



# Disability Policy in Canada: Provincial and Territorial Report

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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Disability Policy in Canada Provincial and Territorial Report was commissioned by Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN), and developed in collaboration with researchers from the Disability Policy Research Program (DiPo) and McGill University. The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of disability policy across Canadian provinces and territories. This report can serve as a baseline against which future progress in policy changes can be assessed, or at least understood.

In this report series, we aim to be as comprehensive as possible by including all policy related to persons with disabilities in each province and territory. We acknowledge that this report reflects a point in time assessment of disability policy. As such, information and links will likely change over time as governments and policy change. All information included in this report is accurate as of the date of publication. To maximize the accuracy of this report, it has been reviewed and verified by individuals with expertise in and/or lived experience with disability policy across Canada.

In an effort to be comprehensive while also succinct, we chose to apply a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria to the disability policy tools included in this report. The focus in this report series is to include legislation, plans of action, advocacy/awareness initiatives, tax programs, and services that support children and adults who have disabilities that are permanent and present from birth or that develop in early childhood. This includes neurodevelopmental disabilities and physical disabilities, deafness and hearing impairments, and blindness and vision impairment. We do not include policy tools that exclusively provide support to individuals that develop disabilities later in life, for example due to accidents or workplace injury. In some cases, there are policy tools that are accessible to all citizens and so are not explicitly designed for persons with disabilities and their families. We refer to these programs as 'blended' and include them in our analysis as they may be relevant to persons with disabilities and/or have unique

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

eligibility criteria for them. This is particularly important in provinces and territories that do not have policy tools and programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities to highlight other avenues through which they can receive support.

We chose to focus this report on children and adults with disabilities, and do not include programs that support seniors (65 years of age or older) with disabilities. The caveat to this is that we do include programs that support seniors if they also support adults under the age of 65 years with disabilities. This report is also focused on current government-funded or administered programs. We include some non-profit and community organizations that administer programs on behalf of government, but acknowledge that there are many more that we do not mention that are instrumental to the provision of support for individuals with disabilities across the country.

With respect to education, this report includes legislation and government directives relating to inclusive education, as well as outlines the bodies that are responsible for administering inclusive education, when available. We also include specific government funding streams or government-funded programs that support inclusive education. We do not include specific programs administered by school boards or other entities.

## **Measuring Up**

In this report, we provide information about the experiences of parents and caregivers when applying for and accessing disability programs, as well as information that emerged during the research process or from our peer reviewers. This information is provided in “Measuring Up” boxes throughout the report. Our intent in including this information is to provide additional context regarding the realities of accessing the policy tools outlined in this report and to give a voice to those with lived experience. It is important to note that these perspectives reflect opinions and experiences of a select group of individuals and may not align with the experiences of all individuals within a given province or territory.

Parent and caregiver experiences were sourced from a study completed by our team, which involved conducting an online survey and follow-up interviews with participants across Canada. We provide more information about the individuals we spoke with during this study on the following page.

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

**499** Survey Participants **81** Interview Participants

English Speakers: 93%  
French Speakers: 7%

**14%** Spoke more than one language in their home

Average age: 42 years  
Range: 22-70 years

Average age: 11 years  
Range: 0-30 years

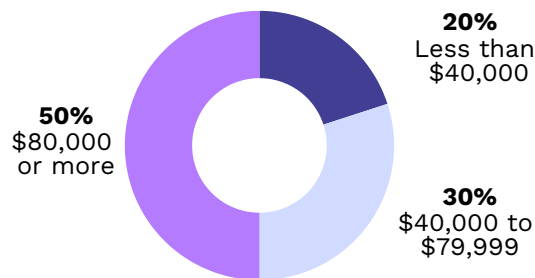
Males: 8%  
Females: 91%  
Non-binary: 1%

