Message from the Premier

British Columbians believe in equity and fairness, respect and diversity. Values that are the foundation of an accessible and inclusive province, values that propel the work found throughout this report.

Inside we share accomplishments, both large and small, that are making B.C. more inclusive for people with disabilities. These successes come from governments, community groups, businesses and the disability community. While viewed individually these actions may go unnoticed. When viewed together we can see the full impact of how we are transforming our communities and our province.

Creating livable communities begins with integrating accessibility into everything we do, our workplaces, buildings, neighbourhoods and businesses. This is the province I believe in and want to help build - a place where everyone can contribute and help make our communities inclusive, welcoming, and vibrant.

Honourable John Horgan
Premier of British Columbia
Message from the Minister

This progress report reflects the many steps that government and people in B.C. are taking to create the most progressive province for people with disabilities. It is a goal shared by many, a province where all people can find opportunity, security and chance to prosper.

In the months and years ahead, we will continue to seek advice and encourage innovation and leadership from people with disabilities and the many businesses, organizations and individuals that play an essential role in helping realize this shared vision.

Building a Better BC for people of all abilities is a priority for our government. This commitment is reflected in the work we have done to date and in the opportunities that lie ahead. Working together, I am confident that we can continue to build a network of supports and services for people with disabilities that support full participation in every aspect of our society.

Honourable Shane Simpson
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Message from the Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is proud of the progress being made to make B.C. a better place for people with disabilities to live. As this year’s report demonstrates, increasing inclusion for people with disabilities requires connections and partnerships. By working together, family members, communities, advocates, employers, service providers, and so many others throughout the province are breaking down attitudinal and physical barriers to create a more inclusive B.C.

Highlights from the past year include a simplified Persons with Disabilities (PWD) application process for people already in comparable federal and provincial programs, an easier certification process for guide dog and service dog teams from other provincial and state jurisdictions to support access for people visiting or moving to B.C., and a partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation to create a LEED-style certification program to identify buildings and developments that are leaders in accessible design.

This year, the Leadership team participated in the federal government’s national accessibility consultation. Both the Minister’s Council on Employment and Accessibility and the Presidents Group prepared in-depth submissions to the consultation, offering advice and expertise on how to achieve an accessible Canada. The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Action Group also prepared federal recommendations to increase access and reduce barriers to the RDSP.

The Presidents Group continues to actively engage employers throughout B.C. around the benefits of inclusive workplaces and identifying concrete actions that will get more people with disabilities employed in our province. To support this work, two Accessibility and Inclusion Consultants have been brought on board to capture employer experiences and learnings, and develop practical, easy-to-use resources and strategies to support businesses – both large and small – to confidently and efficiently hire more people with disabilities. The leadership and vision of the Presidents Group is helping to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities, and creating more accessible, inclusive workplaces that benefit all employees.

In September 2016, members of the RDSP Action Group – Plan Institute, Disability Alliance BC, and the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS), with support from the Vancouver Foundation – began an innovative four-year project partnership called Access RDSP. Since launching the partnership, they have reached over 7,300 people, directly connecting them with the supports and
resources they need to open an RDSP. The partnership is seeing results: 85% of people supported through Access RDSP have either successfully opened an RDSP, or are actively engaged in the process.

B.C. once again proclaimed November as Indigenous Disability Awareness Month to bring awareness to the unique contributions of Indigenous people with disabilities. Through the efforts of BCANDS and support through proclamations from the First Nations Summit and Métis Nation BC, this recognition has expanded to include the Province of Saskatchewan, the Assembly of First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations. In April 2017, in response to recommendations from B.C., the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that the Government of Canada recognize and proclaim November as Indigenous Disability Awareness Month each year.

At the heart of our progress is partnership – working together to increase access and inclusion for people with disabilities and create new opportunities for people of all abilities to fully participate in their communities.

