

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Accessibility Plan

2025 - 2028

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‘Nothing About Us Without Us’

"Nothing About Us Without Us" is more than a phrase, it's a guiding principle that underscores the importance of inclusive decision making. Originally derived from the Latin *"Nihil de nobis, sine nobis"*, the concept has deep historical roots in democratic movements and was embraced by disability rights advocates in the 1990s. Today, it is a foundational value in accessibility planning and policy development, emphasizing that people with lived experience of disability must be actively involved in shaping the systems and services that affect their lives.

This principle is central to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which calls for the full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of public life. In developing this Accessibility Plan, the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) has prioritized engagement with staff and community members who face barriers, recognizing that their insights are essential to creating meaningful, effective change. By embedding this guiding principle into our process, we affirm our commitment to equity, dignity, and collaboration.

Executive Summary

The SPSA is committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible organization that serves all residents of Saskatchewan equitably. In alignment with *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*, this Accessibility Plan outlines the Agency's strategic priorities and actions for identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility across its facilities, programs, services, and communications from 2025 to 2028.

Grounded in the principle of “*nothing about us without us*,” the plan was developed through a collaborative process involving staff from across the SPSA and informed by public engagement, including a province-wide accessibility survey. The data collected highlighted key barriers—physical, attitudinal, technological, and communication-related—that impact individuals' ability to fully participate in and benefit from SPSA services.

The plan focuses on four overarching strategic goals:

1. Foster an inclusive organizational culture that actively addresses attitudinal barriers to accessibility.
2. Address SPSA buildings that are inaccessible.
3. Improve accessibility of SPSA programs and services.
4. Improve the clarity, accessibility, and inclusivity of SPSA communications.

The Accessibility Plan Working Group has also identified future recommendations to strengthen accessibility efforts, including targeted focus groups to engage underrepresented voices, exploring diverse research methods, and timing data collection outside of peak emergency seasons.

This plan represents a foundational step in the SPSA’s journey toward becoming a more inclusive and accessible organization. Through continued collaboration, leadership, and community engagement, the SPSA will work to ensure its services are inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all.

Introduction

The SPSA has grounded its accessibility planning in engagement with those directly affected by barriers. The SPSA is committed to creating inclusive spaces and services by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility across its facilities, programs, and operations.

Following the enactment of *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act* on December 3, 2023, public sector organizations, including the SPSA, are required to develop and publicly share an accessibility plan by December 3, 2025. In preparation for this, the SPSA launched a province-wide public survey in mid-2025 to gather insights from individuals with disabilities, their caregivers, and other community members.

The feedback received highlighted a range of barriers, including physical, technological, attitudinal, and communication-related challenges.

Representatives from each SPSA branch (all of whom are outlined at the end of this document in the Acknowledgement section) came together to review this input and collaboratively shape the Agency's accessibility priorities. This collective effort forms the foundation for a three-year strategy aimed at improving accessibility and ensuring that SPSA services are equitable and responsive to the needs of all Saskatchewan residents.

Accessibility Barriers

The Accessible Saskatchewan Act defines a barrier as anything that hinders or challenges the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities.

There are many types of barriers that persons with disabilities may experience, including physical, information and communication, attitudinal, and technological barriers. Definitions and examples of each barrier type are outlined below to help provide understanding of the experiences of persons with disabilities.

Physical Barriers

Physical barriers refer to obstacles in the built environment that prevent or hinder individuals with disabilities from accessing spaces or services.

For example:

- Buildings with no accessible parking.
- Washrooms that lack accessible stalls or automatic door openers.
- Evacuation transportation that does not consider mobility needs.

Information and Communication Barriers

Information and communication barriers occur when individuals cannot easily receive, understand, or share information due to inaccessible formats, language, or technologies.

For example:

- Difficult or jargoned language that uses too many acronyms.

- No access to communication channels for emergency and routine communications and information sharing.
- Lack of accessible formats for information sharing and communication.

Attitudinal Barriers

Attitudinal barriers are rooted in stereotypes, assumptions, or a lack of awareness that lead to discriminatory behaviors or exclusion of individuals with disabilities.

For example:

- Lack of disability awareness.
- Assumptions made about a person's ability.
- A culture where accessibility needs are often overlooked or not openly discussed.

Technological Barriers

Technological barriers refer to digital tools, systems, or platforms that are not designed to be accessible, making it difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to access.

For example:

- Websites and apps are difficult to navigate or are inaccessible.
- Limited technology options.
- Lack of assistive technology.

Accessibility Goals and Actions

The SPSA understands that improving accessibility is an ongoing journey and is committed to becoming a more inclusive public agency. This plan sets out the key actions we will focus on over the next three years to reduce and remove barriers that people with disabilities may face when interacting with our facilities, programs, and services. In keeping with the foundational principle of accessibility this work has been shaped by input from individuals with lived experience. The SPSA will collaborate with a dedicated accessibility leadership group, as identified by the implementation group, to carry out these actions, while also working to build greater awareness of accessibility across the organization.

