



**NWT
Disabilities
Council**

Accessibility & Housing

NWT Disabilities Council



Our Perspective

- Our Vision as an Organization
- Our Mission
- Our Six CORE Values

- Cumulatively, these three components guide our approach to every facet of disability and accessibility advocacy in the NWT.



Our Vision

- The NWT Disabilities Council envisions that all individuals living with disability have equal access to full citizenship, as guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, toward the achievement of a self-determined, fulfilling, and meaningful life.



Our Mission

- The NWT Disabilities Council exists to educate, advocate, and support the self-determination of all individuals with disabilities.



Our CORE Values

- *Every person with a disability has the right to respect, dignity, individual autonomy, and full citizenship.*
- *We believe in equity, fairness, inclusion, and accessibility for all.*
- *We believe that individuals with a disability and their families have the right to be empowered and free to be self-determining.*
- *We recognize that individuals with a disability are experts on their own life.*
- *We support the autonomy of Indigenous communities to direct supports to community members with disabilities.*
- *We honour the wisdom of all cultures in all of our work.*

An aerial photograph of a forest floor. A small, clear stream flows from the top right towards the bottom right. The ground is covered in a mix of green moss, ferns, and brown, yellow, and red fallen leaves, suggesting an autumn or early spring setting. The lighting is soft, creating a textured and vibrant scene.

Defining Disability

- Disability is a dynamic lived experience of restricted or limited participation in life that results from the interaction of an individual's bodily impairment and their physical and social environment.
- Disability is not limited to physical impairments, it can also encompass intellectual disabilities and psychological impairments. We believe that accessibility in housing should take all forms into account.

Justice

I have the right to:

- equal protection and benefit of the law;
- live free of violence, intimidation, harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect;
- my privacy respected and protected;
- my autonomy respected and protected.

Health

I have the right to:

- equal access to healthcare in my home community;
- the option of care outside of my home community, without cost to me, if services I need are not available in my home community;
- the highest standard of medical care available without discrimination.

Family & Social Protection

I have the right to:

- access to government support to reduce poverty and address out-of-pocket costs associated with my disability;
- live with my family and have access to support that enables family preservation;
- caregivers that support me without real or perceived danger of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Education

I have the right to:

- an inclusive education system at all levels of my schooling;
- free and equal access to education in the regular instructional setting through reasonable accommodations to support my needs;
- parent and student involvement in all decisions regarding individualized supports in the school.

Community Living

I have the right to:

- have the choice of who I live with and where I live;
- safe and accessible housing in my home community;
- access to public spaces in my community, including access to cultural and recreational programs.

Rights of People with Disabilities

Employment

I have the right to:

- reasonable accommodations in my workplace that enable me to do my job;
- NWT employment standards, including minimum wage and safe working conditions;
- protection from exploitation or forced labour;
- affirmative action in employment offered by the federal or territorial government.

Political Participation

I have the right to:

- be present in public and political life, including engagement with organizations specifically for people with disabilities and peaceful assembly;
- vote in elections or referenda;
- freedom of expression and opinion.



Intersectional Factors on Disability

- Life outcomes for people with disabilities are strongly affected by social factors in their lives, including:
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Trauma
 - Addiction
 - Sexual Orientation



Indigeneity and Disability

- Indigenous peoples in our community disproportionately face complex life barriers, from a legacy of colonialism that can cause disability, including: poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, victimization, trauma, and lack of resources.
- The rate of disability within the Indigenous population is conservatively estimated at 31%-- at least two-times higher than that of the non-Indigenous population
- Indigenous peoples living with disabilities are resilient and make important contributions to our community that must be honored.



Existing Resources

- There exist some resources already which can help to aid persons with disabilities to remain in their communities:
 - Grants for renovations to promote accessibility – these are both available through federal grants and territorial programs. There are thresholds of income but these have been revised in the last few years, so should be revisited if a person previously did not qualify.
 - Disability Tax credit – federal program
 - Disability Pension- federal program



What is Accessible Housing?

- Accessibility in design is defined by two key concepts which can serve to guide the way we construct residential facilities in order to serve those in our communities with limitations. Those concepts are:
 - Universal Design
 - And Barrier-Free Design.

A photograph of children playing with large wooden blocks outdoors. The text 'Universal Design' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Universal Design

- “Universal Design” is a term coined by architect Ronald Mace. The concept essentially entails that the needs of people with a range of abilities be taken into account starting with the basic design of structures. This notion deviate from the typical approach of building structures that are “partially accessible”, designed to meet the needs of people who do not have any impairment as the norm.
- Partially accessible designs can pose barriers to persons with impairments, often requiring expensive renovations to accommodate for persons with disabilities.



Barrier-Free Design

- Barrier-Free Design is a more intensive interpretation of the universal design concept. Barrier-free design takes into account both physical impairments with sensory and psychological factors that can pose barriers to participation.



National Housing Co-Investment Fund

Amongst Financial Viability, Affordability, and Energy efficiency, The National Housing Co-Investment fund has introduced accessibility as a necessary component in order to meet the minimum requirements of for this fund. People with disabilities have been identified as a vulnerable group for targeted address through this program.

- Incorporating Universal and Barrier-free design into housing is already being introduced by the National Housing Fund's basic requirements.
 - At least 20% of all units must meet or exceed accessibility standards.
 - Limiting barriers to access housing by regulating rent costs for at least 30% of all units.
 - This fund extends funding not only to residential units, but also to shelters and transitional housing, both of which must take accessibility into account as many who access these experience a range of disabilities and challenges.



A Holistic Approach to Accessibility

- Combining physically accessible structures with Social supports.
- Construction and operations of accessible housing is completed in cooperation with and advised by local indigenous leadership, and the larger community.
- Promoting strong communities that can remain intact.

A photograph of a bison standing on a gravel path in a forest. The bison is facing right, and the path leads into a dense forest of tall evergreen trees. The lighting suggests a sunny day with some shadows on the path.

Information & Resources

More information regarding the National Housing Co-Investment Fund can be Accessed at:

www.cmhc.gc.ca

More information regarding accessibility and existing resources can be accessed through our organization's website:

www.nwt dc.net

Or call toll-free:

1-(800)-491-8885