

Government Offices Most Responsible for Disability Issues across Canada

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Introduction

Government disability services and supports have been described as fragmented and difficult to navigate, especially for those new to the process. In an effort to make it easier to find what you're looking for, we have assembled some basic information about government disability services across the country. In each province or territory, there is a designated office most responsible for coordinating and governing services and supports to people with disabilities. In this brief report, we attempt to summarize:

1. Contact information for those offices in provincial and territorial governments supporting disability services and policies;
2. Location of these offices within the provincial or territorial bureaucracy; and
3. Extent to which the provincial/territorial government has pursued or is in the process of pursuing accessibility legislation.

Methodology

The methodology for creating this resource was as follows:

1. On-line research on government website for each province / territory, using the search terms: **disability, disabled, access, accessibility, special needs**. The purpose of this step was to discover what information was readily available on-line, as well as to identify contact information for members of the public service who could check that we had the correct information, and guide us through the bureaucracy.
2. Telephone conversations with various people at the provincial / territorial government to obtain additional information about the most expedient and efficient way to access government services and information in that jurisdiction.
3. Follow-up where necessary with further telephone contacts to ensure accuracy and completeness of information.

Information in the tables is organized from east to west to north. Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts through multiple media, we were unable to speak with anyone or to find on-line information about disability services in Nunavut. We regret this omission, and would be glad to amend it if someone wished to be in touch with us (see contact information at the end of this report).

Results

Table 1 shows the offices most responsible for disability issues across the country, and well as the contact information for those offices, and a link to the websites, so readers can discover more information if needed.

Table 1: Offices in provincial and territorial governments supporting disability services and policies.

Province/Territory	Office most responsible for disability issues	Contact Phone Number	Email	Website
CANADA	Accessibility Standards Canada	1-833-854-7628		https://www.canada.ca/en/accessibility-standards-canada.html
Newfoundland	Disability Policy Office	709-729-6279	disability.policy.office@gov.nl.ca	https://www.cssd.gov.nl.ca/disabilities/index.html
Prince Edward Island	Accessibility Support Office	902-620-3777	DeptSDH@gov.pe.ca	https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/family-and-human-services/accessability-supports
Nova Scotia	Disability Support Program	902-424-0932	dsp@novascotia.ca	https://novascotia.ca/coms/disabilities/index.html
New Brunswick	Premier's Council on Disabilities	506-444-3000	pcsdp@gnb.ca	https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/pcsdp.html
Quebec	Office de personnes handicapées	800-567-1465	info@ophq.gouv.qc.ca	https://www.ophq.gouv.qc.ca/
Ontario	Accessibility Office	416-849-8276	accessibility@ontario.ca	https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-seniors-accessibility
Manitoba	Disabilities Issues Office	204-945-7613	dio@gov.mb.ca	https://www.gov.mb.ca/dio/
Saskatchewan	Office of Disability Issues	306-787-7283	odi@gov.sk.ca	https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/boards-commissions-and-agencies/office-of-disability-issues
Alberta	Office of the Advocate for Person with Disabilities	800-272-8841	advocate.disability@gov.ab.ca	https://www.alberta.ca/family-social-caregiver-supports.aspx
British Columbia	Accessibility Secretariat	604-660-2421	accessibility@gov.bc.ca	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities
Yukon	Disability Services	800-661-0408	hss@gov.yk.ca	http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/disabilites.php
Northwest Territories	Services for Persons with Disabilities	867-767-9030	HSS_Navigator@gov.nt.ca	https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/services-persons-disabilities
Nunavut				https://www.gov.nu.ca/family-services/information/social-assistance-sa

Table 2 attempts to situate disability services within the context of each respective provincial bureaucracy. In almost every case, the office dealing with disability issues is situated within a Ministry relating to community and social services. In Newfoundland/Labrador and Ontario, seniors are also designated as a focus for the Ministry responsible for disability issues. In Newfoundland and Manitoba, disability services are situated alongside services for children and families. Health is a part of the portfolio governing disability services in two territories – Yukon and Northwest Territories. Two provinces situate disability services with other specific portfolios -- Prince Edward Island has disability services with housing, and British Columbia with poverty reduction. Ontario’s Ministry is the only one that specifically mentions Accessibility. New Brunswick’s disability office is unique in that it is a dedicated Premier’s Council on disability issues.

Table 2: Location of offices responsible disability services and policies within provincial and territorial governments

Province/Territory	Office most responsible	Ministry in which disability office resides	To whom disability office/ministry reports
CANADA	Accessibility Standards Canada	Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion	Carla Qualtrough Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
Newfoundland	Disability Policy Office	Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development	Lisa Dempster Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development
Prince Edward Island	Accessibility Support Office	Ministry of Social Development and Housing	Ernie Hudson Minister of Social Development and Housing
Nova Scotia	Disability Support Program	Department of Community Services	Kelly Regan Minister of Community Services
New Brunswick	Premier's Council on Disabilities	Premier's Council on Disabilities	Blaine Higgs Premier
Quebec	Office de personnes handicappe	Ministry of Health and Social Services	Danielle McCann Minister of Health and Social Services
Ontario	Accessibility Office	Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility	Raymond Cho Minister for Seniors and Accessibility
Manitoba	Disabilities Issues Office	Ministry of Families	Health Stephanson Minister of Families
Saskatchewan	Office of Disability Issues	Ministry of Social Services	Paul Merriman Minister of Social Services
Alberta	Office of the Advocate for Person with Disabilities	Ministry of Community and Social Services	Rajan Sawhney Minister of Community and Social Services
British Columbia	Accessibility Secretariat	Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction	David Galbraith Deputy Minister, Social Development & Poverty Reduction
Yukon	Disability Services	Social Supports, Health and Social Services	Pauline Frost Minister Health and Social Services
Northwest Territories	Services for Persons with Disability’s	Department of Health and Social Services	Diane Thom Minister of Health and Social Services
Nunavut			

Finally, we addressed the question to each jurisdiction as to its progress or plans toward accessibility legislation for people with disabilities:

- Canada and three provinces have already passed accessibility legislation:
 - Ontario – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2006) -- <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>
 - Manitoba – Accessibility for Manitobans Act (2013) -- <http://www.accessibilitymb.ca/law.html>
 - Nova Scotia – Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia (2017) -- <https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf>.
 - Canada – Accessible Canada Act (2019) -- <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/index.html>
- British Columbia has completed public consultations (December 3, 2019) and expects to table its legislation, in 2021. -- <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/accessibility-through-legislation/>
- Five provinces reported that they are in the initial planning stages of considering disability accessibility legislation:
 - Alberta, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland/Labrador and Saskatchewan.
 - Saskatchewan Disability Strategy (2019) - https://saskatchewan.ca/accessiblesk#utm_campaign=q2_2015&utm_medium=short&utm_source=%2Faccessiblesk
- Quebec, the Yukon and Northwest Territories stated that they had no immediate plans to table legislation ensuring accessibility.
- We were unable to confirm the status of legislation in Nunavut.

Conclusion

This report was designed to provide information to our colleagues and subscribers on the location and means of accessing information about disability policy and supports in the federal and 14 provincial / territorial jurisdictions in Canada. We acknowledge that this information is time-limited, and risks becoming obsolete almost as soon as we publish it! In particular, the contact information for individual people may change; however, we hope that this offers a starting place! Please contact us if you see an error or inconsistency, and we will correct it immediately:

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