Leadership Team

Shane Simpson
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Tamara Vrooman
Co-Chair, Presidents Group and President and CEO of Vancity

Craig Richmond
Co-Chair, Presidents Group and President and CEO of Vancouver Airport Authority

Norah Flaherty
Chair, RDSP Action Group

Dr. Jaimie Borisoff
Interim Chair, Minister’s Council on Employment and Accessibility

Neil Belanger
Executive Director, BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

Jane Dyson
Executive Director, Disability Alliance BC
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Government</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Service Delivery</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Internet</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Built Environment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Housing</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Transportation</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Support</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Security</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Communities</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Preparedness</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Experience</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Community and Employer Partnerships in support of accessibility</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Age-Friendly Communities Grants</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: 2016/17 Community Gaming Grants supporting accessibility</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Resort Municipality Initiative accessibility related projects</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Accessibility-related resources and funding opportunities</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inclusive Government

Engaging British Columbians to create a more inclusive B.C. Government

Increasing accessibility for B.C. voters

Some key accessibility improvements were rolled out in the 2017 Provincial General Election. A telephone voting option was introduced to give voters who have a disability that restricts their ability to visit a voting station or vote independently the option of voting over the phone. Voters who meet the eligibility criteria were assisted by an operator throughout the process, with measures in place to ensure the privacy of their vote. To help voters with low vision, the ballots were made larger to be more readable. A new plastic ballot template was created to accommodate the larger ballots, which help voters mark their ballot independently. District Electoral Officers were also asked to collect more detailed information on the accessibility of each voting place in their district to be used as part of the selection process for future voting places. A voting place accessibility feedback form is available on the Elections BC website: http://www.elections.bc.ca/docs/forms/fill-in-3021.pdf

Accessibility and inclusion across the Public Service

The BC Public Service continues to be committed to the recruitment, retention and advancement of employees with disabilities. The public service human resource website MyHR includes new guidelines and resources that can help public service employees welcome diversity, value differences, and foster inclusion.

The Work-Able Graduate Internship Program, a one-year paid internship with the BC Public Service offered to recent post-secondary graduates who self-identify as having a disability, is now entering its third year. Further, 66% of the first-year interns have secured employment within the public service, and the 13 second-year interns are currently considering employment opportunities in the public service. We have now welcomed the third year cohort of 13 new Work-Able interns to their positions starting in September 2017.

“The Work-Able Internship has given me a chance to put my advanced degree to good use, in a supportive workplace. My disability doesn’t limit what I can do, but it has had a very real impact on my career. By creating an opportunity for equitable access to meaningful work, this program has helped me find confidence, gain experience, and increase my skills, proving that all anybody needs is a fair chance!” – Work-Able Intern
Now entering its fifth year of activities, the Employee Accessibility Advisory Council is having a positive impact to ensure government workplaces are inclusive and accessible. The council is made up of public service employees with and without disabilities across government. Over the past year, the council led a number of important presentations to key groups across government to educate and increase awareness around inclusion in the workplace. Council members have also created informational resources such as suggested scripts for inclusive language, information on accessibility on MyHR, and have published blogs on the employee intranet to help shine a light on the realities of living and working with a disability.

Federal Government moving forward on accessibility

Both the Minister’s Council on Employment and Accessibility and the Presidents Group prepared in-depth submissions to the accessibility consultation, undertaken by the federal government as part of a commitment to develop accessibility legislation that promotes equal opportunity, inclusion and participation of Canadians who have disabilities or functional limitations. Between June 2016 and February 2017, the federal government consulted with Canadians on planned accessibility legislation. Many British Columbians participated in the two in-person consultation sessions held in B.C. The province has an opportunity to build on the conversations that took place during the accessibility consultation in B.C. in 2014 and learn from the 2017 federal government consultation and legislation as accessibility legislation is considered in B.C.

The Canadian government made a further commitment to support the rights of people with disabilities in December 2016 when they launched a consultation with Canadians on the possible accession to the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Optional Protocol gives people with disabilities a new safeguard for their rights by establishing two procedures – a complaint procedure and an inquiry procedure – aimed at strengthening the implementation and monitoring of the convention.
The federal government also amended the Copyright Act to remove barriers to the access of alternate-format print materials so Canadians who are blind, have low vision, or otherwise print disabilities can access a wider range of accessible books and textbooks.

