

Accessible B.C. Act: 2022/2023 Progress Report



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Contents



Accessible B.C. Act: 2022/2023 Progress Report	4
Provincial Accessibility Committee	5
Accessibility Plan	6
Accessibility Standards Development	7
Accessible B.C. Regulation	8
Recognition of AccessAbility Week	9
Accessibility Feedback Tool	10
Indigenous Engagement	11
BC Leadership to Advance	
National Collaboration on Accessibility	12
Appendix 1: Accessibility Feedback Tool Data	13

Accessible B.C. Act: 2022/2023 Progress Report



The *Accessible British Columbia Act* (the Act) establishes a statutory framework for government to work in partnership with people with disabilities to identify, remove and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in their communities. Per the requirements of Section 6 of the Act, this report describes the actions taken in the 2022/23 fiscal year by the Minister and the Provincial Accessibility Committee (PAC) to implement the Act and its regulations. For more information about accessibility priorities across government, consult AccessibleBC, government's three-year accessibility plan.

Provincial Accessibility Committee

During the reporting period, PAC met three times: in May, October, and February. Government also requested PAC's input on a range of priorities, including:

- the development of AccessibleBC, government's accessibility plan
- the development of government's accessibility feedback tool
- principles that should inform the development of accessibility standards
- the proposed mandates of accessibility standards technical committees.

The Provincial Accessibility Committee advises government on the implementation of the Act and guides the development of new accessibility standards. The committee was established in December 2021.



Accessibility Plan

In May 2022 (during AccessAbility Week), government released AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan for 2022/23-2024/25. The plan highlights initiatives and high-level priorities across government that support the identification, prevention and removal of barriers for people with disabilities. The Plan was developed following internal engagement across ministries in government and with the input of PAC.



Accessibility Standards Development



In May 2022 – with the input of PAC – the Minister announced work would begin to develop the initial Accessibility Standards under the Act and that the first standards would be in the areas of Employment Accessibility and Accessible Service Delivery. Government established advisory committees to assist PAC develop recommendations for proposed accessibility standards on Employment Accessibility and Accessible Service Delivery. Members of the Employment Accessibility and Service Delivery technical committees were appointed in December 2022. The Technical Committee on Accessible Service Delivery held its first meeting in January 2023.

Technical committees play an integral role in the standards development process by assisting PAC to develop recommendations for the Minister. Each standard has a dedicated technical committee comprised of 15 people with a wide range of experiences that aims to reflect the diversity of British Columbia.

Accessible B.C. Regulation

In April 2022, government adopted a regulation prescribing more than 750 public sector organizations for the purposes of Part 3 of the Act. As of September 2022, these organizations have at least one year to establish an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and a public feedback mechanism.

Government provided \$3 million to Disability Alliance BC (DABC) to develop tools, resources and other supports to help prescribed organizations come into compliance with the regulation.

Organizations prescribed in the Accessible BC Regulation include:

- municipal police departments
- municipalities
- post-secondary education institutions
- public libraries
- regional districts
- school districts



Recognition of AccessAbility Week



In 2022, the province celebrated AccessAbility Week from May 29th to June 4th. During AccessAbility Week 2022, the government provided \$500,000 in community grants to improve accessibility and inclusion. The grants will be administered by Disability Alliance BC (DABC) and will be used to support local accessibility projects across the province. 12 B.C.-based non-profit organizations received grants of up to \$40,000. The recipients will deliver diverse projects in communities throughout B.C., from increasing social connections in rural communities to increasing the accessibility of emergency-preparedness plans.

AccessAbility Week promotes inclusion and accessibility to support the full participation of every person in their communities. It is also an opportunity to support and highlight the efforts of people and organizations that advocate for persons with disabilities.

Accessibility Feedback Tool



As part of its commitments under the Act, government launched the Accessibility Feedback Tool in October 2022. The Tool allows people to report barriers they experience in accessing government services. The Accessibility Directorate will use the feedback received to identify and analyze barriers, share data and work with partners to improve accessibility in B.C.

The Tool was developed using a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens and it incorporates comprehensive accessibility options and follows the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) guidance on Indigeneity, race and ethnicity. The tool also allows respondents to use video, audio and image files to describe their experience and is available in several languages.

A summary of feedback data is provided in Appendix 1.

Indigenous Engagement



Government involved Indigenous Peoples in the development of the Act to align the legislation with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Government has committed to conducting ongoing engagement with Indigenous partners in the implementation of the Act, as outlined in action 4.9 of B.C.'s Declaration Act Action Plan 2022-2027. As part of this commitment, government has contacted Indigenous rights holders and organizations to offer various options to engage with and inform policy development. These options include meetings or presentations by government staff, working sessions to inform policy development, and/or written submissions based on guiding questions.

BC Leadership to Advance National Collaboration on Accessibility



In September 2022, the B.C. government accepted an invitation to co-chair Canada's first Pan-Canadian Forum on Accessibility Standards with Accessibility Standards Canada. The Forum brought together officials from provinces and territories across Canada to develop a shared understanding of accessibility standards in the country and to coordinate efforts across jurisdictions. In May 2022, government also signed an agreement with Accessibility Standards Canada to facilitate coordination and collaboration as the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia work to develop accessibility standards.

Appendix 1: Accessibility Feedback Tool Data

(OCTOBER 2022-MARCH 2023)

Respondents experiencing barriers	Number of submissions	Percentage (%)
Person experiencing barrier	52	58
Written on behalf of someone	19	21
Parent or guardian	6	7
Family member	4	4
Government employee	4	4
Other	4	4
Advocate	1	1
Left blank	18	20

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Barriers identified by type		
Category	Number of times mentioned	Percentage (%) of submissions identifying this barrier
Delivery of services	40	45
The built environment	28	31
Information & communication	24	27
Health	20	22
Housing	12	13
Transportation	12	13
Education	11	12
Employment	10	11

Note: Submissions could identify multiple barriers.

Location	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Lower Mainland	24	27
Vancouver Island	22	25
Southern Interior	9	10
North	9	10
Left blank	23	26

Ministries the feedback relates to	Number of times mentioned	Percentage (%) of submissions identifying this Ministry
SDPR	21	24
HLTH	18	20
TRAN	15	17
CITZ	9	10
PSA	6	7
ECC	5	6
ENV	5	6
MUNI	5	6
HOUS	4	4
MMHA	2	2
PSFS	2	2
PSSG	2	2
AG	1	1
FIN	1	1
MCFD	1	1
TACS	1	1

Note: Submissions could identify multiple Ministries.



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