Males: 68%  
Females: 31%  
Non-binary or other: 1%

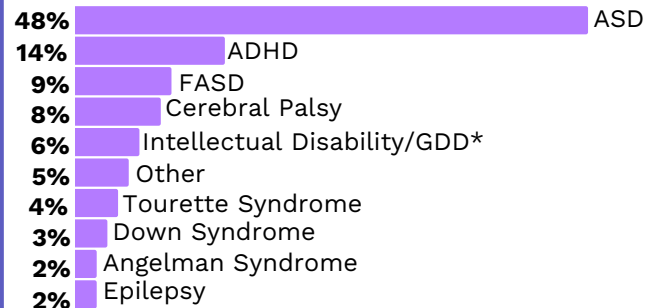
Participants

Youth

## Household Income



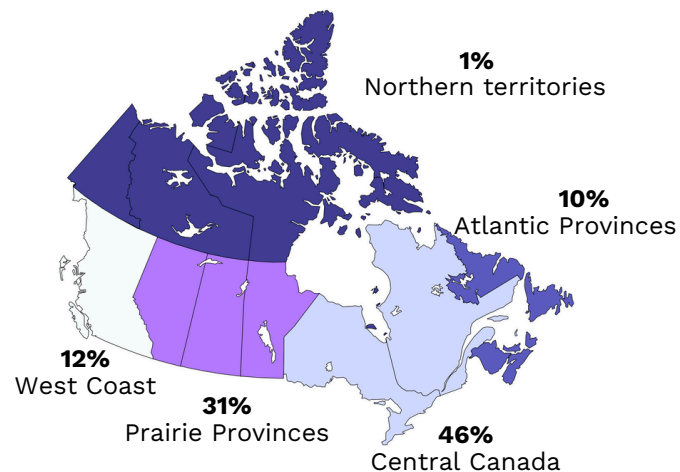
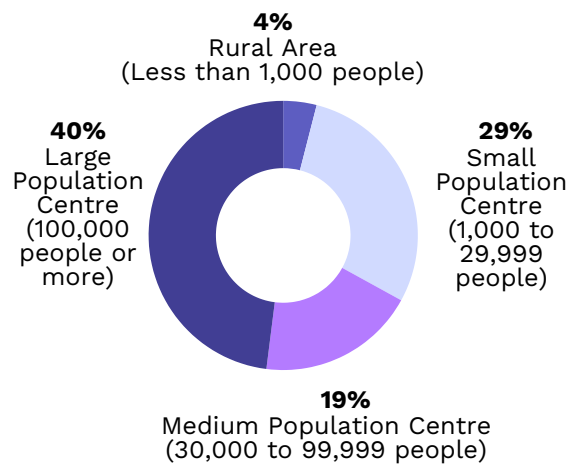
## Primary Diagnosis



**40%** Have more than one diagnosis

\*GDD = Global Developmental Delay

## Location



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank all of the families that shared their experiences with our team and all of the community peer reviewers that provided insightful feedback on this report. The creation of this report would not have been possible without their contributions.

## **Peer Reviewers**

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- Leanne Fenez, Abilities Manitoba
- Ken Pike, Inclusion New Brunswick
- Haley Flaro, Ability New Brunswick
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- Natasha Rumsey, Rumsey Consulting
- Cynthia Anaba, University of Regina
- Haley Jones, parent and advocate
- Marli Robertson, parent and advocate

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# BACKGROUND

## INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY POLICY

“Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives.”

*-Kilpatrick, 2016*

“A set of interrelated decision taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve”

*-Jenkins, 1978*

### **What is Disability Policy?**

There are many different ways to conceptualize and define public policy, and by extension, disability policy. For the purposes of this report, disability policy is broadly defined as what governments and other decision-making entities chose to do or not do that impacts persons with disabilities and their families.

