



# **The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board**

## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2025**

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## Table of Contents

DNSSAB's Statement of Commitment .....	3
Accessibility Plan Objectives.....	3
DSSAB Accessibility Committee .....	4
2021 – 2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan .....	8



## **DNSSAB's Statement of Commitment**

The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) is committed to providing an equal opportunity, barrier-free environment that allows all people to maintain their independence and dignity. The DNSSAB respects and upholds the requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and its associated Regulations and will strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities by identifying, removing and preventing barriers and providing high-quality, accessible programs and services in a timely and effective manner. The DNSSAB is committed to fulfilling these requirements under the Act with the creation of a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

## **Accessibility Plan Objectives**

The 2021-2025 multi-year Accessibility Plan outlines the policies and actions the DNSSAB will take or has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to improve opportunities for people with disabilities within the Nipissing District in accessing DNSSAB's facilities and services in accordance with the Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11). The goal of these accessibility standards is to ensure all Ontarians with disabilities have full and equal access to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment and building structures by January 2025.<sup>1</sup> Through ongoing planning, review and monitoring of the Accessibility Plan and the development of these standards, the DNSSAB will strategically identify, remove and prevent as many barriers as possible.

The Regulation sets out the requirements for each of the standards, as well as general requirements that apply to all, such as:

- develop accessibility policies and plans;
- train employees and volunteers;
- consider accessibility when purchasing goods or services;
- provide goods, services or facilities either directly to the public or to other businesses or organizations; and
- incorporate accessibility features when designing or acquiring self-serve kiosks.

The plan will incorporate each of these standards, and general requirements to ensure its procedures and best practices are consistent with the Regulations, and to ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities through the identification, removal and prevention of barriers within the DNSSAB facilities and services.

The plan outlines:

- The actions that DNSSAB has taken and will continue to take to remove barriers for persons with disabilities since 2018 when DNSSAB's first Accessibility Plan was approved;
- The processes by which the DNSSAB identifies, removes and prevents barriers to persons with disabilities;



- The “Future Initiatives” that the DNSSAB will undertake to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;
- The monitoring and ongoing review process for the Accessibility Plan;
- The communication of DNSSAB’s Accessibility Plan to the employees of the DNSSAB, members of the disabled community and the public; and,
- The standards of Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

### **DNSSAB Accessibility Committee**

The DNSSAB has established an accessibility committee comprised of staff volunteers. The committee shall review and advise the Board about the requirements and implementation of AODA accessibility standards, preparation of accessibility reports, including access for persons with disabilities to a building or premises, and other matters for which the Board may seek advice.

The Accessibility Committee is comprised of the following staff:

Name	Department	Contact Information
Sharon Moseley-Williams	Social Services	705-474-2151, Ext. 3338 <a href="mailto:Sharon.Moseley-Williams@dnssab.ca">Sharon.Moseley-Williams@dnssab.ca</a>
Laura Johnson	Social Services	705-474-2151, Ext. 3130 <a href="mailto:Laura.Johnson@dnssab.ca">Laura.Johnson@dnssab.ca</a>
Derek McLeod	Children’s Services	705-474-2151, Ext. 3352 <a href="mailto:Derek.McLeod@dnssab.ca">Derek.McLeod@dnssab.ca</a>
Rachelle Cote	Social Services	705-474-2151, Ext. 1100 <a href="mailto:Rachelle.Cote@dnssab.ca">Rachelle.Cote@dnssab.ca</a>
Tara Kraemer	Corporate Services	705-474-2151, Ext. 3199 <a href="mailto:Tara.Kraemer@dnssab.ca">Tara.Kraemer@dnssab.ca</a>

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The DNSSAB Accessibility Committee**

- Advise and assist DNSSAB in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free organization for persons with disabilities of all abilities including persons with disabilities;
- Promote accessibility within the organization to increase education and awareness;
- Review DNSSAB’s policies, programs and services and the identify, remove and prevent barriers faced by persons with disabilities;
- Contribute to the development, implementation and education on standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation and buildings through consultation with department staff on recent department initiatives to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;
- List policies, services, programs and practices to be reviewed by the DNSSAB;



- Determine a department strategy for barrier removal on an annual basis;
- Ensure that department measures for the removal of barriers are identified in the DNSSAB's annual budget process;
- Review matters referred to the DNSSAB Accessibility Committee and make recommendations as appropriate;
- File an accessibility compliance report every three years;
- Develop a multi-year accessibility plan outlining the organization's strategy to identify, remove and barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation;
- Make the multi-year accessibility plan public;
- Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years in consultations from people with disabilities;
- and
- Update the CAO or their designate on accessibility issues or concerns and bring forward recommendations.

