



Business Highlight of the Month: The Citadel Shoctor Theatre

In the fall of 2019, Voice of Albertans with Disabilities was called in to do an accessibility assessment for the Citadel Theatre's Shoctor Theatre. The performing arts venue was looking to make some big changes to their dressing room and audience spaces in anticipation of the production "Cost of Living" which features two actors with disabilities. With VAD's suggestions, and a partnership with Chandros construction and other community groups, the backstage got a huge overhaul that includes two accessible washrooms/showers: they are perfect mirrors of each other to accommodate peoples' difference in dominant sides. For the showing of "Cost of Living", the Citadel is testing out removing an entire section of seats to allow for more space for mobility aids that they hope to make permanent in the future, once they figure out the best way to include it.



"Cost of Living" In on now until February 2, 2020!
Purchase tickets here: <https://www.citadeltheatre.com/2019-2020/cost-of-living#tickets>

Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

What is Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act?

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act, also known as Bill 59, was passed in April 2017. The legislation aims to make Nova Scotia inclusive and barrier-free by 2030. Nova Scotia was the third province to enact accessibility legislation, after Ontario in 2005 and Manitoba in 2013.

Similar to the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), the Nova Scotia government is working with people with

disabilities, and public and private sector organizations to create six standards for an accessible Nova Scotia. These standards will be drafted in phases and will be available for public consultation before coming into force.

What are Nova Scotia's Accessibility Standards?

Nova Scotia's accessibility standards are still currently in development. In accordance with the act, these standards will be in the areas of information and communication, goods and services, public transportation and transportation infrastructure, employment, education, and the built environment, which includes buildings, rights-of-way, and outdoor spaces.

What is Nova Scotia's Accessibility Directorate?

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Directorate is responsible for implementing and administering the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act. They work with persons with disabilities, municipalities, businesses, post-secondary institutions, and community groups to create and prioritize accessibility standards. They are also responsible for addressing broader issues related to disability in Nova Scotia.

What is the Government of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Plan?

In 2018, the Government of Nova Scotia introduced their first multi-year (2018-2021) accessibility plan. The government believes it is important to lead by example and wanted to outline their priorities for accessibility over the next few years.

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Plan was collaboratively developed with government staff, through discussions with employees with disabilities, and with input from community engagement sessions.

Between 2018 and 2021, the government will prioritize:

- Awareness and capacity building
- Information and communications (including website accessibility)
- Buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces
- Employment
- Delivery of goods and services



www.vadsociety.ca; vad@vadsociety.ca
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What is Access by Design 2030?

Access by Design 2030 is a framework for how Nova Scotia will achieve its goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. The strategy was developed through consultation with people with disabilities and their families, organizations that serve people with disabilities, representatives from non-profit, education, health, municipal and business sectors, and the Accessibility Advisory Board.

The identified priorities for achieving an accessible Nova Scotia include:

- Standards Development
- Awareness and Capacity Building
- Collaboration and Support
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Government of Nova Scotia – Leading by Example

Website Accessibility Compliance in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

Website accessibility falls under the information or communications barrier, as mentioned in the Accessibility Act. Information and Communications is also one of the six accessibility standards and is a current priority outlined in the Government of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Plan (2018-2021).

The Government of Nova Scotia is currently working on creating a more inclusive, user-centric website. The website will follow the internationally accepted Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 AA). Since the Government of Nova Scotia created their accessibility plan to lead by example for the province, it’s expected that the Information and Communications Accessibility Standard will contain similar website accessibility requirements.

Who must comply with Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act? Compliance for organizations or individuals will be specific to each accessibility standard. Those subject to an accessibility standard must comply with it within the specified time period. Those who fail to comply may be subject to a fine of up to \$250,000.

<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/>



AISH

VAD is pleased to offer AISH assistance to those individuals who need help filling out the application form or the appeal form. By booking an appointment with the Program & Services Manager, you can ensure that you have filled out the application in your best interest. Photocopies of ID and documentation for the application are done on site to ensure that all the required information is sent in on the first submission and there is no cost to the individual requiring assistance. Call the office at 780-488-9088, to set up an appointment, usually booking time is up to 2 weeks ahead. Book today as AISH has a processing period and the sooner you get started the sooner you could be approved for AISH benefits if you qualify.



VAD Bursaries

The Board of Directors of Voice of Albertans with Disabilities is proud to announce our annual Education for Life Bursaries. We are offering individuals with disabilities who live in Alberta, an opportunity to obtain financial assistance to foster their educational growth. We are determined to give people with disabilities an equal chance at success in life. Education has been proven over and over again to be the tool that offers success to most people who take this leap. Circulation of this bursary information is imperative, your assistance would be most appreciated, please post this on your website.

<https://vadsociety.ca/support/bursaries>



Together, We Hold the Power!

Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity