Accessibility Plan

2027 to 2029



WorkplaceNL

Health | Safety | Compensation

Contents

Our Service Commitment 1
Our Accessibility Statement 1
Progress to Date 2
Focus Areas 2027-2029 2
Focus Area 1: Education 3
Focus Area 2: Accessibility of information and communication technology 3
Focus Area 3: Built environment 4
Governance 4
Reporting Progress 4
In Summary 5
Appendix A: Past Work with Community Partners 6

This Accessibility Plan is available in PDF format on our website. Alternate formats are available upon request. Email info@workplacenl.ca or call 1.800.563.9000.

If you have a question or comment about this plan,
please email communications@workplacenl.ca or write to:

Communications and Engagement
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St. John’s, NL A1W 3B8

Message from the CEO

On behalf of WorkplaceNL, I am pleased to share our Accessibility Plan 2027-2029, which builds on the progress we have made and reflects our ongoing commitment to providing services that are inclusive, welcoming and accessible to everyone.

Under the authority of the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act, 2022, WorkplaceNL administers the no-fault workplace compensation system in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our strategic plan guides our work to prevent workplace injury, improve return-to-work outcomes and modernize our client service delivery. This accessibility plan supports each of these priorities by helping ensure our clients can independently access our services, information and spaces.

Over the next three years we will focus on three areas: continuing to educate our employees about accessibility and inclusivity; reviewing and improving the accessibility of our digital information and services; and making our office spaces easier and safer to use. We will work with community partners to complete accessibility audits of our online services and office locations and then act on the recommendations, where reasonably appropriate.

I am grateful to our community partners for sharing their knowledge and experience, and to our employees for their ongoing commitment to accessibility, respect and inclusion.

I invite you to read this plan and share your feedback as we work together to make WorkplaceNL more accessible for everyone.



Elizabeth Lane
Chief Executive Officer, WorkplaceNL

Glossary of Terms

Accessibility Act – the Act Respecting Accessibility in the Province aims to prevent, identify and remove barriers that prevent persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador from fully participating in society. It requires public bodies to develop an Accessibility Plan every three years.

Accessibility plan – a plan developed to address the prevention, identification and removal of barriers in the policies, programs, practices and services of a public body.

Accessibility standard – the accessibility requirement established under the Accessibility Act

Barrier – anything that prevents a person from fully participating in society. Includes physical, architectural, information, communications, attitudinal and technological barriers, or a barrier established or perpetuated by an Act, regulations, policy or practice.

Disability – a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation that is permanent, temporary or episodic in nature that, in interaction with a barrier, prevents a person from fully participating in society.

Inclusion – the practice and principle of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background, ability or identity are welcomed, respected and able to fully participate in society, education and workplaces.

Public body – WorkplaceNL is a public body in Newfoundland and Labrador, as a commission with its board of directors appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

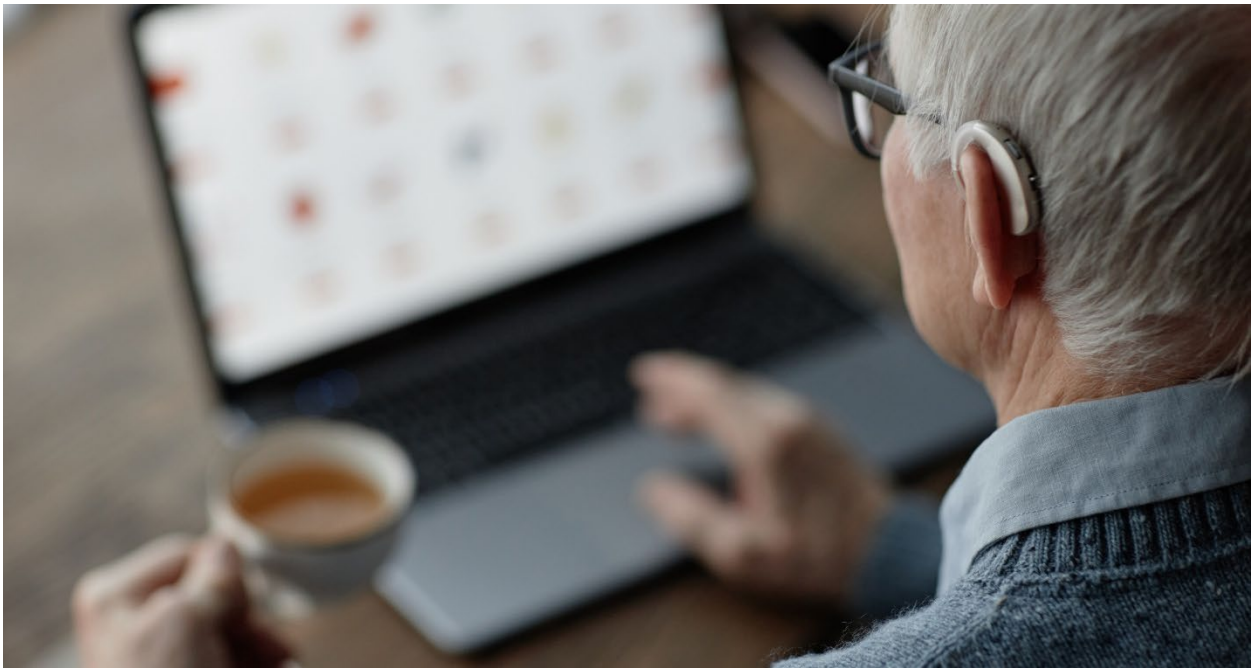
Our Service Commitment

At WorkplaceNL, we are committed to providing fair, caring and quality service to our clients. Our clients can expect:

- To be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy
- To understand and participate fully in their claim or account
- To receive high-quality service
- To have access to timely information that affects them
- To have their privacy protected

Our Accessibility Statement

Our services are accessible and welcoming to everyone. By working with community partners, our employees and our clients, we help prevent, identify and remove barriers so everyone can use our programs and services.



Progress to Date

Advancing accessibility has been a long-term priority for WorkplaceNL. We thank our many community partners for their advice and guidance as we continue to learn and change to meet our clients' needs (see Appendix A for past progress).

Progress under our most recent (2024–2026) Accessibility Plan included engaging with:

Association for New Canadians: to improve our public materials on the three basic rights of workers – to know, to participate and to refuse unsafe work – written in clear, approachable language.

The Autism Society: to improve our employees' understanding of neurodiversity and identify ways to support neurodivergent clients and employees.

Canadian National Institute for the Blind: to train front-desk employees on how to best support clients with sight challenges.

Coalition of Persons with Disabilities: to deliver education sessions to help our employees support persons with disabilities.

DiversityNL: to deliver a series of workshops and information sessions to increase our employees' awareness of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

As well, we revised client letters using clear language as they were moved to our online services. We tested closed captioning for our live stream safety webinars. Closed captioning is available on YouTube for our on-demand webinars.

We opened an inter-faith prayer room for employees, providing a more inclusive workplace.

Focus Areas 2027-2029

As we evolve and modernize, we want our programs and services to stay accessible. To build on our progress, we will work with community partners and people with lived experience to focus on three areas during 2027-2029:

1. Education
2. Accessibility of information and communication technology
3. Built environment

The goals and yearly actions in this plan show how we will keep working to find, remove and prevent barriers so everyone can access our services independently.

Focus Area 1: Education

Educating our team is the foundation of our plan. We will continue to offer learning opportunities to our employees by partnering with people with lived experience and community groups.

Goals

- Foster an accessibility-first culture through continuous training and awareness
- Equip employees with the knowledge and tools to provide accessible services
- Empower employees to identify and remove barriers to access

Actions

2027-2029: Deliver 1-2 accessibility education or awareness activities per year

Focus Area 2: Accessibility of information and communication technology

Accessible information and technology help everyone access and use our services independently. As we continue to modernize our services, add online options and develop new digital content, now is an important time to review these offerings.

Goals

- Provide clients with clear and accessible digital content and online services
- Equip employees with the knowledge and tools to create digital content and online services that are accessible by design

Actions

2027: With community partners, complete accessibility audits of our online services

2028-2029: Implement recommendations from the audits, as reasonably appropriate

Focus Area 3: Built environment

Our physical spaces should be safe, welcoming and easy for everyone to use. Accessible spaces help people move through our offices with dignity and independence, reducing barriers that may make it harder to get support, attend meetings or participate fully. As our last accessibility audits were completed about 10 years ago, it is time to refresh our audits and update our spaces, if needed.

Goals

- Provide safe and accessible spaces that support independent access for clients, visitors and employees.
- Meet accessibility standards in our built environment.

Actions:

2027: With community partners, complete accessibility audits of our office locations

2028-2029: Implement recommendations from the audits, as reasonably appropriate

Governance

Sponsor and Champion: Director, Communications and Engagement

Accessibility Lead: Manager, Service Centre and Client Service Programs

The sponsor is a senior management representative that champions and oversees the plan. The Accessibility Lead supports the work of the plan, including developing and implementing the plan, regularly reporting progress and working with community partners.

A cross-functional team fulfills the actions in this plan, including management and employees from information technology, facilities, finance and human resources departments, as well as front-facing areas including worker and employer services.

Reporting Progress

Each year, we will share our progress on this plan in our Annual Performance Report, as required by the Accessibility Act.

In Summary

Our commitment under this three-year accessibility plan (2027-2029) is to continue to work towards offering services that are accessible and welcoming to everyone. We aim to continually improve how we identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessing our services – focusing on education, accessibility of information and technology and our built environment. To do this, we remain open to learning from people with disabilities and lived experiences as well as building strong partnerships in the community.

Appendix A: Past Work with Community Partners

Over the years, we have partnered with community partners to create awareness and equip our employees to provide accessible services, including:

Association for New Canadians (ANC)

- WorkplaceNL delivered education sessions to ANC staff and new Canadians entering the workforce in our communities (as employees or employers) about employee rights with respect to workplace safety and injuries.
- Completed cultural intelligence assessments with our employees.

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL)

- Completed accessibility review to help improve our facilities and how we serve clients affected by sensory-related disabilities.
- Implemented hearing assistive devices in meeting rooms and amplifiers for phones in main lobbies.
- WorkplaceNL received the CHHA-NL Community Awareness Award in 2014.

Canadian Mental Health Association – Newfoundland and Labrador (CMHA-NL)

- Delivered the Changing Minds education program to our employees, including guest speakers with lived experiences as well as Mental Health First Aid training.

Canadian National Institute for the Blind - Newfoundland and Labrador (CNIB-NL)

- Reviewed programs and service delivery to recommend improvements for clients experiencing sight challenges.
- Introduced alternate formats for our materials, including Braille and large print.

CHANNAL

- Delivered education sessions to our employees to reduce stigma related to mental health and addictions and increase awareness of community resources and support available to employees and clients.

Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – Newfoundland and Labrador (COD-NL)

- Completed accessibility audits of three offices, resulting in 28 recommendations that were implemented between 2017 and 2019.
- WorkplaceNL received the COD-NL Inclusion Award in 2017.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

- Participated in the Understanding Changes Everything Workplace Partnership Program to support employees living with mental illness and addiction.

We have also taken practical steps to improve accessibility across our services, information and office spaces, including:

- Implemented over-the-phone interpretation services for clients, offering services in many languages.
- Increased the number of accessible parking spaces and repainted the parking lines for increased visibility.
- Relocated signage and physical barriers from front entrances.
- Adjusted door tensions for easier access.
- Introduced plain language and branding for publications and correspondence.
- Incorporated accessibility standards into our brand and writing style guides.
- Installed an emergency exit chair to help those with a physical disability escape the third floor in case of emergency.
- Changed dispensers and installed other automatic bathroom features.

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