### **Provincial and Territorial Disability Policy**

In Canada, disability policy is delivered by all levels of government in many different sectors, including health, education, finance, and social services. Our previous [report](#) provides an overview of disability policy at the federal level in Canada. This report series focuses on disability policy provided by provincial and territorial governments. For the purposes of this report, we provide information about disability policy for all provinces and territories in alignment with the following five categories:

1) [Income Supports](#) are programs that provide financial assistance to individuals with a low-income so they are able to afford basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, and other daily needs. Persons with disabilities in Canada at a lower income level or who experience barriers to employment can access financial assistance from income support programs. Some provinces and territories provide income support programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities, while others provide an additional allowance for persons with disabilities within their general income support program. Others still offer one income support program that all individuals with a low income who meet eligibility criteria can access, with no additional supports for persons with disabilities, specifically.

2) Laws and Policies include laws and policy documents that allow systems to be put in place to help governments carry out changes they want to make to systems and structures. Laws are created from bills that are introduced in the provincial or territorial legislature. To become law, bills must pass through a specific legislative process. Policy documents are often published by ministries and can provide guidelines with respect to a specific topic. Legislation may stipulate that ministers can publish policy documents related to the topic of the piece of legislation (for example, education-related legislation often gives ministers the power to publish policy guidelines related to inclusive education).

3) Advocacy, Awareness, and Action Plans include councils, offices or events funded by provincial and territorial governments that can serve a variety of purposes, such as advocating to government on behalf of individuals with disabilities, advising on the development of government programs or policies, connecting individuals with disabilities with programs in their community, awareness building and education, support for mistreatment and discrimination, and, in some cases, direct service provision. This category also includes provincial and territorial action plans related to persons with disabilities that outline policy priorities and recommendations for government action.

4) Programs Provided through the Tax System include refundable and non-refundable tax credits, as well as tax deductions, that aim to offset the additional costs associated with having a disability by reducing the amount of income taxes an individual owes each year. Non-refundable tax credits reduce the amount of income tax owed but do not produce a tax refund if the amount of the credit exceeds the income tax owed, whereas refundable tax credits reduce the amount of tax owed and will create a tax refund if the amount of the credit exceeds the income tax owed. Tax deductions allow for certain expenses to be deducted from taxable income to lower the amount of taxes owed. In Canada, provincial and territorial governments develop their own tax law and policies; however, the Canada Revenue Agency collects and administers individual income taxes on behalf of provincial and territorial governments (except for the province of Quebec, where taxes are administered by Revenu Quebec).

5) Services and Supports for Basic Needs and Activities of Daily Living are services, supports, and programs that provide assistance to persons with disabilities in their day-to-day lives. This can include community-based support, employment programs, home and housing support, respite, early intervention, transportation support, and rehabilitation, among others. For each province and territory, we provide sub-categories within this section for added clarity.

### **Disability Policy Outside Government**

In many provinces and territories, disability policy is delivered by entities outside of government, such as Crown Corporations, non-profit organizations and registered charities. In some cases, these organizations are funded and/or contracted by the provincial or territorial government to provide these services. We specify these cases whenever possible throughout the report. We also provide a list of these organizations at the end of the section on each province and territory as a resource for individuals and families looking for support.

# UN CRPD

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is an international treaty that upholds and protects the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide. Canada, along with 183 other states parties, has adopted the UN CRPD, which means that they accept the legal obligations contained in the UN CRPD. These obligations include ensuring that there are national laws to prevent discrimination, eliminating barriers to accessibility, and working to promote the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities. Associated with the creation of laws are the provision of disability programs that have the purpose of providing support to persons with disabilities to ensure they are able to fully participate in society.

Contained in the UN CRPD are processes that help to ensure that states parties are meeting the obligations outlined in the UN CRPD. For example, states parties must regularly report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to explain what actions they are taking to implement the UN CRPD. In Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Commission is also tasked with monitoring how well Canada is implementing the obligations outlined in the UN CRPD.

Canada and 99 other states parties have also signed on to the Optional Protocol to the UN CRPD. The Optional Protocol creates a process for people to make complaints directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities if they have exhausted all other legal options within Canada.