Goal 1: Foster an inclusive organizational culture that actively addresses attitudinal barriers to accessibility

Building employee understanding of accessibility and fostering inclusive attitudes are essential to delivering high-quality services to all individuals, including those with disabilities. Addressing attitudinal barriers will improve Agency culture and inclusion.

Achievements to date:

To date, all members of the SPSA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group and Accessibility Plan Working Group have completed foundational training on accessibility. This training has helped build a shared understanding of what accessibility means in practice and why it is essential.

In addition, several SPSA staff members have completed enhanced training in trauma-informed care, equipping them with tools to better support individuals who may have experienced trauma, including those with disabilities.

SPSA benefits from strong executive leadership that is deeply committed to accessibility and inclusion. This leadership has been instrumental in driving progress and championing a culture where accessibility is recognized as a shared responsibility across the SPSA.

Actions for 2025-2028:

- The SPSA will implement a phased approach to accessibility training for all staff. This training will begin with foundational concepts and gradually expand to include more advanced topics such as trauma-informed care, neurodiversity, and inclusive communication practices. The goal is to deepen staff knowledge over time and foster a culture of acceptance, empathy, and proactive support for accessibility across the organization.
- The SPSA will enhance internal supports that encourage staff to safely disclose accessibility needs without stigma or fear of reprisal. This includes creating psychologically safe spaces, improving internal communication about accessibility, and ensuring confidentiality in the disclosure process.
- The SPSA Senior Leadership will be trained to become more accessibility literate and to become accessibility champions within the Agency.
- The SPSA will review and enhance its recruitment and hiring processes to ensure they are grounded in accessibility and inclusion. This includes incorporating accessibility considerations into job postings, interview formats, and onboarding procedures, as well as training hiring managers on

disability awareness and inclusive practices. By doing so, the SPSA aims to attract and support a diverse workforce, including individuals with lived experience of disability and accessibility.

Goal 2: Address SPSA buildings that have accessibility barriers

Ensuring that SPSA buildings are physically accessible is essential to creating an environment where all staff, visitors, and individuals can participate fully and safely. Removing physical barriers, such as maneuverability around washrooms and entryways, including and enhancing accessible parking and signage, and installing automatic door openers and access switches, not only supports compliance with accessibility standards but also reflects the SPSA's commitment to equity, dignity, and inclusion for everyone.

Achievements to date:

The SPSA has taken initial steps to improve the physical accessibility of its facilities. The Agency has connected with the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement to begin discussions on assessments of SPSA buildings, identifying barriers and opportunities for improvement.

A collaborative relationship has been established with Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan (LGS) to coordinate an accessibility assessment of SPSA Headquarters in Regina at 2055 Albert Street. LGS occupies one floor and SPSA operates across three floors. This collaboration will ensure a more comprehensive evaluation of shared spaces and supports a unified and collaborative approach to accessibility.

Actions for 2025-2028:

- In partnership with the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement, the SPSA will complete accessibility assessments of all prioritized Agency-occupied buildings to identify physical, sensory, and other barriers. These assessments will guide future infrastructure planning and upgrades to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.
- The SPSA will continue working with LGS to coordinate the accessibility review and potential improvements at the 2055 Albert Street building in Regina. This collaboration will provide a foundation for future potential collaboration opportunities throughout the province.
- Based on assessment findings, the SPSA will begin to create a multi-year Facility Accessibility Improvement Plan outlining timelines, funding requirements, and implementation strategies for necessary upgrades. This plan will be integrated into broader capital planning processes to ensure sustained progress toward a more inclusive public agency.

Goal 3: Improve accessibility of SPSA programs and services

Removing information, communication, and technological barriers that limit individuals' ability to access programs and services will ensure that programs and services provide the positive impacts intended in a meaningful and supportive way.

Achievements to date:

In the final quarter of 2025, the SPSA has been engaged in both internal and external reviews of emergency crisis support services. In part, these reviews aim

to assess how effectively current services meet the needs of Saskatchewan residents. These reviews may identify areas where the SPSA can carry out accessibility-related activities, and improvements can be implemented to ensure that crisis support is inclusive, responsive, and equitable for all individuals impacted by emergencies.

Actions for 2025-2028:

- The SPSA accessibility implementation group will identify key programs to focus on reviewing from a lens of accessibility to identify opportunities for adjustments that enhance accessibility. This may include but is not limited to:
 - ensuring mobility-accessible transportation and accommodations during evacuations
 - allowing service and emotional support animals
 - providing culturally appropriate food and support programs
- The SPSA accessibility implementation group will recommend a review of the design and functionality of the Sask Evac App to ensure it meets accessibility standards and is usable by individuals with varying levels of digital literacy, communication needs, and access to technology. This review may identify opportunities to improve user experience for people with disabilities, those in high-stress emergency situations, and those with limited or no access to technology.
- The SPSA will review its communications strategy and seek to improve how program and service information is shared. This could include communicating key messages multiple times, on a regular basis, and across

a variety of accessible channels. This approach will help ensure that individuals with different communication needs, learning styles, and levels of digital access can receive and understand important information in a timely and inclusive manner.

