

Accessibility Standards Advisory Board
March 3rd, 2025 Meeting Summary Report
Emera Innovation Exchange, 100 Signal Hill Road, St. John's, NL

Attendees: Les Gilholme, Kathleen Parewick, Josh Menchions, Trisha Rose, Jeffrey Normore (Chair), Allison Noseworthy

Regrets: Camille Rose, Juanita Ford

Opening Remarks: Board Chair welcomed members and introduced Minister Pike.

Dialogue with the Minister: Minister Pike acknowledged the Board's progress in standard development and discussed the importance of accessibility and upcoming financial supports for people with disabilities. Identified barriers in accessible education and customer service and potential solutions to address them were discussed.

Both the Minister and the Board agreed that continuing in person dialogue moving forward is important to the development of standards.

Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee Update:

The Committee Lead provided an update on the Committee's work and will share meeting minutes with the Board prior to the next Board Meeting. The committee's work progress included:

- Jurisdictional review in progress to help inform standard development process and to assist with development of the standard development committee workplan.
- Committee in process of finalizing their work plan for Board approval. Once the jurisdictional review is complete, the committee will provide an outline of potential areas of accessible customer service standard development for recommendation to the Board.
- Committee is reviewing additional resources to help inform the development of standards. Resources included are Buildings Accessibility Act, Service Animal Act and Human Rights Act, 2010.

Accessible Customer Service Standard Development Committee Work Plan Discussion:

The Committee Lead provided an overview of the updated draft Committee work plan. The Committee amended the workplan timeline to accommodate adequate time for work deliverables and processes. The proposed timeline includes:

- April 2025: Submit outline of recommended accessible customer service standards to the Board.
- September 2025: First draft of Standards submitted to the Board for review.

January 2026- Final draft recommendations submitted to the Board for review, consideration and recommendation to the Minister Responsible.

The Board affirmed their support in the amended standard development timeline.

Information and Communication (IC) Standard Development Committee Discussion:

The draft IC Standard Committee Expression of Interest (EOI) and draft Terms of Reference for the IC Standard Development Committee were reviewed. The Board provided input to be included within both draft documents.

The Board discussed and reached consensus that the Committee name will be Information and Communication Standard Development Committee. Communication includes all forms of communication and is broader than Information and Communication and Technologies.

The Board discussed Artificial Intelligence (AI) and standard development. Consensus from the Board that AI will be considered in each area in which standards are being developed. The Board also agreed to add AI into the scope of IC Standard.

DPO Updates:

DPO is hosting information and awareness sessions on the Newfoundland and Labrador Disability Benefit (NLDB) in partnership with Canada Revenue Agency, Employment and Social Development Canada, PLAN Institute and Independent Living Nova Scotia. The goal of these public webinars is to increase awareness of the NLDB and the eligibility criteria for this benefit, provide information on how to apply for the Disability Tax Credit and how to open a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). Five sessions will be facilitated by April 2, 2025.

Additional updates included: upcoming consultations on the Framework of Decision-making; progress of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Accessibility Plan Annual Report; and the upcoming announcements for 2025-26 grants.

Meeting Schedule:

- The next virtual meetings will be May 21, 2025 and June 12, 2025 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- The next full day in person meetings will be September 8, 2025, and January 26, 2026, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Action Items:

- Board Chair will draft a follow up letter to Minister Pike for Board member review, in response to the Minister's request for additional information and clarification, to the Board's letter of recommendation for the next priority areas for standard development.
- DPO will prepare Committee meeting minutes and circulate prior to next Board Meeting.
- DPO will finalize jurisdictional scan highlighting the standard development processes across Canada.
- DPO will revise draft Expression of Interest and Terms of Reference for next Board Meeting (May 21, 2025).

Next Meeting:

May 21, 2025, from 9:30 to 12:30.