



The Disability Partnership

Terms of Reference

Vision Statement

Our vision is to create a Nova Scotia without barriers for persons with disabilities.

Mandate

The Disability Partnership strives to achieve a Nova Scotia without Barriers for persons with disabilities by convening the disability community, private and public sector bodies together and collaborating to focus on four key priority areas:

- Education and Training,
- Communication,
- Capacity Building, and
- Informing Policy.

Background

Independence and Inclusion as Equal and Contributing Citizens: A Disability Strategy for Nova Scotians (the Disability Strategy) and *Choice, Equality and Good Lives in Inclusive Communities: a Roadmap for Transforming the Nova Scotia Services to Persons with Disabilities Program* (the Roadmap) are the two integral background documents that lead to the passing of [the Accessibility Act](#) in Nova Scotia.

- The Joint Standing Committee on Community Services brought the partnership together in 2008.
- The employability table wrote “The Strategy” in 2010 that then evolved into “The Roadmap” in 2013.
- In 2014, the [Disability Rights Coalition](#) filed an official [Human Rights Complaint](#) of systemic discrimination by and on behalf of persons with disabilities.
- [The Accessibility Act](#) was passed in 2017 and the [Accessibility Directorate](#) was created to oversee the implementation of the Act.
- In 2021, the [Nova Scotia Court of Appeal](#) decided that the Province of Nova Scotia has been and was continuing to systemically discriminate against people with disabilities.
- Most recently, in 2023, an [Interim Consent Order](#) between the Province, the Disability Rights Coalition, and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission was established, creating a five year plan for the government to end systemic discrimination against people with disabilities.
- Following this, in 2023, [Premier Tim Houston](#) issued what has been called an historic apology to the disability community on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia.

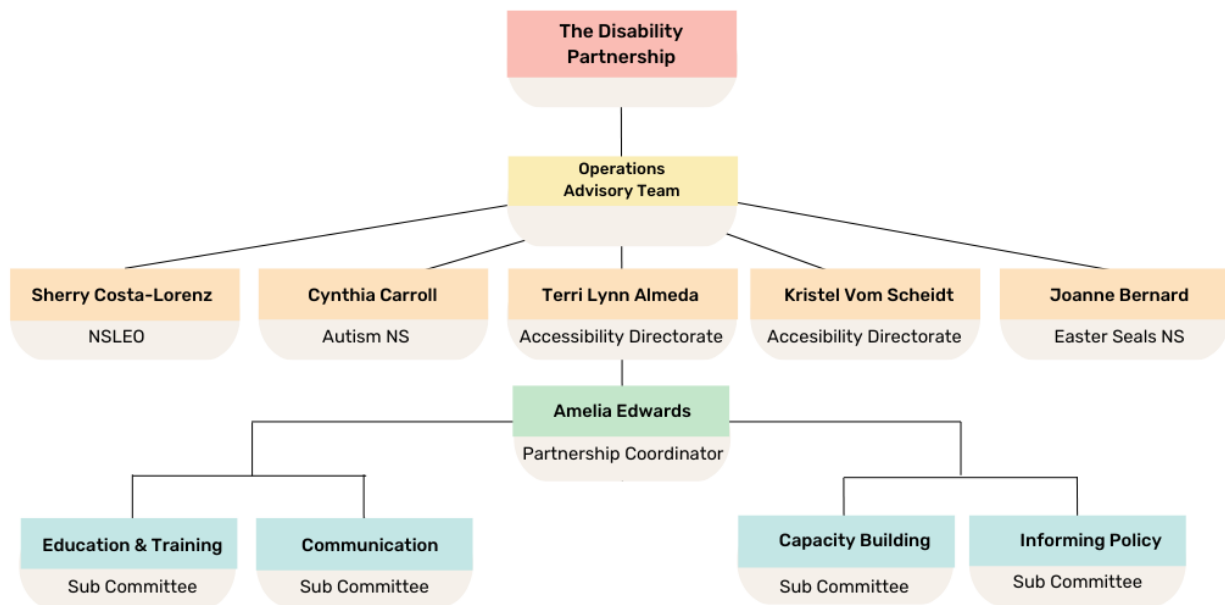
The Partnership recognizes the importance of the organizations who have done the integral work to get to this point and the Partnership itself, as a convener of members, does not override or erase any of the work done by partner organizations such as the Disability Rights Coalition or the [Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities](#). The Disability Partnership is, instead, a backbone support for all disability service organizations in the province who are working together to unify the community and continue making the necessary changes to ensure Nova Scotians living with disabilities are afforded full participation in a barrier free province.

Governance Structure

The Partnership currently uses a Chair & Vice-Chair model with working groups based on priorities that have been determined through group consensus and align with the Partnership’s four key areas of focus: Education and Training, Communication, Capacity Building, and Informing Policy.

The Partnership also has an Operations Advisory Team that consists of the chair, vice chair, and representatives from the four founding organizations (the [Accessibility Directorate](#), the [Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities](#), [Autism Nova Scotia](#), and [Easter Seals Nova Scotia](#)). The chair and vice chair serve a two-year term with the possibility of renewal for an additional two years.

ORGANIZATION CHART



Membership

Membership is open to community organizations throughout Nova Scotia whose primary mandate is serving people with disabilities. There is no cost for disability service organizations to join the Partnership. The Accessibility Directorate is also a member of the Disability Partnership. Although Partnership meetings are specific to representatives from disability service organizations, there are numerous opportunities for subject matter experts and individuals to consult upon matters specific to working groups. Membership structure is subject to evolution with Partnership growth.

Decision Making

Every effort will be made to ensure that decisions made by the Partnership are made by consensus. If members are unable to achieve consensus, modified consensus will be used, a vote will be called and a majority of fifty per cent plus one will rule.

Administrative Support

Easter Seals Nova Scotia in collaboration with Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities (NSLEO) and Autism Nova Scotia has partnered with the Accessibility Directorate to hire a coordinator. The contract will continue for as long as funds are available. This position is hosted at Easter Seals Nova Scotia and reports to the Operations Advisory Team.

The Disability Partnership Coordinator is responsible for the development and implementation of the Strategic Work Plan, under the guidance of the Operations Advisory Team. The role of the Coordinator is to bring together disability community organizations, the Accessibility Directorate, and relevant parties to share information, strengthen community capacity and find new ways of working together on co-creating shared goals. The Disability Partnership Coordinator also provides accessibility, logistical, and administrative support for Operations Advisory Team meetings, Disability Partnership meetings, and working group meetings.

Meetings

Disability Partnership meetings will be held in person, with a hybrid option, at least once every 4 months and/or at the call of either the chair or vice-chair. If a meeting cannot be attended by the Chair, the Vice Chair will assume the Chair's responsibilities. The Partnership Coordinator will attend all Operations Advisory Board, Disability Partnership, and working group meetings, providing logistical and administrative support to each group.

The responsibilities of the Partnership Coordinator include calling for agenda items, working group reports, and supporting materials ten (10) business days prior to the meeting.

The chair or vice chair will approve the draft agenda and the Partnership Coordinator will circulate the finalized agenda five (5) business days prior to meetings, including any relevant supporting documents.

The previous meeting minutes will be reviewed and approved by the chair or vice chair and circulated by the Coordinator via email no less than ten (10) business days after each meeting. Members are invited to submit any amendments at the next meeting. Amended minutes will be emailed to all members.

Confidentiality

The intent of the Disability Partnership is to create a safe platform for collaboration. Individualized statements from members will remain confidential within the group, however the overall strategic direction of the partnership can be shared. At the end of each meeting, members will come to an agreement on key messages that can be shared outside of Partnership meetings. The Coordinator will email out the Key Messages to members of the Partnership.

Agreement

As a member of the Disability Partnership, I have read and agree to the Terms of Reference.

Name

Organization

Date

Signature