**non-binary:** An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary also can be used as an umbrella term encompassing such identities as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid. ([HRC](#))

**pronouns:** Always use a person's preferred pronouns (they/she/he) and do not assume you know what someone's preference may be. Initiate a conversation by saying something like, "My preferred pronouns are... How should I refer to you?" When writing hypothetically about people, **do not use "him/her."** Instead, use "they/their/them" even for singular pronouns. ([MyPronouns.org](#))

Example: "When asking a child about their preferred playground equipment, also ask them what colors they prefer."

**queer:** A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, such as those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but also has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement. ([HRC](#))

**sexual orientation:** An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people. Note: An individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity. ([HRC](#))

**transgender:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. ([HRC](#))

### age

**ageism:** Ageism is the stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age. Ageism can take many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory practices, or institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs. ([WHO](#))

**older adults:** Preferred over senior citizens, seniors or elderly as a general term when appropriate and relevant. It is best used when referring to groups of people and not specific individuals. Always be specific when possible, using someone's age instead of categorizing them as an older adult. Senior is acceptable in direct quotations and in names (e.g., senior center).

### ability

**ableism:** Ableism is the discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require "fixing" and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as "less than," and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions and generalizations of people with disabilities. ([Access Living](#))

**ablest micro-aggressions:** Micro-aggressions are everyday verbal or behavioral expressions that communicate a negative slight or insult in relation to someone’s gender identity, race, sex, disability, etc. Phrases like this imply that a disability makes a person less than, and that disability is bad, negative or a problem to be fixed, rather than a normal, inevitable part of the human experience. ([Access Living](#))  
Examples:

- “That’s so lame.”
- “You are so retarded.”
- “That guy is crazy.”
- “You’re acting so bi-polar today.”
- “Are you off your meds?”
- “It’s like the blind leading the blind.”
- “We need to be aware of our blind spots.”
- “My ideas fell on deaf ears.”
- “She’s such a psycho.”
- “I’m super OCD about how I clean my apartment.”
- “Can I pray for you?”
- “I don’t even think of you as disabled.”

**Blind/legally blind/visually impaired:** Use “blind” only when the person has complete loss of sight and “legally blind” when the person has almost complete loss of sight. Other terms also may be acceptable. It is best to ask the person which term they prefer and take that into consideration. ([National Center on Disability and Journalism](#))

**caregiver:** “Caregiver” is preferable to “caretaker” when referring to the care of people. ([National Center on Disability and Journalism](#))

**deaf/Deaf:** Some people with mild or moderate hearing loss may affiliate themselves with the Deaf community and prefer to be referred to as “deaf” instead of “hard of hearing.” Alternatively, some who are deaf and don’t have a cultural affiliation to the Deaf community may prefer the term “hard of hearing.” Lowercase when referring to a hearing-loss condition or to a deaf person who prefers lowercase. Capitalize for those who identify as members of the Deaf community or when they capitalize Deaf when describing themselves. “Deaf” should be used as an adjective, not as a noun; it describes a person with profound or complete hearing loss. ([National Center on Disability and Journalism](#))

**disability:** When describing an individual, **do not reference their disability** unless it is clearly pertinent to the story. If it is pertinent, it is best to use language that refers to the person first and the disability second. For example: “The writer, who has a disability” as opposed to “the disabled writer.” When possible, refer to a person’s specific condition. ([National Center on Disability and Journalism](#))

**differently-abled:** This term has been used as an alternative to “disabled,” “handicapped” or “mentally retarded.” Currently, **it is not considered appropriate**. Some consider it condescending, offensive or a way to avoid talking about disability. “Person with a disability” is a more neutral term than “differently-abled.”

**Handicapped:** **Avoid using “handicap” and “handicapped”** when describing a person. Instead, refer to the person’s specific condition or use “person with a disability.” The terms are still widely used and generally acceptable when citing laws, regulations, places or things, such as “handicapped parking,” although many prefer the term “accessible parking.” **Avoid “handicapable,”** as it will not be understood by many.

**Wheelchair:** It is acceptable to describe a person as “someone who uses a wheelchair,” followed by an explanation of why the equipment is required. **Avoid “confined to a wheelchair” or “wheelchair-bound”** as these terms describe a person only in relationship to a piece of equipment. The terms also are misleading, as wheelchairs can liberate people, allowing them to move about, and they are inaccurate, as people who use wheelchairs are not permanently confined in them, but are transferred to sleep, sit in chairs, drive cars, etc. ([National Center on Disability and Journalism](#))

### socioeconomic status

**homeless:** An individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Some people prefer the term unhoused. When possible, ask which term people prefer. Use person-first language: people experiencing homelessness; **avoid “homeless people” or the “homeless”**. The term, “homeless shelter” may be used, although some prefer the term, “emergency shelter.” ([The Diversity Style Guide, End Homelessness](#))