While the UN CRPD is ratified federally, many of the obligations contained in the UN CRPD can be met by policy and programs delivered at the provincial and territorial level. In fact, due to the federalist nature of Canada, many articles, such as Health (Article 25), Habilitation and Rehabilitation (Article 26), and Education (Article 24) are met to a greater extent by programs provided by provincial and territorial governments, rather than the federal government.

To demonstrate how government actions can fulfill requirements under the UN CRPD, we link UN CRPD articles with the various disability policy tools we include in this report. For the purposes of this report, we have sorted the 50 articles of the UN CRPD with similar aims into 10 categories (outlined below). Articles that are not included in this report are administrative in nature, related to reporting requirements, or are outside the scope of government action in this context. The icons used on the following pages will be used throughout the report to demonstrate how provincial and territorial disability policy is aligned with the UN CRPD articles.





## Equality

### Description

This category includes articles that promote equality for persons with disabilities both before and under the law, and ensure that persons with disabilities do not face discrimination.

### Relevant Articles

Article 4: General obligations

Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination

Article 6: Children with disabilities

Article 7: Women with disabilities

Article 10: Right to life

Article 14: Liberty and security of person

Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person

Article 22: Respect for privacy



## Accessibility

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities can access public spaces, systems, and facilities, such as the physical environment, transportation and communication technologies.

### Relevant Article

Article 9 – Accessibility



## Social Participation

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate in society fully and on an equal basis with others.

### Relevant Articles

Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality

Article 20: Personal mobility

Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport



## Employment and Financial Security

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to work, and have access to inclusive and accessible workplaces. It also includes articles that outline the responsibility of states parties to alleviate poverty and promote financial security of persons with disabilities.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 27](#): Work and employment

[Article 28](#): Adequate standard of living and social protection



## Health and Social Services

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to healthcare and social services that allows them to have the highest attainable standard of health and well-being, achieve inclusion and maintain maximum independence.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 25](#): Health

[Article 26](#): Habilitation and rehabilitation



## Public Education and Information

### Description

This category includes articles that require states parties to provide public information about persons with disabilities to foster respect and combat stereotypes.

### Relevant Article

[Article 8](#): Awareness-raising



## Legal Capacity and Justice

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure persons with disabilities have equality with respect to legal capacity and access to justice.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 12](#): Equal recognition before the law

[Article 13](#): Access to justice



## Caregiving and Family

### Description

This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equal rights with respect to family life.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 23](#): Respect for home and the family



## Education

### Description

This category includes articles that maintain the right to education for persons with disabilities through the provision of inclusive and quality education, accommodations, and support.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 24](#): Education



## Housing and Related Supports

### Description





This category includes articles that ensure that persons with disabilities have equality in their ability to choose where they would like to live and are able to live as independently as possible in the community through the provision of in-home and community supports.

### Relevant Articles

[Article 19](#): Living independently and being included in the community

# NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

## PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Income Support 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income Support</li> </ul>
Laws and Policies 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessibility Act</li> <li>Buildings Accessibility Act</li> <li>Service Animal Act</li> <li>Mentally Disabled Persons' Estates Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Rights Act</li> <li>Adult Protection Act</li> </ul>
Advocacy, Awareness and Action Plans 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability Policy Office</li> <li>Learning Disabilities Awareness Month</li> <li>International Day of Persons with Disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of the Citizens' Representative</li> <li>Office of the Child and Youth Advocate</li> <li>The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
Programs Provided by the Tax System 	
<b>Disability-Specific</b>	<b>Blended</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability amount for self</li> <li>Disability amount transferred from a dependent</li> <li>Amount for infirm dependents age 18 or older</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born 2006 or later</li> <li>Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents</li> <li>Caregiver amount</li> </ul>

## Services and Supports for Activities of Daily Living



### Disability-Specific

- Intervention Services (includes Direct Home Services Program, Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program and Community Behavioural Services)
- Special Child Welfare Allowance Program
- Summer Camp Inclusion Grant
- Cooperative Apartment Program
- Alternative Family Care Home Program
- Board and Lodging Supplement
- Individualized Living Arrangements
- Shared Living Arrangements
- Home Modification Program (HMP)
- Assistive Technologies Program
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)
- Provincial Grant for High Need Students with Disabilities
- Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities (OEEPD)
- Opening Doors Program
- Accessible Vehicle Funding