Goal 4: Improve clarity, accessibility, and inclusivity of SPSA Communications

The SPSA will review its communications strategy and work to improve all public and internal communications so that they are easy to understand, available in accessible formats, and inclusive of diverse language and cultural needs.

Achievements to date:

The SPSA has acknowledged the need to ensure that communications are accessible to all staff, regardless of their role, location, or work schedule. Early efforts have focused on identifying gaps in how information is shared and exploring ways to improve consistency, clarity, and accessibility throughout the year.

Actions for 2025-2028:

- The SPSA will review and revise its public-facing and internal communications strategy to ensure use of plain language that is clear, concise, and easy to understand. This could include encouraging staff to avoid jargon and acronyms wherever possible, and to provide definitions or glossaries when technical terms are necessary. This approach will help make information more accessible to a wider audience, including

individuals with cognitive disabilities, language barriers, or limited familiarity with emergency management terminology.

- The SPSA will develop a framework for public-facing information that is available in formats that meet diverse accessibility needs. This includes offering American Sign Language (ASL), using dyslexia-friendly fonts and layouts, and providing multilingual communication options—particularly in Indigenous languages such as Cree, Dene, and Michif.
- The SPSA will assess and enhance internal communication practices to ensure that information shared within the organization is accessible to all staff, regardless of role, location, or work schedule. This includes using plain language, offering multiple formats, and leveraging various communication channels to ensure that operational updates, policies, and resources are consistently accessible throughout the year.

Recommendations

The SPSA’s Accessibility Working Group has identified future recommendations to guide accessibility efforts within the SPSA leading up to 2028 and the next plan review:

- Conduct targeted focus groups to better capture underrepresented voices in accessibility data, informed by SPSA’s survey findings, particularly from Indigenous communities and individuals who identify as male.
- Explore diverse research methodologies to gain deeper insights into specific accessibility barriers that may not be fully captured through surveys alone.

- Schedule future data collection outside of peak fire season to ensure broader participation and reduce barriers for those engaged in emergency response during high-demand periods.
- Assess approaches for planning accessibility activities that are designed for public engagement and examine how these differ from activities intended primarily for SPSA staff. Staff will experience barriers in a way that the public will not and vice versa. Recognizing the audience for activities would be beneficial for future considerations.

Data Highlights

Survey results revealed a gender-based difference in experiences with accessibility, with a higher number of women participating and reporting barriers to access. This suggests that women may face unique challenges in navigating SPSA programs, services, and environments. Additionally, responses were well-distributed across regions and age groups, indicating that accessibility concerns are shared broadly and not limited to a specific demographic. These insights will help guide targeted actions to ensure equitable access for all. This underscores the need for multi-faceted accessibility improvements throughout the SPSA.

Conclusion

The SPSA is committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and accessibility across all aspects of its operations. This Accessibility Plan represents a significant step forward in identifying and addressing barriers that impact individuals with

disabilities, both within the organization and in the delivery of public safety services.

As this is the SPSA's first accessibility plan, the primary focus will be on reviewing current practices, identifying gaps, and laying the groundwork for future implementation activities. This foundational approach will ensure that future actions are informed, strategic, and responsive to the diverse needs of Saskatchewan residents.

Through collaborative engagement, thoughtful planning, and ongoing reflection, the SPSA will continue to build on the work outlined in this plan to ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and communications are accessible, equitable, and inclusive. As the Agency moves toward the 2028 review of this plan, it will remain guided by the principle of *"nothing about us without us,"* ensuring that lived experience continues to shape and inform accessibility efforts. The SPSA looks forward to working alongside staff, residents, and communities to create a safer, more inclusive Saskatchewan for everyone.

Acknowledgements

The SPSA would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their participation in this crucial accessibility work.

- Residents and visitors of Saskatchewan who completed the accessibility survey
- Laura Debassige, SPSA Vice President Corporate Services and Accessibility Plan Executive Sponsor
- Katherine Morrisette, SPSA Director Policy and Legislation
- Evan Simonot, SPSA Provincial Response Centre Coordinator
- Kara Doll, SPSA Director, Marketing and Communications
- Leanne Hamilton, SPSA Safety Advisor
- Courtney Fiske, SPSA Business Manager
- Heather Schiedt, SPSA Fire Investigator
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- Dr. Caroline Cordeiro, SPSA Senior Policy Consultant
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Contact Us

Please contact the SPSA's Accessibility email to share any feedback, questions, or comments you have on our accessibility plan, or to request an alternate format of this document.

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