**low income/low-income:** Low-income communities is an acceptable term, but it is important to note that “low income” or “low-income community” has historically served as an implicit descriptor for people of marginalized races and/or ethnicities. It is important to include racial and/or ethnic descriptions along with socioeconomic status when relevant. For example, “the grant will help park and recreation professionals reach low-income and middle-income Puerto Rican families.” ([APA](#))

**poor:** **Poor is not recommended**. Instead use people-first language, such as “people whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold” or “people whose self-reported income were in the lowest income bracket.” ([APA](#))

**poverty:** A level at which someone lacks income, resilience and access to resources and services. ([Washington Environmental Council](#))

## Additional Guidance and Resources

The resources below may provide additional guidance on topic-specific terminology and usage. The links below may contain advice counter to what is provided above. In all cases, refer to the NRPA Equity Language Guide, but do use additional resources when looking for something more specific. If you have a question about usage, please reach out to NRPA's DEI and Communications teams.

[AARP](#)

[Access Living](#)

[American Heart Association](#)

**American Psychological Association (APA)**

- [Bias-Free Language](#)
- [Cultural Humility](#)

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

[Diversity Style Guide](#)

[EPA – Environmental Justice](#)

[Equity in the Center](#)

[Grammarly](#)

[Hogg Foundation](#)

[Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\)](#)

[Kirwan Institute](#)

[Meridians](#)

**National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**

- [Inclusive Language Guide and Links to Other Style Guides](#)

[National Center on Disability and Journalism](#)

[National Museum of the American Indian](#)

[Native Governance Center](#)

[Northwestern University](#)

[Racial Equity Tools](#)

[Reading Level Checker](#)

[Sierra Club](#)

[Smithsonian Magazine](#)

[The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

[The National Conference for Community and Justice](#)

[The Root Cause Coalition](#)

[Vox](#)

[Washington Environmental Council](#)

[Washington Post](#)

**World Health Organization**

- [Ageism](#)
- [Health Equity](#)

# Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI)



- also known as detectable warning surfaces or tactile attention indicators
- standardized walking surfaces that convey information to people impacted by vision loss, through texture and, occasionally, sound

## **BACKGROUND**

**A Japanese inventor was inspired to design a system to help a friend who was losing his vision. In 1965, Seiichi Miyake used his own money to build special mats with raised shapes that lead blind and visually impaired people away from danger and toward safety.**

**Originally called Tenji blocks, the tactile pavement was first installed outside the Okayama School for the Blind in Okayama, Japan in 1967.**

**They quickly spread to larger cities, like Tokyo and Osaka, and within a decade, Miyake's system was mandatory in all Japanese rail stations.**

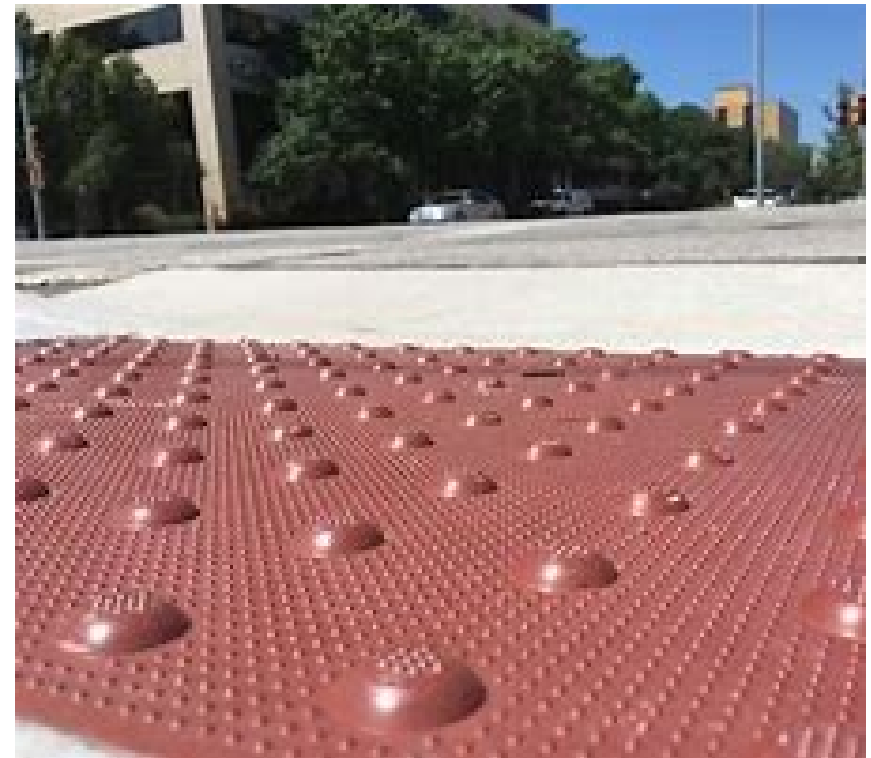
- typically made from inserts (metal, rubber, stone or plastic) or can be built directly into concrete surfaces
- must provide a distinct visual contrast to the surrounding surface (yellow is common, not required)
- must provide a surface texture easily detectable underfoot or by a long cane