### Blended

- NL Health Services
- Provincial Home Support Program
- JobsNL Wage Subsidy
- Special Assistance Program – Medical equipment and supplies
- Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program
- Long-Term Care
- Accessible Parking Permit

## ACRONYMS

APSEA	Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
CBSP	Community Behavioural Services Program
CNIB	Canadian National Institute for the Blind
COD NL	Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – Newfoundland and Labrador
HMP	Home Modification Program
LDANL	Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
OEEPD	Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities

# INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

 Employment & Financial Security  Health & Social Services  Caregiving & Family  
 Equality  Social Participation  Housing & Related Supports

The Income Support program provides financial support for low-income adults (18 years of age or older) living in Newfoundland and Labrador. Individuals and families can receive two types of benefits under this program. Basic benefits include the family and individual benefit to assist with food, clothing, personal care, household maintenance and utility costs, and the shelter benefit to assist with rent and mortgage costs. Fuel supplements and cost of living allowances are also available for clients. The amount of financial assistance each month depends on family income, family size, living arrangement, types of benefits needed based on an individuals' circumstances, and employment-related expenses (such as transportation or child care). For example, in 2024, single adults living with relatives can receive \$339 per month, whereas a couple with dependent children living with relatives can receive \$779 per month.

Income Support clients are also eligible for non-basic benefits, based on their personal circumstances. Non-basic benefits include municipal tax payments, private child care (related to employment or training), expenses for burials, and health-related expenses (such as vision care, prescription drug coverage, dental care, and costs related to special diets).

Additionally, income support clients are also able to receive benefits and services from other government departments and agencies including the following (which we describe in greater detail below):






- Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program
- Special Assistance Program - Medical Equipment and Supplies
- Medical Transportation Assistance



## Did you know?

In June 2024, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced a new income top-up program for persons with disabilities called the Newfoundland and Labrador Disability Benefit. Eligibility for this benefit will be based on income level and age (individuals aged 18 to 64 years will be eligible). This Benefit will come into effect in July 2025 and will provide up to \$400 per month to persons with disabilities. Additionally, starting in January 2025, this program will provide \$1,200 per year for an individual's Registered Disability Savings Plan. The government has also noted that this program will have zero clawbacks; the benefit will be provided on top of any other benefits a person with a disability is already receiving. The government suspects that around 5,000 people will receive this new benefit.

# LAWS AND POLICIES

 Equality  Legal Capacity & Justice  Accessibility  Social Participation  
 Education

The central piece of legislation specifically related to the rights of persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador is the [Accessibility Act](#). This Act became law in December 2021 with the goal of improving accessibility by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from full participation in society. Key [actions](#) required as part of implementation of this Act are the development of an Accessibility Standards Advisory Board, which is responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, and the creation of accessibility plans by public bodies.

The [Buildings Accessibility Act](#) came into effect in 1981 with the purpose of providing people with physical and sensory disabilities access to public buildings, apartment buildings, and hotels, and to ensure compliance with buildings accessibility standards. In 2018, amendments were made to the regulations with the purpose of addressing issues with building accessibility. Amendments included requirements to increase the number of accessible rental units in an apartment building, improve accessibility of public washrooms, increase the number of accessible parking spaces, and increase fines for illegally parking in accessible parking spaces.






Additionally, the [Service Animal Act](#) provides persons with disabilities with the right to access public accommodations, facilities, and services when accompanied by a service animal. Prior to this Act, the Blind Persons' Rights Act outlined the rights of individuals with visual impairments to use service animals. The Service Animal Act built on this legislation by expanding both the variety of animals recognized as service animals and the variety of disabilities that may require the use of a service animal.

