



The Corporation of The Nation Municipality

**MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
2023-2028 # AC-01-2023**

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005

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Message from the Mayor of The Nation Municipality



As the mayor of The Nation Municipality, I believe that accessibility is not just a privilege but a fundamental right that every person deserves. It is our duty to ensure that everyone, regardless of their abilities, has equal access to all the opportunities and services that our community has to offer. We must work towards creating a more inclusive society where no one is left behind.

I am proud to say that we are taking significant steps to make our municipality accessible to all, we are committed to breaking down the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in our community.

But our work is not done yet. We must continue to push for more inclusive policies and infrastructure and ensure that accessibility is at the forefront of all our decision-making processes. By working together, we can build a community that is truly accessible and welcoming to all.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Francis Brière
Mayor

1. Introduction

Located in the Ottawa region, in the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, the Nation Municipality has a little over 13,350 inhabitants and 572 companies over an area of 658 km². The community of The Nation was originally mostly francophone and agricultural but is getting largely diversified due to its strong residential and commercial growth especially in the West Sector. Its main attractions are the Calypso Water Park and the St-Albert Cheese Factory.

1.1 Statement of commitment

The Nation Municipality is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. In the past few years, our dedicated team has taken several initiatives to ensure an effective transition towards becoming a fully accessible workplace and service provider. In 2020, our satellite office in the Village of Fournier was renovated, and automatic doors, ramps and accessible showers and bathrooms were installed. Another significant initiative was taken in 2021, when The Municipality's website was fully redesigned in compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA. Also, we are proud to announce that The Nation's Sports Complex opened in February 2023 and was conceived in accordance with AODA standards.

Our goals

Our main goal for the next 5 years is to continue to upgrade our facilities to make them accessible for all but also to ensure the maintenance of our current accessible installations, and this include regular inspections of the installations and the establishment of replacement plans as needed.

More specifically, in the next upcoming years, the Advisory Committee for Accessibility (ACA) will be focusing its energy on our arena located in St-Isidore and our parks. The Recreation Department is currently working on future renovation plans for the arena, which will potentially include an accessible viewing section for spectators. The ACA also considers that the community could benefit greatly from the construction of walking paths that are accessible for wheelchairs in each of our parks.

The Nation Municipality values the importance of offering fully accessible resources for all residents, employees, and visitors. To ensure that we reach this goal, the municipality will stay up to date on AODA standards and requirements, and this plan will be reviewed and adjusted at least once every five years.

2. Definitions

“Person with disability”

For the purposes of this policy, “disability” is defined according to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or in a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability;
- Learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

“Service animal”

For the purpose of this policy, “service animal” is defined as either:

- A guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Right Act;
- A service animal for a person with a disability. For the purposes of this policy, and animal is a service animal for a person with a disability;
- If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

“Support person”

For the purposes of this policy a support person is defined as a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

3. Guiding principles

3.1 Dignity and Equity

Dignity is a fundamental human right that should be afforded to all residents, visitors and employees of The Nation Municipality. Accessibility plays a critical role in upholding this right by ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not excluded or marginalized from participating in everyday life. Ultimately, by ensuring that everyone has equal access to resources, services, and opportunities, we can create a more just and equitable society in which everyone is valued and respected.

3.2 Collaboration

Collaboration among a community is an essential aspect of making a municipality more accessible. By working together with the Advisory Committee for Accessibility, and by inviting our community members to provide feedback, The Municipality can identify areas that need improvement and develop innovative solutions to make The Nation more accessible. Through collaboration, our community can create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all residents.

3.3 Accountability

A municipality has a fundamental responsibility to ensure that all members of its community have equal access to public facilities and services. In addition, municipalities must also prioritize the implementation of policies and practices that promote social inclusion, such as accessible communication and information, education, and employment opportunities. Ultimately, by prioritizing accessibility and inclusivity, municipalities can create a more equitable and unified community where all individuals can thrive.

3.4 Commitment

A municipality's commitment towards accessibility is essential to ensure that all residents have equal access to public facilities, services, and opportunities. The Nation Municipality chooses to prioritize accessibility and to create a more inclusive and equitable community that benefits all residents.