# Two Types of TWSI

- Attention (warning) TWSI • Guidance (wayfinding) TWSI



**Attention TWSIs utilize truncated domes to signal a need for caution/attention at places such as a ramp at a crosswalk, platform edge, or a flight of stairs**



**Guidance TWSIs should consist of a pattern of parallel, flat-topped, elongated bars that extend in the direction of travel.**

**Guidance TWSIs are often used at the following locations:**

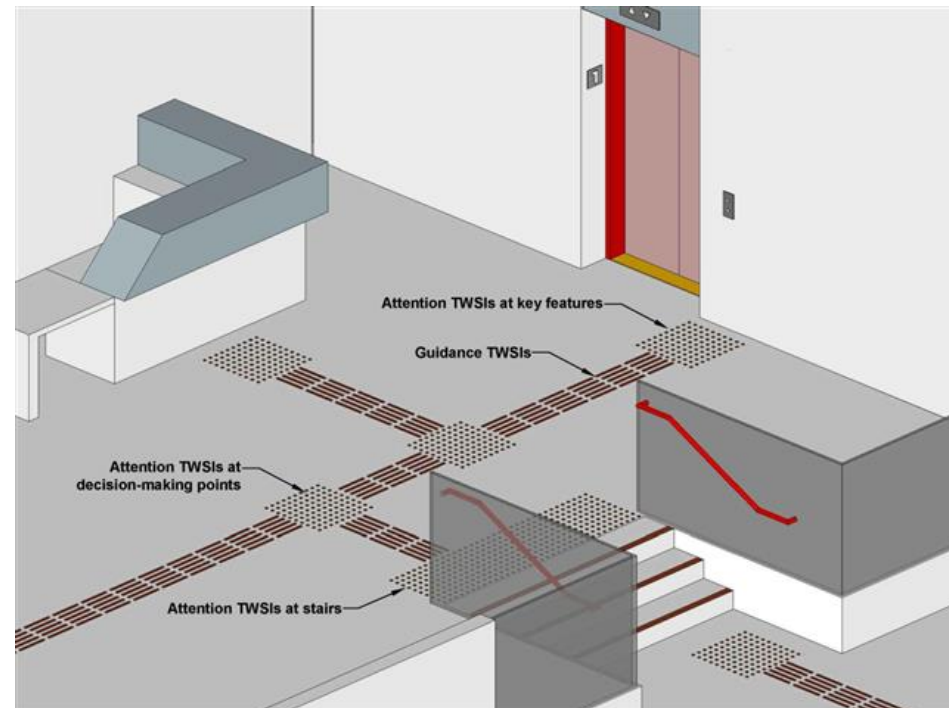
- Transit stops
- Train stations
- Subway or light rail transit (LRT) platforms
- Airports
- Sports arenas and stadiums
- Large open spaces (e.g., public squares)
- In the door areas of expansive open areas (e.g., shopping malls)



**TWSI guides user around potential obstacle.....  
However, the pattern cut into surrounding surface could  
create confusion when using a long cane.**



It is not uncommon to combine both types of TWSI to enhance the functionality of a space. Attention TWSIs are placed at decision points, key features and a staircase. Guidance TWSIs indicate the clear path of travel.





# **Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events**

Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate,  
Department of Justice



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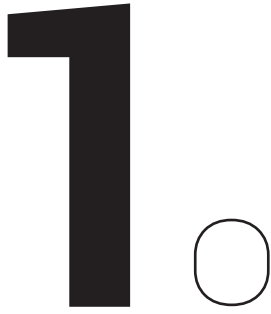
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The following resources were referenced and adapted to develop this guide:

*Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings* (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada);  
*Guide to Conducting Accessible Meetings* (Ontario Municipal Social Services Association);  
*A Planning Guide for Accessible Conferences* (Council of Ontario Universities); and  
*Planning Accessible Meetings and Events: A Toolkit* (American Bar Association).

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Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events  
Department of Justice

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# Introduction

Nearly 20% (144,000) of Nova Scotians are currently living with a disability<sup>1</sup>, and this number is expected to increase as the population of our province ages.

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act states the goal of achieving an accessible province by the year 2030. "An accessible Nova Scotia will improve the health, well-being and independence of persons with disabilities." <sup>2</sup>

Accessibility involves preventing and removing attitudinal and environmental barriers related to: information and communication; transportation; employment; the built environment; education; and goods and services. Ensuring that all Nova Scotians are able to participate in meetings and events is just one aspect of accessibility.

Regardless of the size of your event, accessibility can be incorporated into all areas of your planning to ensure all attendees can fully participate.

There are two main areas of accessibility to consider when planning an event:

- Access to the physical event space – parking, washrooms, entrances, meeting space
- Access to the event materials and presentations – accessible materials such as electronic and audio versions, large print, braille, and American Sign Language (ASL)/ English interpretation, and real-time captioning (CART).