The [Mentally Disabled Persons' Estates Act](#) provides information on appointment of guardians for persons with intellectual disabilities in the management and custody of their estate.

Other pieces of legislation related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- [Human Rights Act](#) protects individuals against discrimination on the basis of many characteristics, including disability.
- [Adult Protection Act](#) provides protection to adults that do not understand or appreciate the risk of abuse or neglect, including those with disabilities.
- The [Schools Act](#) requires that all school boards follow all policies and guidelines issued by the minister relating to special education for students.

# ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND ACTION PLANS

 Equality  Public Education & Information  Accessibility  Social Participation  
 Legal Capacity & Justice

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has a Disability Policy Office, which works with all government departments and agencies, in addition to community organizations and businesses, to support the development of policies and programs that support persons with disabilities and that actively try to remove the barriers that they face. The Disability Policy Office also provides grants through the Accessibility Taxi Program to help cover the cost of retrofitting a passenger vehicle to meet accessibility standards or to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle, which can accommodate passengers with mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters.






In 2021, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador proclaimed October as Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, as a reminder of the need to spread awareness, remove barriers, and provide services and support to individuals with learning disabilities to allow them to reach their full potential. Additionally, in line with the United Nations, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador acknowledges the International Day of Persons with Disabilities annually on December 3, which aims to celebrate and recognize all persons with disabilities and their important contributions to society.

Other offices in Newfoundland and Labrador related to persons with disabilities include the following:

- The Office of the Citizens' Representative accepts and mediates general complaints related to contacting and/or accessing services from government offices and agencies. If a complaint is unable to be resolved through an investigation, a report with recommendations is generated and sent to the House of Assembly. The Office can also accept systemic complaints that outline how government policies, procedures, and actions can affect a large number of people.
- The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is an independent office of the House of Assembly that protects and represents the rights of children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. The four primary responsibilities of this office are advocacy on behalf of individuals, advocacy for systematic changes, reviews and investigations of concerns raised by children and youth, and education and outreach relating to the rights of children and youth.
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission is a free service that is responsible for investigating human rights violation complaints. The Commission also promotes human rights throughout the province by providing information to individuals, organizations, and community partners.










# PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE TAX SYSTEM

 Equality
  Caregiving & Family
  Health & Social Services
  Social Participation  
 Employment & Financial Security

Outlined below are the tax-related programs provided by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that are available to individuals with disabilities and their families. More information about Newfoundland and Labrador taxes for the 2023 tax year can be found [here](#). All dollar amounts provided in this section are accurate for the 2023 tax year.

Tax Credit	Description and Eligibility
<b>Disability amount for self</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces tax payable for persons with disabilities.</li> <li>Individuals can claim this on their taxes if they have been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit.</li> <li>Adults 18 years of age or older can claim \$7,005 on their tax return.</li> </ul>
<b>Disability amount transferred from a dependent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals can claim this on their taxes if their dependent has been approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit and does not need to claim all or part of the disability amount on their tax return.</li> </ul>
<b>Amount for infirm dependents age 18 and older</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This amount (up to \$3,297) can be claimed for dependents over the age of 17 years with an impairment in physical or mental functions.</li> <li>The dependent must have a net income under \$10,382.</li> </ul>
<b>Medical expenses for self, spouse or common-law partner and your dependent children born in 2006 or later</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit.</li> <li>Dependents must be under the age of 18 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Allowable amount of medical expenses for other dependents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals can claim the same medical expenses on their provincial tax return that they claimed through the federal medical expenses tax credit for their other dependents 18 years of age or older.</li> </ul>
<b>Caregiver amount</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals caring for a dependent over the age of 17 years with a net income under \$19,409 and with an impairment in physical or mental functions can claim this amount (up to \$3,297 for each dependent).</li> <li>This amount can also be claimed for an eligible parent or grandparent.</li> </ul>

# SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

 Caregiving & Family  Health & Social Services  Employment & Financial Security  
 Accessibility  Social Participation  Education  Housing & Related Supports  
 Equality