4. Practices and procedures

The following departmental practices and procedures will continue to be implemented:

- 4.1** Communications will be conducted in a manner that takes into consideration the person's disabilities;
- 4.2** Staff, volunteers and contractors who interact with the public or who are involved in the development of policies, practices and procedures regarding the provision of goods and services for the municipality will receive appropriate training;

- 4.3** Persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by the municipality that are typically open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law;
- 4.4** Persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in premises normally open to the public;
- 4.5** If an amount payable by a person for admission to the premises, or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, The Nation Municipality will ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person;
- 4.6** Notice will be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access The Nation Municipality services are temporarily disrupted;
- 4.7** The Nation Municipality will establish a process to allow people to provide feedback on whether the municipality is providing accessible goods and services;
- 4.8** The Nation Municipality acknowledges that persons with disabilities may elect to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by The Nation Municipality.

5. Feedback process

- 5.1** Should a member of the public wish to make a complaint regarding the accessible provision of goods or services they have received (or not), the member of the public can advise The Nation Municipality of their complaint or concern through the following means:
- Fill out the feedback form available on The Nation Municipality's website at: [Accessibility - The Nation \(nationmun.ca\)](https://www.nationmun.ca/Accessibility)
 - Send an email outlining the nature of the complaint or concern to the following email address: admin@nationmun.ca;
 - Contact the Accessibility Coordinator by phone at 613-764-5444, or by mail at the following address: The Nation Municipality, 958 Route 500 West, Casselman, Ontario K0A 1M0;
- 5.2** Regardless of the method used to file a complaint or provide a comment, a response will be provided to anyone providing a complaint or comment regarding the provision of accessible goods and services, in the same manner as the complaint or comment was received, within 30 days.

- 5.3** If deemed appropriate, a complaint or comment regarding the provision of accessible goods and services may be directed to The Nation Municipality's Accessibility Advisory Committee for recommendations on how to address the complaint or comment.
- 5.4** If agreement on the resolution of a complaint cannot be reached between the Accessibility Coordinator or designate and the complainant, the matter will be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer for disposition.
- 5.5** If the Chief Administrative Officer is unable to provide a satisfactory resolution to the complainant, the complainant has the option of presenting the complaint to Council for final resolution.

6. Service disruption

- 6.1** If there is a planned service interruption, partial or full, of services or facilities offered that persons with disabilities use or depend on (e.g. elevators), in whole or in part, The Nation Municipality shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
- 6.2** Notice of disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or service, if any, that are available.
- 6.3** Notice will be given by posting the information about the service disruption at a conspicuous place on the premises owned and operated by The Nation Municipality, as well as by posting the information on the municipal website (www.nationmun.ca) and providing audio messages on the automated telephone attendant for the facility where the service disruption will be taking place. If deemed appropriate and time permits, planned disruptions may also be published in local newspapers.
- 6.4** If a temporary service disruption of the website is planned, a notice announcing the interruption of service shall be posted as soon as possible.

In the event of an unplanned service disruption, notice will be given as soon as feasibly possible in the manner described at item 6.3.

7. Format of documents

- 7.1** Should The Nation Municipality be requested to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, The Nation Municipality shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.
- 7.2** Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of The Nation Municipality should contain a note indicating "alternate formats are available on request" and include relevant contact information.

7.3 The Nation Municipality will consult the person requesting the document to determine what accessible alternate format of the document or information should be in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

7.4 The time frame attached to the conversion process varies depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality or source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors noted above.

7.5 Conversion shall be processed in-house whenever possible. When a member of the public requests a municipal document, or portion thereof, in an alternate format, the department of origin shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, and not the requester.

7.6 In-house printing, where possible, should adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards or any subsequent accessible information and communication policies.

8. Assistive devices

8.1 The Nation Municipality acknowledges that persons with disabilities may elect to use their own person or personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from goods and services by The Nation Municipality.

8.2 Should a person with a disability be unable to access the municipality's goods and services through the use of their own personal assistive device, The Nation Municipality will ensure the following measures:

- Determine if the provision of the good or service is inaccessible, based upon the individual's requirements;
- Access potential accessible service delivery options to meet the needs of the individual;
- Notify the person with a disability of an alternative method of providing the goods and services and how they can access the alternative, temporarily or on a permanent basis.