People with disabilities all have different needs, so be sure to communicate with participants ahead of time to clarify their accessibility requests. Remember to be flexible, creative, and open to alternative arrangements.

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<sup>1</sup>Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

<sup>2</sup>An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia, S.N.S, 2017, c.2

# 2.0

## Scheduling

The timing and scheduling of an event always has implications for attendees, but is especially important when ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

### Timing

Consider other significant events happening in the area on the same day. Where possible, ensure that the timing of your event does not conflict with another event that many people with disabilities and service providers may be attending.

### Transportation

People with disabilities may need extra time to arrange transportation and prepare for an event. If you schedule an event on short notice, people with disabilities may not be able to attend. (For example, in Halifax Regional Municipality, Access-a-Bus must be booked seven days in advance.) Additionally, be aware that, due to transportation arrangements, disabled participants may arrive early, and if the event runs over the scheduled time, people with disabilities may be unable to stay. Try to ensure your event or meeting runs on time.

## Disability Supports and Accessible Communication

Disability support and service agencies (such as ASL/ English interpreters, oral translators, and real-time captioning professionals) are in great demand and short supply, so must be booked weeks in advance. Be sure to schedule your event far enough in advance to accommodate this required time.

Developing alternative versions of documents (such as braille and ASL), captioned video, and plain language materials can also take significant amounts of time (generally, 2- 4 weeks). Disability supports and accessible communications are the first services you should book to ensure the accessibility of your event.

✓	Scheduling Checklist
	Start and end times allow time for accessible transportation to and from event.
	Event agenda allows adequate time at beginning of event to identify available disability support services, and remind participants about logistics related to accessibility.
	Event agenda allows adequate time at breaks and between sessions for people with disabilities to access refreshments and washrooms, and transition between meeting spaces.
	Where possible, event date does not conflict with another event that many people with disabilities and disability support and service providers may be attending.
	Disability support and service providers are booked well in advance of event.
	Arrangements for the development of alternative versions of communications materials are made well in advance of event.

# 3.0

## Selecting a Venue

The degree to which your venue is accessible is paramount to the success of your event.

A facility that is accessible also minimizes the number of additional arrangements to be made to accommodate participants with disabilities.

Assessing the accessibility of the building entrance, meeting rooms, washrooms, hallways, paths, and elevators all contribute to its level of accessibility for persons with mobility, sensory and other disabilities. It is also important to consider the location of the venue in relation to accessible transportation and parking.

Conducting a site visit before booking the location is the best way to determine how accessible a venue is. When visiting, be sure to see all space that will be used by speakers and attendees, and ask staff specific questions about venue accessibility.

✓	Venue Checklist
	Venue is close to accessible public transit stops, and has clear, level, short paths between transit stops and the venue.
	Accessible parking spots are available (with slip-resistant, level access, close to building entrance). If the number of accessible parking spaces is limited, the location of the nearest additional accessible parking has been noted.
	Entrances (especially main entrance) to building are equipped with automatic doors wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters. If the main entrance is not accessible, a clearly visible sign indicates the location of an accessible entrance.
	All building entrances are well-maintained (e.g., snow shoveling to bare pavement and de-icing in winter).
	Doorways to meeting rooms have automatic door openers, and are approximately 1-metre wide to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters.
	Meeting rooms have adequate lighting in areas where presenters are situated and participants will be seated.
	Room capacity figures have been adjusted down to account for assistive and mobility equipment. (For example, if 10% or more of participants are expected to use mobility aids, plan for 30% additional space.)
	Routes of travel (e.g., hallways and paths) to and from all event areas are wide and barrier-free (e.g., no steps or sudden changes in level or flooring).
	Public elevators are accessible (i.e., large enough to accommodate power wheelchair and scooter users, and equipped with auditory floor indicators, door sensors, and control panel buttons with braille indicators at an accessible height). If the event will take place on several floors, the building has enough elevator capacity to transport attendees who cannot use stairs or escalators.
	Accessible washrooms are available and close to meeting room and dining area. Washrooms should have raised tactile symbols or braille lettering, an automatic door opener, and at least one accessible stall. There should be enough accessible washrooms to accommodate the expected number of attendees.
	Refreshment and reception areas are near the main event rooms and have accessible washrooms nearby.
	Outdoor access to allow participants to walk/relieve their guide or service dogs during breaks.
	The venue's emergency evacuation plans take persons with disabilities into account.
	No renovation or construction work is scheduled during the event date(s) that might affect accessibility
	Venue staff are trained in providing accessible customer service.

# 4.0

## Promotions and Registration

To address participants' needs effectively, you must know what those needs are.

Asking for and using this information is the essence of a person-centered and respectful approach to planning an inclusive event. Be sure to invite participants to identify any accommodation needs early in the planning process.

