

## Advancing Accessibility: A Holistic View into Canada's Digital Accessibility Laws

### Canadian landscape of accessibility laws

As a baseline, each individual Canadian province or territory has a human rights act. These laws are important because they make it illegal for discrimination against people with disabilities to occur in a host of areas, such as the provision of goods and services, employment, and housing.

Provinces	Laws	Effective Date	Application	Overview	Deadlines	Notes
<b>Federal</b>	Accessible Canada Act (ACA) - Bill C-81	July 2019	Public sector only	<p>The Accessible Canada Act is a federal law that aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers facing people with disabilities. The federal government adopted the Act in 2019.</p> <p>The Act focuses on barriers in these seven areas: employment, the built environment, communication, information and communication technologies, procurement, programs and services, and transportation.</p> <p>Organizations must consult people with disabilities, publish accessibility plans about how they are finding, removing, and preventing barriers, set up feedback loops, and publish progress reports about how they are following their accessibility plans.</p>	Create a Canada without barriers by 2040.	Organizations under federal jurisdiction are required to comply or face a fine of up to \$250,000.
<b>British Columbia</b>	Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA)	September 1, 2022.	Public sector only	Over 750 public sector organizations are required to establish an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan, and a build tool for accessibility feedback.	September 1, 2023.	First independent review will occur after 5 years (2027).
<b>Alberta</b>	No official	—	—	No current provincial digital accessibility legislation, but an	—	—

	accessibility laws			existing patchwork of related legislation.		
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	Accessible Saskatchewan Act (ASA)	May 17, 2023.	Public sector only	Outline the rules government and organizations must follow to remove barriers in different areas, such as the built environment, information and communications, employment, service animals, transportation, procurement, and service delivery.	No set deadlines. There will be a review seven years after the Act comes into force, then at least every 10 years after that.	Organizations that do not follow the law can receive penalties and fines
<b>Manitoba</b>	Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)	December 2013.	Public sector only	<p>By the end of 2016, the Manitoba government and public sector organizations had to prepare accessibility plans that would then be updated every two years.</p> <p>Focuses on multiple key standards (areas), such as Accessible Customer Service, Accessible Information and Communications, Accessible Built Environment, Employment Accessibility, and Accessible Transportation.</p> <p>2022 - Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation. This standard will identify WCAG 2.0 level AA as the set of guidelines to follow.</p>	<p>End of 2016.</p> <p>Achieve “significant progress” by 2023.</p>	—
<b>Ontario</b>	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	June 13, 2005.	Public and private sectors	<p>Made up of five standards, as well as some general requirements, including customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces.</p> <p>Private or non-profit organizations with more than 50 employees and all public sector organizations must make their website and web content compliant with Web Content Accessibility</p>	Various deadlines leading to creating a barrier-free Ontario by 2025.	<p>Failure to comply could result in fines of up to \$100,000 for each day of violation.</p> <p>Other failures may be subject to fines of up</p>

				Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021.		to \$250,000.
<b>Quebec</b>	No official accessibility laws (but other legislation)	SGQRI-008 (2012)	Public sector only	<p>Quebec's mandatory standard (not a law) lacks clear timelines, goals, or penalties for non-compliance.</p> <p>A mandatory standard without any real means of enforcement: Standard sur l'accessibilité des sites Web du gouvernement du Québec - based on WCAG 2.0 level AA with a few exceptions (excludes SC 1.2.4 and 1.2.5 but includes SC 2.3.2 and SC 3.1.4).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1978 - Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights</li> <li>• 1981 - Regulation of the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec</li> </ul> <p>Quebec's Act Respecting Equal Access to Employment in Public Bodies - prevents public-sector employers, including schools, healthcare providers and public transit, from discriminating against employees and potential employees with disabilities.</p>	—	—
<b>New Brunswick</b>	No official accessibility laws	—	Public sector only	New Brunswick does not currently have accessibility legislation, but most departments and organizations are required to make their internet websites and web content conform to WCAG 2.0 Level A (subject to some limited exceptions) to the greatest extent possible.	—	—
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia (ARANS)	April 2017.	Private and public sector	Nova Scotia's accessibility standards apply to goods and services, information and communication, transportation, employment, education, and built environment. Development began in 2018 with an expected implementation as of 2022.	Access by Design 2030 (an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030).	Failure to comply may be subject to fines of up to \$250,000.

				<p>Clearly references WCAG 2.0 level AA.</p> <p>Also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2017 - Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia</li> <li>● 2019 - Accessibility Act General Regulations</li> </ul>		
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	Newfoundland and Labrador Accessibility Act (NLAA)	December 3, 2021.	Public sector	<p>Improve accessibility by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from full participation in society.</p> <p>Under the Accessibility Act, public bodies are required to develop an Accessibility Plan and make it public within 2 years. The Act also outlines what the Accessibility Plan should include, the measures to take in barrier removal, and the procedures to assess that the measures are working</p>	Accessibility plan by 2023.	—
<b>Prince Edward Island (PEI)</b>	No official accessibility laws	—	—	Prince Edward Island does not have an accessibility legislation.	—	—