

# Business ACCESS-Ability Guidelines



## Overview

The Business ACCESS-Ability Program furthers the Province of Nova Scotia's commitment to equal opportunity and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. Under this program, funds are available for cost shared grants to business for accessibility-related improvements which may fall under one, or more, of the following categories:

### 1) Built Environment

**Objective:** Remove physical barriers for persons (customers and employees) to access business services.

#### Construction/Renovation Projects

**Eligible Expenses:** - Improvements to the physical environment of a business to meet the accessibility requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code. It includes such improvements as "curb cuts" on private property, provision of accessible parking, and the installation of automated door openers. Other improvements will be considered on a case-by-case basis, particularly if they improve safety of individuals, such as fire alarms for the deaf.

**Expense Cap** - \$50,000

**Amount Covered** - Up to 66% of eligible expenses

#### Design and Permit Fees

**Eligible Expenses:** - Funding for the design of improvements to the built environment (described above) and any applicable building permit/development fees.

**Expense Cap** - Maximum of 15% of construction costs.

**Amount Covered** - Up to 66% of eligible expenses

### **Accessibility Certification**

**Eligible Expenses:** - Funding for the completion of a Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) Audit and for Certification from the Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

**Expense Cap** - Maximum of \$25,000 per business (could apply to multiple buildings owned by an applicant)

**Amount Covered** - Up to 66% of eligible expenses.

## **2) Accessible Communication Services**

**Objective:** Ensure that all customers, clients, and employees can access information related to a business.

**Eligible Expenses:** Any improvement to allow communication between persons with a disability and a commercial enterprise, including:

- Accessible web design
- Accessible signage, both analogue and digital
- Assistive technologies to enable the blind, deaf, and hard of hearing to communicate with a business enterprise
- Conversion of commercial documentation into braille or another format
- Captioning of commercial videos

**Expense Cap** - \$30,000

**Amount Covered** - Up to 66% of eligible expenses.



### 3) Assistive Devices

**Objective:** Ensure that employees and consumers who are persons with disabilities have the devices they need to effectively do their jobs and access places of business.

**Eligible Expenses:**

- Purchase and installation of assistive devices
- Training of employees to use the devices

**Expense Cap** - \$30,000

**Amount Covered** - Up to 66% of eligible expenses.

### 4) Accessible Transportation

**Objective:** Ensure that there is a province-wide accessible passenger shuttle service connecting all regions through private operators. Provide support for businesses to make improvements, allowing for improved access to transportation services.

**Eligible Expenses:** Additional costs, including costs of converting an existing vehicle to a wheelchair-accessible commercial shuttle, or the difference between the cost of purchasing a wheelchair-accessible commercial shuttle service vehicle and a traditional commercial shuttle service vehicle.

**Expense Cap** - \$40,000

**Amount Covered** - 66% of eligible expenses

### 5) Universal Design Capacity Building Courses and Workshops


**Objective:** Develop universal design capacity within the professional-technical services community and train disabled persons in this field.



## **Eligible Expenses and Initiatives:**


- Up to 75% of registration fees and travel expenses for short-term continuing education and training programs related to universal design in such areas as the built environment and communications, including accessible web design, in accordance with Province of Nova Scotia travel policy.
- 100% of registration fees for selected supported short-term courses, such as the following:
  - A ten-day Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) Accessible Building Assessor Training and Certification Program, to be held in Halifax.
  - A one-day workshop on accessible web design.
  - A half-day workshop on organizing accessible events and meetings.
- Up to \$3000 for travel expenses for those attending the RHF Certification Training Program from outside of Halifax.
- Agencies and institutions may apply to offer universal design courses and workshops targeted at the business community.