✓	<b>Promotions and Registration Checklist</b>
	A range of registration options is provided (online, telephone, text phone, email, TTY).
	Options for providing input (e.g., if planning a consultation) are clearly presented, with alternative formats accepted (i.e., in person, by phone or videoconference, paper or email submissions, or ASL via video logs (VLOG)).
	Event website is accessible.
	All communications use plain language.
	Pre-meeting and registration materials are offered in alternative formats such as braille, large print, and text-only saved to USB.
	Registration includes a request for participants to identify accommodation needs (see Appendix 2), with one designated person identified to coordinate these requests. A deadline to submit these requests is clearly communicated.
	Barriers that cannot be eliminated, and suggested alternatives, are communicated in promotions and registration materials.
	Promotional and registration materials state that the event is accessible, will provide accessible meeting materials, and strives to be scent-free.
	Information related to the availability and location of accessible parking spots and proximity of transit stops is provided.
	When possible, participants are provided with the event agenda in advance.

# 5.

## Communications and Accommodations

It is important to consider accessibility, accommodations and the communication needs of your whole audience when preparing an event budget, workplan, and communications plan.

Planning may involve providing large print or braille documents, electronic and audio versions of documents, ASL/ English interpretation, real-time captioning (CART), and sighted guides.

The person(s) for whom you are booking the service should be consulted on their preferences and involved in booking service providers. Bookings must be made well in advance, and meeting materials must be provided to service providers prior to the meeting (generally, at least 3 business days). Costs for these services are difficult to estimate since they vary based on time, location, availability of service providers, and the type of service required.

Estimated costs for these services in Nova Scotia and some logistical considerations are outlined below:

### ASL (American Sign Language)/ English Interpreters

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex visual language. Information is conveyed by the shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements.

ASL is a language of access, evolving out of a need for people with different hearing levels to access spoken communication and connect with fellow community members.

ASL is not a universal language - each country has its own sign language, and regions have dialects, much like the many languages spoken all over the world. ASL is used predominantly in the United States and Canada, and, like any language, has its own unique rules of grammar and syntax.

### **ASL Service Providers**

- ASL/ English interpreters can be booked directly, or through the **Society for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians**.
- Hourly rates are approximately \$55 per hour per interpreter. Bookings under 2 hours require a minimum of 2 interpreters; bookings over 2 hours require a minimum of 3 interpreters.
- It is important to ask participants if they have preferred interpreters and to involve them in the booking process.

## **Braille Translation**

Braille is a tactile system of raised dots used by many people who are blind or partially sighted. Each raised dot arrangement represents a letter or word combination that is read by touch. More information about braille is available through the **Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)**.

### **Braille Service Providers**

- Braille costs are difficult to estimate, since varying formats may be required for different users, and each document will have unique complexities and, therefore, require different parameters.
- Most companies will assess documents on an individual basis before issuing quotes. Generally, each electronic page of text will require approximately 3 pages of braille translation.
- There are numerous businesses across the country that offer braille printing:
  - In Nova Scotia:  
Julianne Acker-Verney  
jackerverney@me.com  
902.456.9913
  - Across Canada: the CNIB maintains a list of providers on its [website](#).

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

CART, or real-time captioning, provides simultaneous (real-time) speech-to-text translation for people who are deaf, or hard of hearing and who may not use sign language. An on-site captioner uses a court reporting steno machine, which is connected to a laptop containing special software that converts the key strokes, and displays the text being spoken on an overhead screen or monitor. Real-time captioning can also happen remotely, where the CART provider connects to the meeting via the room's telephone/audio system, and streams text over the internet to an overhead screen or monitor.

## CART Service Providers

- CART services should be booked at least one week in advance. It is advisable to have an A/V specialist onsite to assist with technical setup and testing
- All event materials (presentations, agenda, meeting minutes, acronyms, speaker names, speaker notes, etc.) should be provided to the translator in advance.
- Hourly rates range from \$125 to \$140 per hour, with additional time required for technical set-up and testing prior to the session. Many CART providers require a 2- 4 hour minimum and may charge for the entire time booked, even if the event ends early.
- Technical requirements: hard-wired internet and audio (phone or polycom with extended speakers) connections; dedicated phone line; laptop; projector with screen; A/V technician.
- There are currently no CART providers based in Nova Scotia, so providers from other provinces must be engaged. Some options include:
  - **Canadian Hearing Society** - Remote services across Canada and internationally. (On-site services in Ontario only.) Both English and French language services
  - **AB Captioning & CART** - On-site and remote services across Canada.
  - **Neesons** - On-site and remote services across Canada. Both English and French language Services.

## Sighted Guides

Sighted guiding is a technique used when an individual who is blind or partially sighted is led while walking by holding the arm of another individual just above the elbow.

### Sighted Guides Service Providers

- The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Nova Scotia has a roster of volunteers trained in sighted guiding. To book a sighted guide, contact the CNIB Nova Scotia.