**Simplifying the Guide Dog and Service Dog Certification process**

Last year, the *Guide Dog and Service Dog Act* came into force, supporting better access for people with certified guide and service dogs. In March 2017, the B.C. Government made regulatory changes to simplify the certification process for guide dog and service dog teams from other provincial and state jurisdictions. With these changes, the process is streamlined to support access for individuals visiting or moving to B.C.

**PROFILES**

**Paralympian Athlete Back in the Swim of Things**

Former Paralympian swimmer Brianna Nelson is making waves in her new position as Communication Project Support with the B.C. Government. She secured the opportunity through the Work-Able internship program. Nelson, 25, retired from sport with two silver medals from the London 2012 Paralympic Games and a gold from the International Paralympic Committee World Championships in 2013. Despite these successes, Nelson didn’t feel confident about approaching potential employers outside of the
service and retail industry where she had been working. Nelson is glad that she decided to apply for Work-Able. The internship provided her with valuable new skills and public service experience that could lead to a permanent position.

“I’m enjoying myself a lot,” Nelson says of her new job. “I’ve had some pretty good experiences. It’s very encouraging that you can find your niche in government.”

Past Work-Able interns and supervisors share their experiences:

“The Work-Able Internship Program is an exceptional opportunity to open doors to the BC Public Service for those of us with disabilities who often have an extremely difficult time getting our foot in the door in the organization through the regular hiring process. Through the Work-Able Internship Program we are given an incredible opportunity to gain invaluable skills and work experience to apply to our future careers without letting our disabilities hold us back from achieving our full potential.” – Work-Able Intern

“I love coming into work each day and learning something new. The amazing thing about this internship is that it serves as a platform for further learning. This internship is truly amazing and unique because it allows time for experimentation. A great thing about the Work-Able internship for me has been the help in navigating a return to the workforce as someone who is recently diagnosed as having a disability. I didn’t know what kinds of challenges I would face, but Work-Able was able to support me every step of the way. Work-Able is a great program, and I highly recommend it for any recent grad with a disability who is considering a career in the public service.” – Work-Able Intern

“I would advise recent graduates who self-identify as having a disability to apply to Work-Able without any fear or shyness about coming forward as a person with a disability, which in the mainstream can sometimes have a negative stigma associated with it. Full disclosure of your disability is optional, accommodations are offered to help you succeed, and you are supported throughout the application process and the length of your internship by Work-Able staff in order to help you succeed in the program. Also, I recommend that recent graduates seriously consider the benefits associated with the Work-Able program: a year of full-time work in the BC Public Service with many ministries to choose from, five year in-service status as a BC Public Service employee that helps apply for future work in the Public Service, as well as a wealth of experience, skills and contacts that are gained as a result of successful completion of the program. I would encourage them to apply as soon as possible after graduation and put their all into succeeding in the program.” – Work-Able Intern
“I really enjoy all the opportunities I’ve been given to try new projects and expand my knowledge about the various roles of the provincial government, even just the various roles found within a particular branch or division. My supervisors are phenomenal and have offered me plenty of support and in some cases have even structured my workload such that I am gaining the experience I need to find a permanent position in the future. It’s a wonderful feeling to work with people who are so ready to help you succeed.”

– Work-Able Intern

“By leveling the playing field during the hiring process, Work-Able played a major role in breaking the barriers I’ve often faced when seeking employment. Since starting my internship, my supervisor and coworkers have been continuously supportive of my needs and of my growth as a Public Service employee.”

– Work-Able Intern

Community in Action:

Medal of Good Citizenship awarded to community leaders

The Medal of Good Citizenship recognizes individuals who, through exceptional long-term service, have made outstanding contributions to their communities without expectation of remuneration or reward.