## Programs for Children and Adults

The primary program for persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador is Intervention Services, which consists of two main programs. The Direct Home Services Program is delivered by NL Health Services and is a home-based early intervention program provided to families with infants and preschool-aged children that display or are at risk of significant developmental delay. The goal of this program is to implement skill teaching and behavioural strategies personalized to each child and family that will help support the child's development. After a referral is made to a regional health authority by a family or service provider, child management specialists will first visit the family home to assess eligibility, and, when space becomes available, provide services within the family home. A component of this program is the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program, which provides applied behavior analysis services in the family home to children in Grade 2 or younger with a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

The second program included under Intervention Services is the Community Behavioural Services Program (CBSP). Delivered by the regional health authorities, this program is available to individuals school-aged and older with a developmental disability and significant behavioural concerns. Intervention and support provided through this program is administered in the home and in the community environments in which behavioural difficulties occur. Referrals to this program can be made by the individual themselves (if they are an adult), families, or service providers. Once admitted into the program, behaviour management specialists visit beneficiaries regularly to complete a functional analysis/assessment and to develop and monitor a suitable approach to address behavioural concerns. Family and caregiver involvement in this program is encouraged whenever applicable or possible.

Children with disabilities, specifically, can receive support from the Special Child Welfare Allowance Program, which provides assistance with the cost of services and supports to families with a child under the age of 18 years with a physical or intellectual disability living at home. The amount families can receive each month is determined based on a financial needs test. Families can also receive a Summer Camp Inclusion Grant to help cover the cost of a support person that can facilitate participation of a child with a disability in summer camp.



## Did you know?

For children with disabilities, several departments within the Government of Newfoundland have implemented a coordinated service model, which recognizes the need for children to receive services across sectors at different points of their lives. This model involves the creation of an Individual Support Services Plan by professionals, which outlines services and supports needed across sectors and in different environments.

### Housing

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador provides several residential options and housing supports for adults with disabilities. These options include:

- Cooperative Apartment Program. Private residences shared by up to three adults with intellectual disabilities with staff that provide skill teaching and support to enable more independent living in the future.
- Alternative Family Care Home Program. Private, staffed homes for up to two adults with intellectual disabilities. Services and supports are available as needed.
- Board and Lodging Supplement. Funding supplement available to adults in financial need, with psychiatric, physical, and/or intellectual disabilities, who are 18 years of age and older, and who reside with relatives or non-relatives.
- Individualized Living Arrangements. These arrangements are established when no other service option is available or appropriate for an adult with an intellectual disability, meeting home support criteria and unable to reside with their natural family. Housing-related costs are covered by the income support program and supplemented by NL Health Services.
- Shared Living Arrangements: Individuals with disabilities who require a high level of home support may choose to share the cost of a living arrangement and home support staff. Housing-related costs are covered by the Income Support program and supplemented by NL Health Services.

Additionally, the Home Modification Program (HMP) provides funding to assist homeowners with low-to-moderate income (\$46,500 or less, or \$65,000 or less in Labrador West and the North Coast of Labrador) who require accessibility changes to their residences, to enable individuals to remain in their own homes for a longer period. Persons with accessibility needs may receive a forgivable loan of up to \$7,500. Repairs exceeding these levels may be addressed under a repayable loan of up to \$10,000 (or \$13,000 in Labrador).

### Education and Employment

While the Department of Education outlines a vision of inclusive education for K-12 schools across the province, the administration of special education-related services and supports is largely the responsibility of teachers, in-school specialists, schools, and school boards. School-aged children can receive



## MEASURING UP: DISABILITY POLICY IN ACTION

### Parent Perspective: Challenges Associated with Living Outside of Large Cities

In Newfoundland and Labrador, six individuals completed the survey and only one individual was able to participate in a follow-up interview. Our interview participant provided a unique perspective about the challenges accessing services when living outside of one of the larger cities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

“We had to leave here and go to St. John’s and it’s sad because the Janeway is fantastic, we’ve dealt with the Janeway in the past but it’s really difficult when you’re a parent and you have to travel by air. To fly in province for us cost more than if we flew out of province. It’s, like \$1200 for a return for one person to fly to St. John’s which is an hour flight. So, we either have to travel by highway which is eight to nine hours depending on time of year to take him into the Janeway or we have to fly which costs us way too much money, and we have nothing here on the west coast which is sad.”

assistive technology that supports their learning through the [Assistive Technologies Program](#).