## Teletypewriter (TTY)

A Teletypewriter, or TTY, is a text telephone consisting of a keyboard and small display screen that permits communication over a phone line via typed conversation. If both the caller and the receiver have a TTY, the call can take place directly, person to person. If one party does not have a TTY, they can still communicate through a telephone relay operator using a toll-free number. The operator acts as a communication link by typing what the hearing person says so it appears as written text on the TTY screen, and voicing what the TTY user types.

### TTY Service Providers

- The Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate's TTY line can be used during regular business hours by any person who requires this service. To access, call: 1-877-996-9954 (toll-free in NS) or 902-424-2667

✓	<b>Communications and Accommodations Checklist</b>
	Websites and web-based meeting materials are accessible (e.g., HTML or Word documents, accessible PDFs, ASL /audio versions, compatibility with screen readers).
	All communications use plain language, are written using minimum 12-point, legible font (such as Arial or Verdana), and follow the CNIB's Clear Print Guidelines.
	All PowerPoint presentations use a minimum 22-point, legible font, such as Arial or Verdana. Slides use dark coloured text over a plain, light background.
	Meeting materials are prepared in alternative formats, including braille, large print (Arial or Verdana, 18-point font), text-only (Word docs) and audio versions of documents on USB drives.
	All videos used during event have been captioned.
	Promotional and registration materials state that the event materials are available in alternative formats and how to obtain them.
	The person(s) for whom service providers and accommodations are being provided have been consulted about and involved in arrangements.
	ASL/English interpreters have been booked well in advance and sent the agenda, speakers' notes, and other relevant materials at least 3 business days before the event.
	Real-time captioning (CART) has been arranged and sent the agenda and all other relevant materials ahead of the event.
	Options for last minute and on-site requests for accessible communications and accommodations have been explored.

# 6.

## Room Set Up

There are several important factors to consider when ensuring a meeting room is accessible.

The size of the space, positioning of service providers such as ASL/ English interpreters and CART providers, lighting, audio systems, and assignment and positioning of seating all must be considered in relation to the needs of participants, and the content and objective of the event.

✓	<b>Room Set-Up Checklist</b>
	Space for ASL/ English interpreters and captioning equipment is designated and in areas with adequate levels of lighting.
	Clear sightlines are established for people using ASL/ English interpreters and CART.
	Seats at the front of the room are reserved for participants who are deaf, hard of hearing or have low vision.
	Area where presenters are situated and participants will be seated are well lit.
	If slide presentations or videos are used, the images are projected high enough to be fully visible to all seated attendees.
	Sufficient space is provided to allow circulation and seating for the anticipated number of participants who use wheelchairs, scooters, guide/service dogs or other mobility aids.
	Seating arrangement is designed with multiple seating options for participants using wheelchairs, scooters, guide/service dogs, or other mobility aids. More than just one seat has been removed in these spaces to accommodate the turning radius of these devices. (For sample accessible floor plans, visit the <b>ADA National Network Initiative</b> website)
	Aisles are sufficiently wide (a minimum of 38 inches) to ensure ease of passage of wheelchairs and scooters. When possible, both horizontal and vertical aisles are established to improve access and flow.
	Microphones are available for speakers and participants so participants can adequately hear proceedings.
	Microphones are adjustable, and there is a clear path for people to move to and from microphones. (For the audience, a hand-held microphone is a more accessible option than a standing microphone.)
	Cables, wires, and microphones are well secured and away from aisles and other traffic areas.
	Speaker podium is at ground level or accessible via ramp or lift. Speaker podium height is set at, or can be adjustable to, 28–34 inches.
	Room is free of distracting background noises, such as ventilation systems or sound from adjacent rooms.
	If water is available for presenters or attendees, bendable straws and cups with handles are provided for persons with limited hand/ grasping mobility.
	Tables for displays, materials and food/beverages are be in an accessible area, and at a height that is accessible for persons using wheelchairs or scooters (28-34 inches).
	Water dishes are provided for service/guide dogs.

# 7.0

## Chairing or Moderating Events

As chair or moderator of an event, your role is to act as host and help facilitate communication between participants and event organizers.

You will be responsible for identifying available disability support services to participants, and reminding them about event logistics related to accessibility.

✓	<b>Chair/ Moderator Checklist</b>
	Participants advised of services available (e.g., sign language interpretation, attendant care, note taking, captioning).
	Accessibility service providers identified to anyone requiring assistance.
	Participants reminded to identify themselves each time they speak for the benefit of participants who are blind or partially sighted, and to assist remote CART providers identify who is speaking.
	Participants informed of the nearest emergency exits and accessible restroom facilities.
	Participants reminded to use the microphones provided.
	All presenters reminded to speak clearly and at a moderate pace so information is easier to communicate to interpreters, intervenors, note takers and captioners. Presenters reminded to describe any visual/graphic references in their PowerPoint presentations for the benefit of participants who are blind or have low vision.
	The content of the agenda and handout materials briefly described, and meeting breaks and any content or scheduling changes clearly identified.
	Participants and speakers advised to minimize any interruptions that may interfere with the work of interpreters, intervenors, captioner and note takers.
	Participants advised that interpreters sign everything that is signed, and sign everything that is said; they will not add words, edit, or censor a conversation.
	During question and answer periods, participants asked to state their name before beginning and to speak slowly and clearly. Time is allowed for people to respond and express ideas at their own speed.
	Participants reminded that the event strives to be scent-free.