9. Customer service

9.1 As a designated public sector organization, we must meet all of the requirements of The Accessibility Standards for customer service under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

9.2 In February 2010, The Municipality implemented its Policy on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service which is intended to ensure the provision of goods, services, and facilities to persons with disabilities and to adapt those services/facilities in order to comply with the customer service standard in Part IV.2 of Ontario Regulation 191/11. The Policy on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service was last revised in January 2023.

9.3 Previous achievements

- Creation of the Accessibility Advisory Committee which acts as a resource to assist the Municipality with the enforcement of the requirements set out in the AODA;
- The conception of the Nation's new Sports Complex which is now operating and offering accessible installations;
- The renovation of the Fournier municipal office to integrate accessible installations;
- Creation of the 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan.
- Redesigning of the Municipality's website in compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA to ensure accessible information for our residents;

9.4 Strategies and actions

- Continue to ensure accessible services to our residents and visitors in respecting the AODA standards.
- Continue renovating facilities or constructing new buildings striving to improve and incorporate accessibility components for our residents.
- Continue to assess and revise parks and recreation facilities to increase participation in recreation programs that accommodate individuals with special needs.

10. Information and Communications

10.1 As per the Information and Communication Standards under the AODA, The Municipality is required to provide accessible formats and communication support when providing information to people with disabilities, upon request. Also, as an organization with publicly-available emergency procedures and public safety information, we must make this information accessible.

10.2 We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports.

10.3 We will also meet internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws and ensure it is kept up to date.

10.4 Previous achievements

- Redesigning of the Municipality's website in compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA to ensure accessible information for our residents;
- Utilization of Equidox software for PDF remediation to make our public documents accessible;
- Implementation of an online form for residents to provide feedback on accessibility;
- Utilization of Telmatik for emergency alerts which offers a flexible notification solution for our residents who can opt for text messages or automated calls with speech synthesis reading.

10.5 Strategies and actions

- Continue to notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports for all departments.
- Increase social media promotion of the Municipality's initiatives regarding accessibility.
- Continue to ensure that any process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports.
- Continue to ensure that the employees of the Municipality understand the accommodation request process, including the requirement to arrange for accessible formats and communication supports, and the requirement to consult with the person making the request in order to determine suitable accessible formats or communication supports for all departments.
- Continue to ensure that the Municipality's website and web applications are compliant with AODA standards.
- Continue to evaluate and remediate the Municipality website content and ensure that it meets or exceeds accessibility compliance requirements by providing the appropriate frameworks, tools, guidelines and training for use by all the departments of the Municipality.

11. Employment

11.1 As an employer in Ontario, The Municipality must comply with the Ontario's Accessible Employment Standards to meet the needs of employees and job applicants with disabilities.

11.2 Previous achievements

- Implementation of the Statement of Policy and Procedure Accommodation on the Basis of Disability and Accessible Employment which states the Municipality's commitment to the prevention and removal of barriers to people with disabilities, to the accommodation of persons with disabilities and to the establishment of processes by which persons with disabilities may request accommodation.
- Implementation of the Return to Work Program Policy
- The renovation of the Fournier municipal office to integrate accessible installations.
- Notice of Equal Opportunity Employer on the Employment Opportunity's web page, on our job postings and on invitations for interviews.

11.3 Strategies and actions

Continue to ensure the Municipality's employment policies and practices are inclusive of people with disabilities by:

- Ensuring all employees and successful applicants with disabilities are informed of available support and accommodation.
- Ensuring applicants with disabilities are informed of available accommodation during the recruitment, assessment and the selection processes.
- Consulting with employees to provide and arrange for accessible formats and communication supports.
- Providing to employees, upon request, individualized workplace emergency response information.
- Maintaining a return to work process and provide individual documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities when required.
- Ensuring the needs of the employees with disabilities are taken into account for the purposes of performance management, career development, advancement and redeployment.

