



Accessibility in Business

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via Queens' Chamber of Commerce



Is your business accessible to everybody? in person or otherwise



Consider: NS has **1 in 4** people with some form of disability ... a significant market you may be shutting out!



\$50B/yr consumer buying power in Canada

NS Accessibility Act

passed April 27, 2017


Under Bill 59

Department of Justice – Human Rights Issue

Timeline for ‘Access by Design 2030’

Starts with Provincial government, then public sector bodies, then private sector.





Business owners have a **responsibility** to welcome everyone ... a moral, a business and soon to be a legal one.

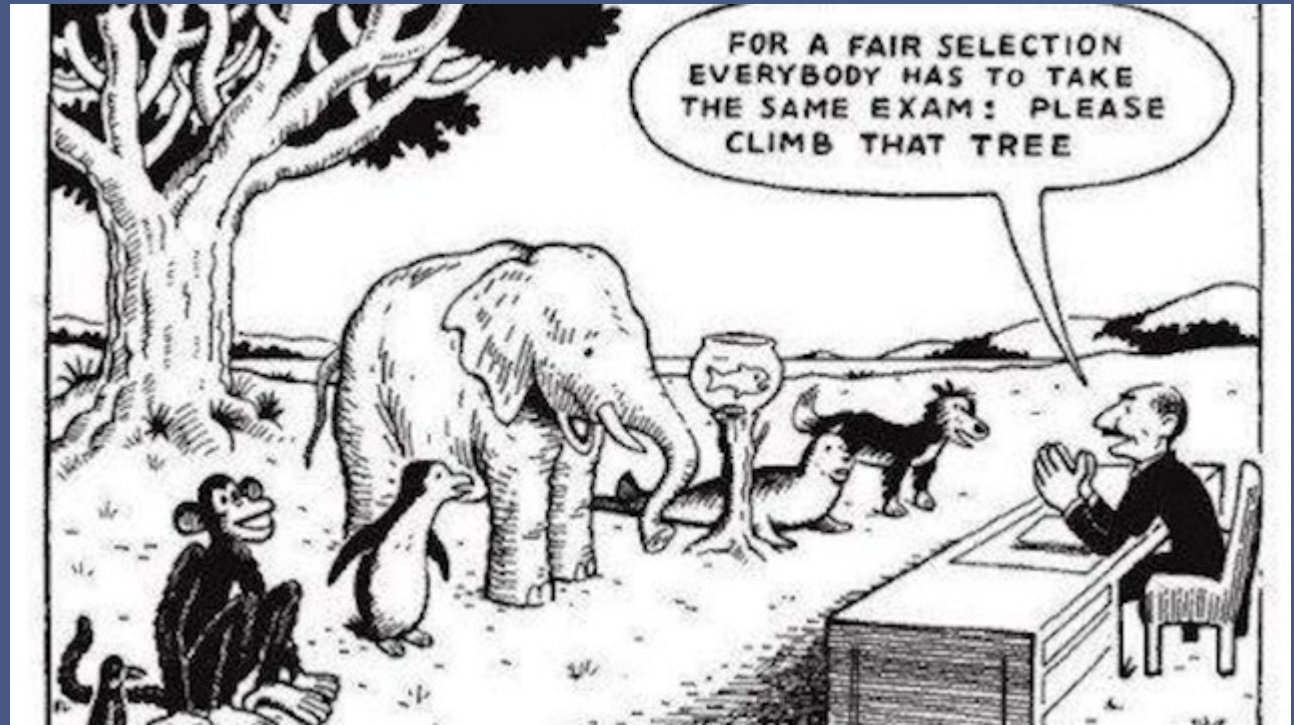
This Act allows for **penalties** up to \$250,000.

Provincial Government has invested \$1.8M in **grants** for businesses to become more inclusive.

See cch.novascotia.ca/business-access-ability-grant-program for info on 5 areas of funding.

Disabilities are created by barriers.

Accessible = Barrier-Free



Barriers may be physical, digital, attitudinal.

‘Able-ism’ is when those who don’t hit barriers don’t even recognize them.

Your customer (or employee) may have impaired:

**Mobility Hearing Sight Dexterity Pain
Memory Cognition Development**

It may be temporary, periodic or permanent.