# Effective, Respectful Communication

Regardless of ability, everyone deserves respectful, clear communication.

Below are some key guidelines for communicating with participants with disabilities:

- Treat the person with a disability with the same respect that you extend to every person.
- Focus on the person as an individual, not their disability.
- Ask each person what will make them most comfortable during the event.
- Always ask the person if they need assistance and how you can assist; do not make decisions for the person or assume they need help.
- Address the person directly rather than the service provider.

## Persons who use wheelchairs/scooters

- When speaking for more than a few minutes, bend to eye level or pull up a chair.
- Never lean on, push, move, or touch the mobility device.

## Persons who are blind or partially sighted

- Introduce yourself and others if present, identifying jobs or roles.
- Be descriptive when giving directions. Avoid using visually-oriented references.
- Offer your arm if person needs to be guided. Describe where you are going and any obstacles.
- With permission, guide the person's hand to the back of a chair if you offer someone a seat.
- Let the person know when you are leaving a room.
- Do not pet or distract service animals. When walking, position yourself on the opposite side of the service animal.

## Persons with speech difficulties

- Find a quiet space to communicate. Listen carefully. Give the person your full attention.
- Do not simplify your choice of words, or assume that a person with a speech impairment cannot understand you.
- Do not interrupt or finish sentences for the person.
- Do not pretend to understand when you do not. If you do not understand, ask the person to repeat. If you still are unable to understand, ask the person to write the information or to recommend an alternative method of communicating.

## Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing

- Ask the person how they prefer to communicate (e.g., sign language, gesturing, writing, or speaking).
- When communicating with a person who reads lips, face the person when talking, and speak clearly, using your normal tone of voice and volume. Do not over-exaggerate words, use short and simple sentences, and avoid blocking your face.
- Seek well-lit spaces, and avoid background noise.
- Have pen and paper or text device on hand as an alternative communication method.
- If you have any doubts, ask if the person understood you. Advise the person if you have trouble understanding them. Do not pretend to understand the person when you do not.
- Be sure to visually identify speakers, in addition to verbally announcing them.

## Persons with learning difficulties

- Ask the person how they prefer to communicate (e.g., written or verbal).
- Find a quiet space to communicate. Listen carefully. Give the person your full attention.
- Speak clearly. Use clear, concrete language, avoiding abstractions. Do not overload the person with too much information.
- Allow the person extra time to process the information and ask questions.
- If you have any doubts, ask the person if they understood you.

## Persons with developmental/intellectual disabilities

- Speak clearly. Use simple, concrete language, avoiding abstractions. Do not overload the person with too much information.
- Break down complex concepts into smaller, simpler parts.
- Allow time for decision-making. Verify person's responses by repeating questions in a different way. If you are not sure if the person understood you, ask them to repeat the information.
- Keep to the person's schedule and routine.

# Appendix 1: Glossary

## Advisor

The equivalent of a language interpreter, an advisor makes it possible for people with intellectual disabilities to understand new language and procedures; in effect, they are contextual interpreters.

## American Sign Language (ASL)

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex, visual language. Information is conveyed by the shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements. ASL is a language of access; it evolved out of a need for people with different hearing levels to access spoken communication and connect with fellow community members. ASL is not a universal language; each country has its own sign language, and regions have dialects, much like the many languages spoken all over the world. ASL is used predominantly in the United States and Canada, and, like any language, has its own unique rules of grammar and syntax.

## Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

Devices that help reduce background noise and compensate for poor room acoustics or distance from the sound source. ALDs can be portable or permanently installed, and include FM, infrared and loop systems. They are designed to connect to any audio sound source and send the signal directly to hearing aids and wireless receivers worn by people with hearing loss. The receivers allow individuals to adjust the volume to their comfort level and can be used with a variety of headsets or neckloop listening accessories for those who have a T-switch compatible hearing aid. They are recommended for all meeting assemblies including tours, lectures, meeting venues, classrooms, places of worship, etc.

## Assistive technology

Any device or system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities, including:

- any service or support that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device
- supportive services such as sign language interpreters, readers, intervenors, service animals, etc.

## Attendant

A person who is employed to assist or guide a person with a disability to perform required tasks needed throughout the day. This could include assistance with feeding, toileting, dressing, etc.

## Braille

Braille is a tactile system of raised dots used by many people who are blind or partially sighted. Each raised dot arrangement represents a letter or word combination that is read by touch.