12. Procurement

12.1 We will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

12.2 Previous achievements

- For our calls for tenders, we use *bids&tenders* which delivers digital solutions that are accessible according to requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- We post calls for tenders on our website which meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA

12.3 Strategies and actions

- Continue to ensure accessibility criteria are key requirements of the procurement process when acquiring or purchasing goods, services and/or facilities.
- Review and update resources and tools for accessible procurement to ensure that current best practices and technologies are considered (Purchasing & Materials Management and People & Equity).
- Continue to work with vendors and community partners to meet or exceed accessibility requirements.

13. Training

13.1 The Nation Municipality is required, under the AODA, to provide training on the requirements of the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code to all employees, volunteers and persons who participate in developing Municipal policies or provide services or goods on behalf of The Nation Municipality.

13.2 The Nation Municipality shall ensure that the following persons are trained on policies, practices and procedures establishing the accessible provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities.

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the municipality, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- Every person who participates in developing the municipality's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

13.3 This training will include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and the requirements of this policy and instruction about the following.

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities, as outlined in this policy and associated practices and procedures.

- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person, as outlined in this policy and associated practices and procedures.
- How to use equipment or devices available on the premises owned or leased by The Nation Municipality that may help in the provision of goods and services to a person with a disability.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services provided by The Nation Municipality.

13.4 Previous achievements

- Implementation of the Municipality's Policy on Training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards under the AODA.
- Access Forward training for new employees, the General Requirement module being mandatory for all new employees of The Nation and other modules as applicable.
- Mandatory training for all employees: The Ontario Human Rights Commission Working Together: The Code and the AODA.
- Implementation of a tracking system for employee accessibility training to ensure employees are up to date and to ensure full compliance with training requirements of the AODA.
- The Deputy Clerk completed the following training sessions:
 - October 7, 2020: Introduction to Website Accessibility by Accessibility Services Canada;
 - October 7, 2020: Introduction to Document Accessibility by Accessibility Services Canada
 - October 14, 2020: Accessibility Compliance 101 by Accessibility Services Canada
 - November 4, 2020: Accessible PDF Documents by Accessibility Services Canada
 - December 2, 2020: Web Accessibility for Content Managers by Accessibility Services Canada.

13.5 Strategies and actions

- Ensure all employees and volunteers continue to complete mandatory AODA and accessibility training appropriate to the person's role as soon as possible and in a variety of formats.
- Enhance leadership knowledge and skills to ensure compliance with Municipal Policies Policies, Human Rights legislation, AODA and other related legislation.
- Continue to record and track employee learning and development activities specifically related to AODA and accessibility requirements. (People & Equity).

- Ensure that all training, activities, course materials and learning approaches are developed and delivered in accessible formats.
- Apply an equity and accessibility analysis to all organizational learning and development activities.

14. Design of public space

14.1 The Nation Municipality will comply with the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces if it makes major changes to an existing – or constructs a new – public space that is covered by that Accessibility Standard.

14.2 Previous achievements

- The conception of the Nation’s new Sports Complex which is now operating and offering accessible installations.
- A committee was created for the rehabilitation of the St-Bernardin park. Any new project will consider AODA Standards.
- Amount allocated in the 2023 budget for a ramp in the stands at the St-Isidore arena to make it accessible.
- Rodolphe Latreille park was revamped with new accessible structures and is expected to open to the public for Spring 2023.

14.3 Strategies and actions

- Continue to prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at facilities under its management to comply AODA standards.
- Continue to maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance of accessible elements.
- Continue to respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing remediation.

Our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is publicly posted at [Accessibility - The Nation \(nationmun.ca\)](https://www.nationmun.ca/Accessibility-The-Nation)

For more information about The Nation Municipality initiatives for accessibility, please contact the Clerk’s office at 613-764-5444 or at admin@nationmun.ca.

Schedule "A":

Samples of public notice documents for an interruption of services

Sample #1:

"To all clients:

The elevators on the east side will be out of service from the 1st to the 15th of April due to regular maintenance. To access the upper level of this building, please use the elevator located on the west side of the building. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. For any questions, please call *(phone number)*.

Thank you

Management"

Sample #2

"To all clients:

The accessible washroom is presently out of service due to a damaged pipe. Repairs will be affected tomorrow. In the meantime, we have made arrangements that our clients use the accessible washroom located at 233 Main Street being the building beside this one. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Thank you

Management"