NS focusses on 6 categories to improve:

Built Environment

Goods & Services

Education

Transportation

Employment

Information & Communication

New standards are in development.





Built Environment



- Approach and entrance – if not barrier free, is help available? Doesn't have to be \$\$
- Navigating within – wayfinding (layout & signage), service counter, washrooms. Not just mobility
- Lighting and contrast helps invisible disabilities too
- Consider main users as not all 'solutions' help all: carpets to dampen glare and sound is hard for wheelchair users.



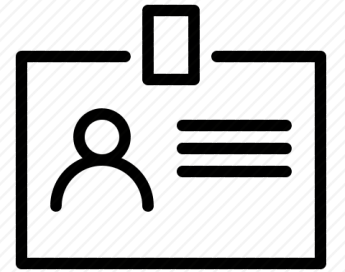
... built environment



- NS Building Code much improved in Jan 2020 with amendments to Section 3.8 'Accessibility'
 - Ramps, stairs, railings, door & hall widths, knee clearance, handles, control switch locations
 - # of accessible parking stalls and washrooms
 - Whether a power operated door is required: YES if mercantile & business services is over 500m²
 - Signage to & visual alarms in washrooms.



Employment



- Recruiting, interviewing, hiring & retention: are various formats or supports available?
- Duty to Accommodate is in the Canadian Human Rights Act, up to undue hardship
- Statistics show that employees with disabilities were top performers and accommodations are not \$\$\$
- NSWorks has Job Developers & Employment Maintenance Workers, sometimes Job Coaches.

Disclosure – No details, only what accommodations are required.



EMPLOYMENT AGENCY



**“Right now we have openings for a beach lifeguard,
greenhouse gardener, and sauna manager.”**

Find the right fit & where expectations match!



... employment supports



- CCH Business grants for assistive technologies
- START program has wage incentives, training &/or equipment cost coverage for sm-med-sized business
- WIPSI covers new staff training to foster diversity
- Opportunities Fund for people with disabilities
- Login to LaMPSS (Labour Market Program Support System); check Labour & Advanced Education
- also see CASE, CCRW-hirefortalent.ca, Worktopia, ...



Goods and Services



- Do you offer a variety for different users?
nb. ergonomics for dexterity, simplicity of use,
- Consider unique abilities, needs & preferences
ex. many love Sobey's quiet hour for autism
- Be mindful of invisible impairments or frustrations.
Does the customer need extra help from you or a service dog or support personnel? Allow for them.



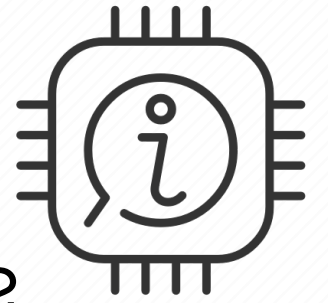
... goods and services



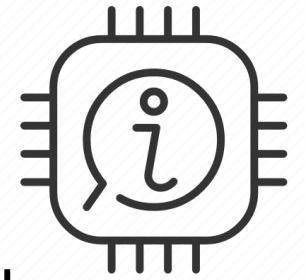
- Staff training for good customer support.
- EU has 2017 policy on ‘key products and services’, like phones, e-book readers, operating systems and payment terminals ... need for *tactile* interaction.
- Give notice of temporary disruptions in accessibility options.
- Policy on being open to accessibility feedback.



Information and Communication



- How do customers engage with your business?
- Digital Accessibility: visual needs to have audio and vice versa, audio needs visual. Options!
- Screen readers are helpful only when there's something to read, so use alternative text on images, captions on videos, and test without mouse or trackpad for website navigation.



... info & comm's

- Consider which font style, size, colour is clearest
- QR codes are easy to use, info easily updated – city restaurants are using for menus (Covid > blind)
- Personal devices have magnifiers, dictation and text-to-speech. Countless apps can 'see' for people. Staff can learn then bring awareness.
- Policy should be printed & on website that alternative formats are available.

Again, there's no need for an expensive intervention but be aware.



Transportation

- QCT is supported by province and the Region, is accessible but needs drivers!

Education



Queens is committed to improving accessibility:
www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/planning/accessibility
an **Accessibility Advisory Committee** is in place,
mandated to create a local *Accessibility Plan*,
focusing first on Municipal Buildings and Services.

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