## CART (Communication Access Real-Time Translation)

Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART), or real-time captioning, provides simultaneous (real-time) speech-to-text translation for people who are deaf, or hard of hearing and who may not use sign language. An on-site captioner uses a court reporting steno machine, which is connected to a laptop containing special software that converts the key strokes, and displays the text being spoken on an overhead screen or monitor. Real-time captioning can also happen remotely, where the CART provider connects to the meeting via the room's telephone/audio system, and streams text over the internet to an overhead screen or monitor.

## Chemical sensitivity

A chronic condition characterized by adverse effects from exposure to low levels of chemicals or other substances in modern human environments. Suspected substances include smoke, pesticides, plastics, synthetic fabrics, scented products, petroleum products and paints.

## Closed captioning

Text hidden in the signals that create a television picture, which cannot be seen unless decoded. Just like subtitles, the decoded text appears at the bottom of the screen.

## Described video

A video with a described narrative woven into the original soundtrack that meets the viewing needs of a blended audience. It is meaningful for those who are blind and partially sighted, and unobtrusive for those who are sighted.

## Disability

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act defines disability as, "a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders and individual's full and effective participation in society."

## **FM system**

Use of FM radio frequencies to transmit signals that amplify sounds for persons who are hard of hearing.

## **Guide/service dog or animal**

A guide dog is one that has been specially trained to live with and accompany someone who is blind, enabling them to move about safely. A service dog/animal is trained to assist a person with a disability that is not related to vision .

## **Infrared system**

Use of infrared light to transmit signals that amplify sounds for persons who are hard of hearing.

## **Intervenor**

A professional service provider who communicates auditory and visual information to a deaf-blind person using a variety of methods, depending on what works best for the individual. These include visual sign language, tactile sign language, tactile finger spelling, braille and large-print notes.

## **Large print**

Printed material in a font size that is 14 points or greater. Best practice is to use an 18-point, sans serif font, such as Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, Futura, Univers or Franklin Gothic.

## **Note taker**

A person who provides a text (written or transcribed using a keyboard) of the key messages communicated during the event.

## **Open captioning**

Text that always appears on the television screen, without decoding. See closed captioning.

## **Oral interpreter**

Some people who are hard of hearing may rely on speech (lip) reading. Oral interpreters repeat the spoken words silently so that their speech can be read.

## **Scent-Free**

An environment that is identified as a space free of fragrances or other chemicals that affect people with chemical sensitivities.

## Sighted Guiding

A technique used when an individual who is blind or partially sighted is led while walking by holding the arm of another individual just above the elbow.

## Tactile Markers

A system of textured ground surface indicators found on footpaths, stairs and transportation platforms to assist pedestrians who are blind or partially sighted. Tactile markers are also used on walls as directional indicators, and to identify washroom doors, elevators, etc.

## Teletypewriter (TTY)

A Teletypewriter, or TTY, is a text telephone consisting of a keyboard and small display screen that permits communication over a phone line via typed conversation. If both the caller and the receiver have a TTY, the call can take place directly, person to person. If one party does not have a TTY, they can still communicate through a telephone relay operator using a toll-free number. The operator acts as a communication link by typing what the hearing person says so it appears as written text on the TTY screen, and voicing what the TTY user types.

## VLOG (video blog)

A blog in which the postings are primarily in video form. In lieu of written communication, a person who communicates using sign language can send a VLOG electronically in lieu of an email.

# Appendix 2: Sample Text for Accommodations Request Form

To facilitate your participation in this event, we are happy to provide you with necessary services and supports, including documents in alternative formats, ASL/ English interpretation, CART, sighted guides, etc.

Please indicate your accommodation needs using the list below (check all that apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ASL (American Sign Language)/ English interpreters | <input type="checkbox"/> Note-taker                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive listening system                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation to the facility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Braille materials                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Real-time captioning (CART) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dietary needs                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Scent-free environment      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large print materials                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sighted guides              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Materials on a USB memory stick instead of paper   | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair access           |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                |

Please provide any additional details regarding the accommodation needs indicated above:

If you require assistance in case of an emergency evacuation, please provide info:

If you will be accompanied by a personal attendant or a service animal, please provide info:

Do you require an accessible parking space?

For more detailed information, questions or concerns please contact (*name of contact*) at (*email address and phone number*).

# YOU ARE INVITED

Join us for a community engagement session to discuss photos taken by older adults of accessible and inaccessible spaces in Nova Scotia and to share your experience of accessibility as an older person in your community!

We are publishing a photobook in the Spring of 2022 and are hopeful that your stories, ideas and conversations will be included through your participation.



Age Friendly  
in Focus 

**Community Engagement Session**

November 30,  
2021

10:00-11:30 AM AST

Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZwkcO-ppj4iE9WJOIWF4Z-LwL0WzdiG-Nr>

We look forward to seeing you virtually!

**To Register:** Go to <https://nscommunitylinks.ca/age-friendly-in-focus/>