



**InclusionNB**

Creating Opportunities • Créer des possibilités

# **Local Government Leadership for Inclusive Communities**

Election Brief

## INTRODUCTION

**Inclusion NB** is a provincial, non-profit organization that empowers New Brunswickers with an intellectual or developmental disability, and their families. We partner with government at all levels, community organizations and grassroots champions to identify and remove systematic barriers faced by those we support.

Local governments play a powerful role in shaping inclusive communities. Municipal leadership is critical in ensuring that the design and delivery of local government services - zoning, housing, transportation, and community infrastructure - reflect the needs of all residents. Embedding accessibility and inclusion into these systems is essential to ensuring people with an intellectual or developmental disability can fully participate in community life.



## Defining Accessibility and Inclusion

These are different concepts aiming to achieve the same goal. Accessibility refers to the 'ability' for every citizen to access physical spaces, programming, etc. It's often used as an umbrella term for improving opportunities for all New Brunswickers with a disability. While accessibility is extremely important, inclusion goes a necessary step further. Inclusion is about belonging. It aims to ensure the needs of residents with an intellectual or developmental disability are addressed.

## INCLUSIVE HOUSING

Local governments are on the front lines of the housing and homelessness crisis in New Brunswick.

Crisis-driven housing responses, when not grounded in inclusive practice, risk recreating the very systems communities have worked to leave behind—congregated, segregated neighbourhoods where people are pushed to the margins. This can mean further isolation, limited access to supports, and exclusion from community life. These models have also long been associated with poorer social, health, and economic outcomes, reinforcing stigma rather than addressing need.

In recent years, there has been an intentional shift away from this approach toward inclusive, community-based housing that prioritizes integration, mixed-income neighbourhoods, choice, and belonging. There is a critical role for local government leadership to work alongside provincial crisis responses to safeguard this progress—ensuring that local decisions around zoning, land use, and service delivery actively promote inclusion rather than reinforce separation and segregation.

### Housing Inclusivity:



Housing that is safe, affordable, physically accessible, close to activities, amenities, and services and welcoming of all people within diverse and dispersed mixed-income developments, structures, and neighbourhoods.

### Your role:

Positive change depends on “local governments integrating inclusive housing into community plans, zoning decisions, and housing strategies. Without municipal awareness and commitment, inclusive housing rarely becomes a practical part of land use and development decisions”.<sup>1</sup>

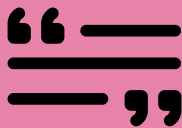


<sup>1</sup> Inclusion BC, Position Statement on Access to Housing for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, March 2026.

# How You can Help Your Municipality Achieve Inclusion

## 1. Develop community plans that include concrete actions to:

Adopt our definition of 'housing inclusivity' to guide planning and decision-making on local housing development.



Embed accessibility and inclusion into all aspects of community planning.



Monitor the number of new housing units that are created to ensure affordability for households with low and low-to-moderate incomes.



Ensure that the needs of people with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities are reflected in local housing needs reports and community plans.



Encourage partnerships with the housing development sector, the non-profit housing sector, and others to explore ways to increase the supply, diversity, and affordability of the existing housing stock.



Work quickly to develop and implement an **inclusionary zoning by-law** (now permitted under the *Community Planning Act*) to require private housing developers to include a portion of affordable and accessible units within new rental developments.

Developments under inclusionary zoning by-laws can be incentivized with government financial assistance and supported through partnerships with community organizations. Shift from crisis response to preventative, long-term housing solutions based on a strong foundation of inclusive and affordable housing.

This will also require strategies to shift from existing congregate models of housing such as tiny home communities for vulnerable populations to longer-term inclusive housing models.



## How You can Help Your Municipality Achieve Inclusion

2. Ensure by-laws and enforcement practices do not disproportionately impact vulnerable populations.
3. Partner with provincial and community organizations to expand supportive housing solutions and wraparound services.



Kyra, Fredericton



Annie and Alyssa, Fredericton



Matthew, Bathurst

## INCLUSIVE TRANSPORTATION

Accessible, inclusive transportation is essential to full participation in community life and a key responsibility for municipal leadership. Barriers in transit can limit access to work, education, healthcare, and social connections. Local governments play a critical role in ensuring transportation systems are accessible, reliable, and designed for all users—supporting independence, equity, and inclusion across the community.

### Recommendations:

Ensure transportation systems are accessible and reliable for people with an intellectual or developmental disability.



Expand on-demand transportation services to allow people to access transportation at the times they are needed, rather than solely rely on fixed schedule services.



Involve people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and community disability organizations in transportation planning and decision-making.



Keep transportation affordable and equitable to support full community participation. Explore ways to provide low-cost transportation options for people on fixed incomes.



Strengthen and expand paratransit to meet diverse and flexible needs of people with a disability and aging adults.