Students under the age of 21 years with low incidence sensory impairments (including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired) can access educational services, programs, and opportunities through the [Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority \(APSEA\)](#).

The [NL Coordinating Council on Deafness](#) provides educational support services to eligible persons, such as vocational counselling, assistance in gaining access to post-secondary education and transitional supports, provision and maintenance of personal Assistive Listening Devices, and accessories and provision of supportive documentation for adaptive technologies and accommodations.

Post-secondary students with disabilities can access the [Provincial Grant for High Need Students with Disabilities](#). This grant provides financial assistance to assist with the cost of education-related services and supports needed by individuals with disabilities to support their learning. Examples of services covered under this program include tutors, note-takers, interpreters, and technical aids, among others.

Individuals with disabilities can also receive employment-related supports through the [Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities \(OEEPD\)](#).

The OEEPD offers many employment programs and career development services to assist persons with disabilities in finding, obtaining, and maintaining employment. The OEEPD also provides the Opening Doors Program, which provides job experience to persons with disabilities in the Provincial Public Service. The positions available through this program are designated to only be filled by persons with disabilities, and are protected to ensure they are not removed through periods of workplace adjustments.

Adults with disabilities can also receive support (up to \$5,000 in 2024) for workplace accommodations, adaptations, assistive technology, and technical equipment through the Work-Related Supports for Persons with Disabilities program.

### Transportation

The Accessible Vehicle Funding program supports individuals and families to acquire or adapt personal vehicles for accessibility. This can include installation of hand controls, or modifying vans to be equipped with lifts and ramps. This program is provided based on financial need of individuals and families.

### Blended Programs

Beyond the specific programs outlined above, a range of therapeutic and professional services that support persons with disabilities can be accessed through NL Health Services. This includes social workers, nurses, behavioural and child management specialists, dieticians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and laboratory technicians. Eligibility criteria (including the need for a referral) vary for each service provided.

Blended programs that may provide support to individuals with disabilities despite the fact that they are not specific to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Provincial Home Support Program. Provides personal and behavioural supports, household management, and respite services to individuals and families that require support to live in their home.
- JobsNL Wage Subsidy. Provides funding to employers to create employment opportunities. Notably, persons with disabilities and Income Support clients (among other groups) are given priority under this program.
- Special Assistance Program – Medical equipment and supplies. Provides basic medical supplies and equipment to assist with activities of daily living.
- Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program. Provides financial assistance for the purchase of eligible prescription medication.
- Long-Term Care. Delivered in both long term care facilities and in some hospital/health centres with combined long term and acute care services across Newfoundland and Labrador. All facilities provide 24 hour nursing care, as well as varying degrees of medical, rehabilitative, social work, pastoral care, dietetic, pharmaceutical, palliative care, respite, and recreation programs.

- Accessible Parking Permit. Allows individuals with conditions or health issues that impede their ability to walk long distances to park in zones marked with a blue international wheelchair logo. Temporary permits valid for six months or permanent passes valid for five years are available.



## Support for Individuals and Families

Empower, the Disability Resource Centre, provides resources and services to persons with disabilities and their families in Newfoundland and Labrador. This organization receives funding from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada.

Additionally, there are many non-profits, charities, and other organizations that advocate for and provide support to individuals with disabilities and their families in Newfoundland and Labrador. A selection of these organizations include the following:

- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – Newfoundland and Labrador (COD NL)
- Inclusion Canada Newfoundland and Labrador
- Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (LDANL)