

Introduction

At the heart of every community are places where people can gather safely to celebrate our rich cultural heritage. All Nova Scotians need facilities in their communities that are safe, welcoming, foster community pride and build stronger communities. The Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage supports activities that contribute to the well-being and vitality of Nova Scotia's communities through the promotion, development, preservation, and celebration of the province's diversity, culture, heritage, identity, and languages.

Government is committed to an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. This grant program aligns with the commitment to increasing accessibility across the Province ([Access By Design](#)).

Program Description

The Community Access Ability Program provides cost sharing grants that support community-led **accessibility improvement** projects. This includes accessibility in the built environment, education, employment, good & services, information & communication, transportation and more.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Program Officer, Paul Tingley, to discuss their project before applying at AccessAbilityGrants@novascotia.ca or (902) 233-8379

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Commitment

- Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage supports our communities to thrive by promoting active living, tourism, and Nova Scotia's diverse culture, heritage, and languages. We pride ourselves in helping to grow communities and organizations by providing programs and services that support these areas.
- We are committed to ensuring that our programs and services are free of discrimination and barriers, and value equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA). By applying this lens, and ensuring it is a core value in our programs and decision-making processes, we are taking steps to address the long-standing systemic barriers that impact many communities in our province.
- Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage is committed to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility across Nova Scotia, and we support partners who share in this commitment.

Eligible Applicants include:

- [Registered](#) non-profit organizations, such as Community Halls, Legions, Churches, Day Cares, Shelters, Recreation facilities, etc...
- Municipalities, Towns, Villages and First Nations communities.
- Public institutions, such as libraries, museums, schools, hospitals, post secondary institutions, etc...

All applicants must:

- Operate primarily for the benefit of community, culture, and diversity, AND
- Provide programs that serve a broader community and not strictly the organization's membership, AND
- Own the property where the work will take place OR maintain a long-term lease of at least 5 years with the owner of the property where the work will take place.

Eligible Projects

Projects should focus on **improving accessibility** in community spaces and may include (but are not limited to):

- **Physical Accessibility:** Installation of ramps, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, or other modifications for improved mobility access.
- **Sensory Accessibility:** Adjustments for visual and auditory accessibility, such as braille signage, tactile paving, visual alarms, or hearing loop systems.
- **Technology Enhancements:** Installation of assistive technology to improve access to services for people with disabilities.
- **Outdoor Accessibility:** Accessible pathways, seating, and inclusive play areas in parks, trails, beaches and community gathering spots.
- **Accessible Transportation, Education, Communication, Goods and Services**
- All projects that alter the built environment should meet, or exceed, the [Nova Scotia's Building Code](#), which is the minimum standard. Items not required by the building code may be considered if they are designed to improve accessibility.

Ineligible Applicants

- Federally or provincially owned buildings
- For-profit business (use [Business Access Ability program](#))
- Private homes or residencies

Ineligible Project and Costs

- General maintenance unrelated to accessibility.
- Expenses that happen outside the 2025 fiscal year (April 1, 2025-March 31, 2026).
- Operational costs or ongoing staff salaries.
- Any items that are required by the Nova Scotia Building code for new construction
- Costs associated with preparation of the grant application.

Program Criteria

Eligible applications will be reviewed against the following program criteria:

- **Impact on Accessibility:** The depth and scale to which the project improves accessibility for all.
- **Community Benefit:** How the project fosters inclusion and benefits the local community.
- **Quality:** adherence to building guidelines of the [Nova Scotia Building Code](#)
- **Feasibility and Budget:** Project readiness, budget and capacity to complete the project

Funding Parameters

- **Contribution Level: CCTH covers up to 66% of total eligible project costs.**
- **Maximum Funding: \$50,000 per project.**
- Cost Sharing: Applicants are responsible for securing the remaining project costs through their own funding sources, in-kind contributions, or other grants.
- For projects under \$25,000 - funding will be disbursed in 1 transaction of 100%. Grants above \$25,000 will be dispersed in 2 transactions - 80% upon return of the Terms & Conditions document and 20% upon receipt of Final Report.
- Applicants may use donated materials or equipment or in-kind work as part of their contribution. Eligible in-kind contributions include applicants labour in the design or construction of the project. For unskilled labour, applicants may report up to \$20.00 per hour rate. For skilled labor, applicants may use contractor's commercial rate. Please include a copy of the contractor's professional ID card.
- If your organization is eligible for HST exemptions or rebates, please deduct these expenses from your application as the Province will not cover these costs.

Project Considerations

- Once funding has been provided, no substantial changes can be made to the project without the written consent of the Program Officer. Funds are to be returned if not completely used for the project.
- Organizations which receive funding must submit a **final report** within 30 days of the project end date. Organizations will be required to submit photos, copies of final invoices and proof of payment (i.e. paid receipts/cancelled cheques) for purchases/services rendered in completion of the project.

Application Procedure

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to speak with department staff far in advance of the deadline and before applying. See contact information below.
- Applicants must complete the Application Form in full. A checklist is included to help ensure that all required information is considered/provided. **Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.**
- Applicants must include at least one quote from external contractors/suppliers
- Application Forms must be signed and dated by the Chairperson / Chief.
- Applications can be delivered by email, in-person, fax, courier or sent by regular mail.

Application Deadlines and Activity Start/End Dates

- **The deadline to submit complete, signed application is 11:59 p.m. February 14, 2025.** Projects can start no earlier than April 1, 2025, and must be completed prior to March 31, 2025. Projects must have defined start and end dates.
- Applications will be reviewed by Communities, Culture and Heritage staff and recommendations for approval made to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. **The entire review and approval process may take 12 - 16 weeks.**

Other links/resources for accessibility

- [Nova Scotia Building Code](#)
- [Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate](#)
- Canadian Standards Association B651:18 – [Accessible Design for the built environment](#)
- Canada National Institute of the Blind – [Clear Print Guide](#)
- Barrier Free design examples – [Washroom](#) – [Ramp](#) - [Entrance](#)
- [Rick Hansen Accessibility Professional Auditors](#)
- [Built Environment Accessibility Standard](#) – available here after release

For more information, please contact Community Supports and Infrastructure:

Program Officer: Paul Tingley

Phone: (902) 233-8379

Email: AccessAbilityGrants@novascotia.ca

Fax: (902) 424-0710

Courier: Homburg Building 1741 Brunswick Street, 3rd Floor Halifax, NS B3

Mail: Communities Nova Scotia Unit, Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage

PO Box 456, Halifax, NS B3J 2R5