### **DNSSAB Departments:**

- Ensure that commitments outlined are implemented;
- Employees are trained; and
- Review their department on an annual basis and continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers as required.

### **Barrier Identification:**

The Accessibility Committee will use the following approach to identify barriers:

- Research previously identified barriers;
- Solicit staff contributions in all service areas of known and suspected barriers; and
- Review suggestions and comments forwarded by the public by way of the feedback process.

The Accessibility Committee will focus on the following areas to identify barriers:

- Physical facilities (e.g. furniture, work stations, building interiors/exterior, parking areas, washrooms etc.)
- Service and Program delivery to staff (e.g. job postings, promotion, hiring/interviewing/testing etc.)
- Service and program delivery to persons with disabilities (e.g. in-person, telephone, mail, e-mail, website)
- Procurement (e.g. purchasing, by-laws etc.)
- Safety and Evacuation
- Interviewing, Hiring, Promotion, and other Human Resources Policies and Practices
- Technologies (e.g. computers, operating systems, software, office equipment, telephones etc.)



- Information and communication infrastructures (e.g. printed, forms, website/web-based resources, signage, bulletin board etc.)
- Customer service for people with disabilities (e.g. support person, service animals, service disruption notices etc.)

### **Quarterly and Annual Review Process:**

The Accessibility Committee will meet quarterly to review the progress of barrier removal and to update the Accessibility Plan relative to Departmental operations and annual budget deliberations. As new projects arise, the Committee will review the plans and provide recommendations on how to best improve and achieve accessibility. The Committee will continue to monitor legislative changes to the Act and any revisions and/or actions related to these changes will be captured in annual Plan review update.

On an annual basis the Accessibility Committee will review and update the multi-year Accessibility Plan and advise the Board at least once every five years. The recommended initiatives identified in the review will be considered, evaluated and approved within the context of DNSSAB's Capital and Operating Budget Process.

### **Communication:**

Copies of this plan and subsequent annual updates will be available from Corporate Services and on the DNSSAB's website ([www.dnssab.ca](http://www.dnssab.ca)). The plan and subsequent updates will be available in accessible format, upon request.



## Definitions

“Accessibility Standard”: means an accessibility standard made by regulation under section 6 of the AODA.

“Accommodation”: means the special arrangement made or assistance provided so that persons with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to persons without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the person’s unique needs.

“Barrier”: means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, and information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Disability”: as defined by the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code, means,

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness, or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other medical appliance or device;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A mental disorder, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

“Service Animal”: means an animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

“Support Person”: means any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, friend to who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care of medical needs or with access to goods or services.



## **2021 – 2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

Under the AODA, the DNSSAB is required to establish, maintain and document a multi-year plan that outlines the DNSSAB's strategies to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers.

The 2021-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reflects the DNSSAB's continued efforts and dedication in meeting its commitment to create accessible programs, services, and a workplace that ensures full participation of individuals with disabilities.



Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
<b>Customer Service – Accomplishments</b>			
Access to services that cannot attend the office in-person (Home Visit Policy)	Review the Home Visit Policy/Procedure to ensure services are available to persons with disabilities who cannot physically come to one of our offices to complete either an Ontario Works or Children’s Services application (Home Visit Policy).	Ontario Works, Children’s Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Mental health advocacy for youth	Work with employers in the District to advocate and improve access to employment opportunities for youths with mental health thus increasing better employment outcomes in the District.	Ontario Works	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Child care options for children and families with special needs	Advocate for childcare options, including the number of spaces, quality and access to early learning services are available for children and families with special needs	Children’s Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Social Housing operational reviews check for AODA compliance	Ensure that operational reviews and reports contain sufficient checks to ensure housing providers are in compliance with AODA	Housing Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
The DNSSAB’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan addresses accessibility concerns	Review the plan to ensure accessibility concerns are addressed and provide suggestions where necessary.	Housing Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative



Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
<p>Ensure that all housing and homelessness service delivery agreements contain language requiring that services be offered according to AODA standards</p>	<p>In conjunction with the DNSSAB's Accessibility Committee, conduct a review of all new and existing service delivery agreements to ensure services are delivered in an accessible manner in compliance with AODA</p>	<p>Accessibility Committee/Housing Services</p>	<p>Review of existing agreements: Completed in 2018</p> <p>Review of new agreements: Ongoing Initiative</p>
<p><b>Employment – Accomplishments</b></p>			
<p>Lack of Individualized emergency evacuation response plans for employees with a disability.</p>	<p>Enhanced communication support through regular communications and the onboarding process to ensure all employees with disabilities that require assistance during a workplace emergency would have completed an individual emergency evacuation response plan, and subsequently communicated to the City Hall Emergency Coordinator (building landlord)</p>	<p>Human Resources (HR)</p>	<p>Completed in 2018</p> <p>Ongoing Initiative</p>
<p>Need to increase staff awareness of availability of ergonomic assessments for their workspace</p>	<p>DNSSAB in conjunction with the Joint Health and Safety Committee provide regular communication and support to all staff about the availability of ergonomic assessments.</p>	<p>Human Resources/ Joint Health and Safety Committee</p>	<p>Completed in 2018</p> <p>Ongoing Initiative</p>
<p>Notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.</p>	<p>A statement is included in all job postings notifying applicants accommodations are available upon request in the recruitment and selection process.</p>	<p>Human Resources (HR)</p>	<p>Completed in 2018</p> <p>Ongoing Initiative</p>



Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
Ensure the assessment or selection processes in recruitment, make accommodation upon request that “takes into account the applicant’s accessibility needs due to disability”	In the recruitment and selection process, accommodations take into account the applicant’s individual accessibility needs.	Human Resources (HR)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.	Successful applicants are notified of the DNSSABs policies for accommodating employees with disabilities through the onboarding process.	Human Resources (HR)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Inform employees of DNSSAB’s policies to support its employees with disabilities.	Employees are informed of DNSSAB’s policies to support its employees with disabilities through regular communication and training, and the onboarding process.	Human Resources (HR)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative g
Upon request, provide accessible formats and communication supports to employees as it relates to information needed in order for the employee to perform their job and information generally available to employees.	Information and communication supports are provided to employees in an accessible format upon request in order for them to perform their job.	Human Resources (HR)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Develop and having in place documented return to work processes. This does not override any other return to work process created under any other statute.	In conjunction with the overseeing health care professional, HR, the supervisor and the Union, return to work processes and plans for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability are developed, implemented, and maintained in accordance with the DNSSAB Workplace Disability and Accommodation policy and Ontario Human Right Code.	Human Resources (HR)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative



Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
Develop documented individual accommodation plans upon request.	Individual accommodation plans are developed and documented upon request in accordance with the DNSSAB Workplace Disability and Accommodation policy and Ontario Human Right Code.	Human Resources (HR)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Where performance management systems are in place, career development and advancement is provided and redeployment is used, the employer “shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans.”	Individual accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are considered in performance management, career development and advancement, and where redeployment is used.	Human Resources (HR)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
<b>Training – Accomplishments</b>			
Corporate training to address attitudinal barriers	Employees receive training on diversity and inclusion to address attitudinal barriers and enhance their awareness and empathy towards coworkers and clients with disabilities.	Human Resources (HR)/Corporate Services	Completed in 2021  Ongoing Initiative
Delivery of SAIL (Supportive Approaches though Innovative Learning) training to all staff	Trained staff with the skills and resource materials ranging from mental health issues to diversity, self-care and problem solving to enhance services provided to persons with disabilities.	Ontario Works	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Train all employees, volunteers and persons who provide goods or facilities on behalf of the DNSSAB and persons who participate in developing the policies of the DNSSAB on the requirements of the Integrated Standard and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.	Employees and students are provided AODA Customer Service Training and Integrated Accessibility Standards - Information/Communication and Employment Standards Training as required.	Human Resources (HR)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative



Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
Provide training to staff on changes to policies, practices and procedures that govern the provision of goods or services on an ongoing basis and maintained records of training.	Employees are trained on changes to policies practices and procedures that govern the provision of goods or services on an ongoing basis and as required. Training records are maintained in accordance to the requirement under the AODA Act.	Human Resources (HR)/Corporate Services/All Departments	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
<b>Design of Public Spaces Standards – Accomplishments</b>			
Ensure the work environment is barrier-free	The Accessibility Act requirements and Design Guidelines is followed to ensure there are opportunities for citizens to access barrier-free services.	Corporate Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Accessible parking in all DNSSAB locations	Accessible parking is available at all DNSSAB locations.	Corporate Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Doors to reception area in North Bay are not accessible to all citizens	Automatic door openers are installed at the reception area in the North Bay office to increase accessibility to the building and services.	Corporate Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Doors to reception area in Sturgeon Falls are not accessible to all citizens	Automatic door openers are installed at the reception area in the Sturgeon Falls office to increase accessibility to the building and services.	Corporate Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative



Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
Ensure the Accessibility Committee is involved in any new accommodation design plans for the workplace	The Accessibility Committee is involved in any new accommodation design plans for the workplace to ensure the Act requirements and Design Guidelines are followed to address potential needs of employees with disabilities.	Accessibility Committee/Corporate Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Ensure that any new housing developments subject to DNSSAB funding meet accessibility standards	All new DNSSAB-funded housing developments address accessibility and contain accessibility elements so that citizens can live independently.	NDHC	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
<b>Information/Communication – Accomplishments</b>			
Language Interpreters Services.	The DNSSAB locates and ensures language interpreters services are available upon request and as soon as practicable to improve communication and access to barrier-free services.	All Departments	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Access to services for parents/ families from the deaf or hard of hearing community.	Collaborate with community partners delivering services for the deaf or hard of hearing to increase access to information and ensure services are available to parent/families as needed. e.g. Canadian Hearing Society	All Departments	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Web access to DNSSAB.	The DNSSAB website (except content not updated since January 1st, 2012) and web content conforms to WCAG 2.0 by 2020 and level AA thereby ensuring information is inclusive and full accessible to all citizens. New website content will conform to the WCAG 2.0 and level AA standard.	Corporate Services/Designated Departments	Completed in 2020.  New website in progress 2021.  Ongoing Initiative



Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
Ensure that the Housing Services section of the DNSSAB website is accessible	In conjunction with the Communications & Executive Coordinator and other departments, a review of website accessibility was completed to increase access to Housing Service information by persons with disabilities. New website content will conform to the WCAG 2.0 and level AA standard.	Housing Services	Completed in 2018.  New website content in progress – 2021  Ongoing Initiative
Some DNSSAB reports are not fully accessible and are posted on the website	Public documents are posted to the DNSSAB website in full-text searchable format to enable screen readers to read and search the documents to improve access for people with disabilities ensuring everyone can participate.	Corporate Services/Designated Departments	Completed in 2018  New website content in progress – 2021  Ongoing Initiative
Service notifications	Service notifications are communicated in multiple ways: website, intake line, automated line, print materials. Service notifications and materials are updated as necessary when new accessibility standards for communications are established corporately.	All Departments	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative



Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
Ensure that the “Rent Geared-To- Income and Market Rent Applications for Social Housing in the District of Nipissing” are provided in an accessible manner	Rent Geared-To-Income and Market Rent Applicants for Social Housing in the District of Nipissing” are provided in accessible formats and communications supports as quickly as possible and at no additional cost when requested by a person with a disability so all citizens have equal access to the applications process.	Housing Services/Nipissing District Housing Corporation (NDHC)	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Emergency Procedures, plans or public Safety Information, which are available to the public, are to be provided in an accessible format “as soon as practicable upon request.”	Emergency Procedures, plans or public Safety Information are available to the public (e.g. posted in public waiting areas, DNSSAB website) and provided in an accessible format “as soon as practicable upon request” (e.g. writing, e-mail, or telephone).	Human Resources (HR)/Corporate Services	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Processes for receiving and responding to feedback shall ensure that the processes are available to persons with disabilities.	There is an “Accessibility” page on the DNSSAB website that provides a joint email address for the public to submit feedback for the Accessibility Committee receive and respond to.	Corporate Services/Accessibi lity Committee	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative
Providing information and communication supports upon request in an accessible format “in a timely manner that takes into account the person’s accessibility needs due to disability,” at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. The public is notified about the accessibility formats and communication supports.	The DNSSAB website has an “Accessibility” page that notifies the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports upon request and provides them with a joint email address to submit such request.	Corporate Services/Accessibi lity Committee	Completed in 2018  Ongoing Initiative

**Information/communication – Future Initiatives**





Barrier Identified / AODA Initiative	Action(s) to Prevent/Remove the Barrier	Responsibility	Compliance Deadline
Ensure that the Nipissing District Housing Corporation (NDHC) section of the DNSSAB website is accessible.	Ensure the content in the NDHC section of the DNSSAB website conforms to the WCAG 2.0 and level AA standard.	Nipissing District Housing Corporation (NDHC)	New website content in progress – 2021  Ongoing Initiative
Staff not fully utilizing the accessibility features available in MS Office when creating various types of documents, presentation materials, and brochures	Provide new and existing staff with technical training regarding accessibility features of Microsoft Office to ensure accessible information is available to staff and persons with disabilities.	Corporate Services	2025
Increase staff access to information and/or resources available in the community to assist them in their job to support persons with disabilities.	Provide staff with a list of accessible resources on the DNSSAB intranet (SharePoint), and update as required.	Accessibility Committee	2022

<sup>1</sup> Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_05a11\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm)