



New Brunswick Parks Accessibility Event Planning



Planification d'événements d'accessibilité de Parcs Nouveau- Brunswick





New Brunswick Provincial Parks

Accessible Event Planning

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1. Accessibility

Accessibility is defined by services Canada as: the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities.

The purpose of this document is to help event planners in Parks NB provide inclusive experiences that include all people living and visiting New Brunswick.

2. Parks NB Goals & Outcomes

The goal of NB Parks efforts in accessibility is to increase the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in NB parks. We aim to promote equality of opportunity in all our parks so all persons may have an enriching experience as our guests.

As we continue to move forward towards this objective, we are committed to working with our partners, advocates and the persons with disabilities who visit our parks to continuously improve the quality of services we offer.

3. Accessibility Lenses

The word accessible means a great deal to billions of people around the world. However, everyone has their own experience and personal definition. To be truly accessible it is necessary to take on different people's perspectives and not just barriers from the point of one user group. Parks New Brunswick will consider the needs of persons with disabilities while applying the following lenses when planning an event:

- Physical
- Sensory
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Pervasive Development
- Developmental

4. Venue

The key to making events inclusive and accessible is to think about the many barriers that can exist for a person with a disability or disabilities and address them at the planning stage. It begins by looking at your venue and applying our different accessible lenses.

Whenever possible, visit the site of a potential venue. Think about people with different disabilities who may attend your event, and the barriers they could encounter when they arrive. Think about the following points, and ask yourself these important questions:

- Parking

Is there any accessible parking that meets modern standards? Where is it? How many spaces are available? Do I have additional parking spots or alternative transport available if the permanent parking spots are full? These are things we need to know, and they are things we need to let our guests know.

- Accessible Transportation

Is the venue close to public transportation with accessible services, and are the transit vehicles serving that route accessible? If so, your guests will need to know where the passenger drop-off areas are located.

- Outdoor and indoor surfaces

Are there barriers along outdoor and indoor paths that might cause problems for people who use canes, crutches, or wheelchairs? Make sure that things like garbage cans and sandwich boards can be moved so there is at least a one-metre wide path of travel for someone in a wheelchair/power chair.

Check if surfaces are level, as well as firm and stable. Avoid soft, thick pile carpeting or loose mats. While asphalt and cement are great outdoor accessible surfaces, crushed and packed gravel or limestone can be considered firm and stable.

- Doors

Are their automatic doors available? Are they working? Do they open the right way? If not, make sure you can prop doors open, or at least make sure there will be attentive volunteers who can help people trying to go through.

- Washrooms

Are the washrooms accessible? Is there room on the floor area beyond the swing of the door for a wheelchair or walker? Check also that there are grab bars, and that a person using a wheelchair can reach the sink, soap and hand drying amenities.

- Acoustics

Does the main room have a loud echo when using sound equipment, is there any feedback? Environments with significant echo created barriers for people who are hard of hearing.

- Lighting

Are lights adjustable so you are able to control the brightness of the room or a portion of the room? Good lighting helps people who are hard of hearing lip read or communicate in sign language. Control of the lighting also allows us to provide a friendly environment for persons who are not neurotypicals and may be sensitive or stressed by bright lights.

In addition, check that you can adjust the amount of natural light for daytime events. Direct natural light can cause shadows and glare, making it difficult for people with partial site to make out their surroundings.

5. Promotion

Once we know about the accessibility features of our venue, we can begin to inform our guests about them as well. Please consider the following when promoting your event:

- Provide contact information so guests with disabilities can learn about the accessibility features you noted during your site visit, or let you know what accommodations you can make so they can participate.
- Use a variety of ways to communicate such as telephone, email and print, to ensure that your guests with disabilities receive the information they need, and are able to provide information back the source in a way that works best for them.
- Use at least 12-point sans serif fonts such as Arial, Verdana or Source Sans Pro for print materials.

6. Room Set-Up

Simple adjustments in the way that the room is set up can eliminate many common barriers and make for a much more welcoming atmosphere for guests with disabilities. Let's think about the following:

- **Easy to read signs**
Use common words and simple, short sentences to make signs easier for people to understand. Whenever possible use universal picture signage to make areas.
- **Clear floor space**
Make aisles or space around tables wide enough for people using mobility aids such as wheelchairs or walkers to easily move. An aisle width of about one metre or more is recommended. In addition, cover electrical cables or cords that cross over aisles or pathways so everyone can safely get across them.
- **Registration or ticket sales tables**
Make sure there are chairs for people who use canes or crutches and find it hard to stand in lines for long periods. Provide volunteers to stand in their place. In addition having enough room for a person using a wheelchair/powerchair to approach and maneuver in front of registration tables.
- **Accessible seating**
There are several ways we can make sure that people with disabilities can sit comfortably and enjoy our event(s). Make sure there are spaces without chairs at the tables for every person using a wheelchair/powerchair. Where bar height tables are used, provide some lower dining height tables for people using wheelchairs. Provide a variety of chairs with and without armrests if available. Reserve seating for people with various disabilities and consider the nature of their disability when doing so. While doing this make considerations for their guests so they are not sitting by themselves.
Some examples would include people who rely on lip reading will need to sit closer to speakers. Provide seating for those who can't stand for long periods at events where people will be mostly standing.

7. Speeches & Presentations

Speakers and presenters should consider the following:

- Use a microphone, speak slowly and describe any images that are projected on the screen during the presentation.
- Be aware that if presentations run longer than planned, people who use specialized transportation services may need to leave your event on time.

8. Service Animals

Service animals are not pets. They work to make life easier for people with disabilities, and they are welcome in public areas where food is served (though not where food is prepared). Make sure there is a relief area for these animals, and make sure their owners know where it is. Treat service animals like other guests, service animals can get thirsty. Having a water bowl on hand is a very good way to make a guest with a service animal feel welcome.

9. Volunteers

Volunteers are a wonderful asset to have when hosting an event. Volunteers can have a profound positive impact on our guests. They can do a great deal to help event organizers make their event more inclusive and welcoming for people with disabilities. Please consider the following:

- Hosting a training session for volunteers so they can troubleshoot and resolve accessibility barriers. This will also allow them to ask questions and be involved in the process of creating a barrier free environment.
- Remind your volunteers not to make assumptions about a person and their abilities. Simply instruct the volunteers to ask “Can I help you?”

10. Event Checklist

PENDING

11. Volunteers

PENDING