## **Eligibility Guidelines**

- Businesses operating in Nova Scotia registered with Joint Registry of Stocks are eligible including locally owned franchises.
  - Franchises not locally owned or residential rental properties are ineligible.
  - Individuals interested in funding to pursue support for workshops and courses (category 5) must apply through a business or agency applicant.
  - Organizations are eligible to receive funding for one project per category per fiscal year (April 1–March 31).
  - Eligible businesses must be open for use by all community members and not reserved to those belonging to the applying organization by way of membership or other means.
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- Capital projects are required to meet the Barrier Free Design requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code and should also refer to the following CSA Technical Standards, where applicable:
  - Accessible Design for the Built Environment, CAN/CSA-B651-04
  - Barrier-free Design Standard, CAN/CSA-B651-M95
  - Accessible Design for Self-Service Interactive Devices, CAN/CSA-B651.2
  - Accessible Design for Automated Banking Machines, CAN/CSA-B651.1
  - Customer Service Standard for People with Disabilities, B480
  - Inclusive Design for an Aging Population, B659
  - Electrical Aids for Physically Disabled Persons, Z323.3.1
  - Lifts for Persons with Physical Disabilities, CAN/CSA-B355
  - Motor Vehicles for the Transportation of Persons with Physical Disabilities, CAN/CSA-D409
  - Transportable Mobility Aids, CAN/CSA-Z604

## **Eligible Expenses**

- Project expenditures incurred prior to formal notice of successful grant application may be eligible for cost sharing under this program and will only be considered if incurred within the current fiscal year. Applicants who choose to incur the expenditures prior to approval assume the risk of those costs not being approved.
  - Funding applications for improvements to leased premises will be considered, provided the lease period extends at least two years beyond the date the application is submitted.
  - Applicants may use in-kind (donated) materials, labour, and equipment as part of their contribution. For unskilled volunteer labour, applicants must use industry standard, to a maximum of \$20.00/hr. For skilled labour and professional
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services, applicants may use contractor's or professional's commercial rates. Estimates must be included, as well as a copy of the contractor's certified ID card, professional designations, or proof of incorporation.

- Grants from other government sources for the specified project must be declared and may affect the amount of grant awarded under this program.
- Funding will only cover actual costs incurred. If they are less than the original estimate, the grant amount will be revised accordingly. Grants will not exceed the actual cost of the project.

## Required Documentation

- A completed Business ACCESS-Ability Program Application
- All requested documentation – use the checklist below to ensure your application is complete. Incomplete submissions will delay consideration of your project.

## Checklist of Required Documentation for categories 1–4

- Description of business**
  - Description of the building(s):** Describe current layout and issues. Include photos/sketches/drawings for clarity.
  - Description of proposed project:** Provide a detailed description of the project and the accessibility-related improvements being proposed. Include photos/sketches/drawings for clarity.
  - Other grants:** Identify all other sources of grant funds.
  - Copy of lease agreement or proof of ownership:** For capital projects, include written approval of property owner and copy of current lease. Required documentation for proof of ownership would be the deed or property assessment.
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- Proof of insurance:** Provide all or portion of insurance policy that states coverage period and indicates that the equipment or property are insured for fire/vandalism. Renewal notices will not be accepted.
- Proof of incorporation:** Provide evidence of incorporation and identify how long the organization has existed.
- Detailed estimates:** a minimum of 3 bids recommended on contracted work. If 3 bids cannot be obtained, explain why.
- Proof of skilled labour:** Provide a copy of the contractor's professional ID card, professional designations, or proof of incorporation if using skilled labour.
- Justification of bid selected:** Provide justification of bid selected if it is not the lowest one received.

## Checklist for Required Documentation for Category 5, Capacity Building

- Description of training institute or agency delivering the course(s)**
- Description of proposed training**
- Identify all sources of funding**
- Proof of Incorporation**

## Application Process

- Contact the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage Program Officer to discuss the proposed project and the application requirements before submitting an application.
  - Submit applications by email to: [sbaccess@novascotia.ca](mailto:sbaccess@novascotia.ca)
  - Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until the grant program is 100% expended.
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## Funding Payment Conditions

- Applicants who are approved for funding receive a letter outlining the terms and conditions of funding.
- Non-repayable contributions must be used for the activity as described in the application.
- Applicants/recipients must notify the department in advance of any changes in the activity, including start and end dates, location, or any other significant changes.
- Applicants who do not receive the amount they requested may be required to submit a revised budget based on the approved amount.
- If the project is not undertaken after payment of the grant has been made, the recipient must return the funds to the department.
- Successful applicants must submit a Final Report within 30 days of project end.

## Send Completed Application Form To:

Business ACCESS-Ability Grant  
Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage  
Communities, Sport and Recreation Division  
*sbaccess@novascotia.ca*

## For further information, contact:

### **Wayne Matheson**

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