Marilyn Rushton, a well-known Burnaby citizen, was honoured with the medal for her inspirational life of service to the blind and partially-sighted community, her contributions to families with children who are blind or partially-sighted, and her energetic support for the musical community. Blind since birth, Rushton is a powerful role model, teacher, and gifted musician. She has volunteered countless hours with the Maple Leaf Singers, and is the director and accompanist for The Tempos, a choir for blind and partially-sighted children, youth and adults. Rushton is the president of the BC Vision Teacher’s Association and serves on the board of Blind Beginnings, a non-profit that supports B.C. families with blind/partially-sighted children.

Marilyn Rushton, recipient of the Medal of Good Citizenship
Troy Becker, a resident of West Kelowna, was honoured for contributions to making his community a safer place and helping to create life-enhancing opportunities that build confidence for people with disabilities. A professional firefighter and volunteer search and rescue member since 2001, Becker created the Community Recreation Initiatives Society to benefit people with disabilities wanting outdoor experiences like kayaking, zip lining, bicycle riding and mountain climbing. He and his organization also run annual camps throughout the province for various groups like Spinal Cord Injury BC and families with children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

Abbe Gates, a well-known Vancouver citizen, was honoured with the medal for spearheading initiatives aimed at improving life experiences and inclusion for children, teens and young adults with developmental and physical disabilities. Among her many other contributions, Gates supports The Night to Remember Gala, which provides an annual dance and red-carpet experience to more than 150 young people, aged 15 to 35 years, with development disabilities. As well, she helped establish a social group for teens through the Vancouver Parks board, called Friday Friends. She is now collectively working on establishing the same kind of program for all these young people who are now adults.

If you know a deserving individual in your community, consider nominating them for the Medal of Good Citizenship. Information can be found at: http://gov.bc.ca/medalofgoodcitizenship
Accessible Service Delivery

Delivering more accessible government services to people with disabilities

Streamlined online tool for income and disability assistance

In February 2017, government combined the online application tool and client services portal for income and disability assistance into a single, streamlined online tool. Now British Columbians are able to apply for income and disability assistance online through My Self Serve.

The application has been re-written using plain language and an intro video was created to show applicants how to easily use some of the online features. Applicants can now access instructions on how to easily submit documents online, see where they are within the application process and save their application to complete at a later time.

Helping young adults and their families plan for the future

Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) is a program that helps youth and young adults with developmental disabilities and their families plan for the future using a person- and family-centered approach to team-based transition planning. STADD navigators help individuals access an integrated system of supports and services from youth through adulthood that help them to maximize their independence and quality of life. This service is available to individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 who have a developmental disability and will be eligible for support from Community Living BC. STADD services are currently available in over 90 B.C. communities and expansion is underway across the Fraser region and in rural and remote communities in the interior and the north. More information about STADD can be found at: http://gov.bc.ca/adultdevelopmentaldisabilityservices

Supporting children with autism and their families

Since 2011, government’s Autism Outreach Program has provided Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) intervention training and support to more than 1,600 parents, social workers and autism service providers in rural and remote B.C. communities. This includes over 65 training workshops across the province and a partnership with Douglas College to provide on-line college-level training at a significantly reduced rate to front-line service providers (Behaviour Interventionists) living in more than 80 B.C. communities.
The GoodLife Fitness Family Autism Hub, operated by the Pacific Autism Family Network, opened its doors in November 2016. Government provided $20 million towards a $32-million initiative to build the centre, which provides a network of supports for individuals with ASD and their families across B.C. Its core purpose is to be a knowledge centre, bringing together state-of-the-art resources for research, information, learning, assessment, treatment and support, and building capacity to address the lifespan needs of individuals with ASD and related disorders.

Autism Information Services British Columbia (AIS BC) is a new provincial information centre for autism and related disorders that provides information and supports to families, service providers and community professionals across B.C.

AIS BC staff are trained to assist the growing number of B.C. families affected by autism who need support in making informed decisions about treatment options for their children. The AIS BC office is located within the Goodlife Fitness Family Autism Hub.

Ongoing improvements in the current autism services and supports include:

- Developing training modules for front-line health professionals on common mental-health conditions in children and youth with ASD
- Improving accountability and quality assurance of front-line service providers
- A $3-million, government-funded research project to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of parent coaching for parents who have children aged 15-30 months who are showing red flags for autism
- Developing training modules for babysitters/caregivers, recreational staff and first responders
Tele-health increases accessibility of health services in rural and remote communities

The use of tele-health technology to help British Columbians living in rural and remote areas access health and social services continues to expand across B.C. through the Children’s Virtual Care initiative. For pediatric patients and their families, a trip to BC Children’s Hospital in Vancouver is still necessary for surgical procedures, but assessments and pre- and post-surgical care can be done close to home using telehealth – live videoconferencing over a secure, high speed provincial network. There are now 17 regional “pediatric-enhanced” telehealth sites equipped with specific pediatric clinical tools that support care for infants and children.

Access to justice is a priority

Access to justice continues to be an important principle that applies across the justice system. The Ministry of Justice and Court Services Branch recently launched an accessibility survey among all courthouse locations across the province. The purpose of the survey is to identify the current level of accessibility and inform prioritization of facility modifications and projects to improve accessibility. The results of the survey will build an inventory for each location and will help identify and prioritize ongoing accessibility enhancements. The Court Services Branch also provides visual language interpreters and CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation) service – an instant, voice-to-text translation – upon request to justice system participants at no cost. Visual language interpreters include sign language, tactile, oral and deaf interpreters. Arrangements can be made by contacting the interpreter clerk at the local court registry.

Providing integrated support for mental health and substance use services in B.C.

A new digital hub was developed by government with input from service providers, experts, parents, caregivers and people who have experienced mental health and/or substance use issues. The hub is part of the targeted initiatives totalling $165 million over three years to support those with mental health and/or substance use challenges, and brings together more than 6,000 services from

Mental Health Digital Hub website
over 450 providers throughout B.C. The resource focuses on prevention and early intervention, housing, enhanced treatment and supports, and better integration and access to services.

Foundry is a network of centres and e-health services, co-created with health and social service partners, and young people and their families in communities across B.C. The Foundry centres provide a one-stop shop for services to support health and well-being for youth and young adults by providing primary care and social services, as well as early intervention and specialized mental health and substance use services. Currently there are six Foundry centres being implemented across the province – in Abbotsford, Campbell River, Kelowna, North Shore and Prince George including the existing Granville Youth Health Centre. New investments in mental health and substance use services will support up to an additional five new centres, in locations to be determined, for a total of up to 11 centres. Foundry brings health and social services together in a single place to make it easier for young people to find the care, connection and support they need. Find more information about Foundry at http://foundrybc.ca.

Increasing accessibility in post-secondary education with Open Textbooks

Through the Open Textbook Project with BCcampus, higher education is becoming more accessible through the use of openly licensed textbooks, making digital versions free to use by students and faculty. Approximately 295 faculty members at 23 public post-secondary institutions are currently participating in the project.

Since June 2016, 39 open textbooks have been certified as accessible, based on the B.C. Open Textbook Accessibility Toolkit, which provides resources for users to make open textbooks accessible to people with learning challenges. BCcampus also held webinars on accessibility best practices for faculty and staff at B.C. institutions.

Digital version of a textbook
Addressing domestic violence through the three-year Provincial Domestic Violence Plan

In Canada, one in five women lives with a disability. Of these women, over 51% have experienced a violent crime within the last year. This number reaches upwards of 85% if the disability is intellectual. The Provincial Domestic Violence Plan identifies women with disabilities as one of the key populations requiring attention.

The plan aims to address domestic violence through a principled approach that promotes safety, shared responsibility, and culturally relevant and respectful engagement. To support the plan, government and community partners developed a toolkit to increase the capacity and competency among early-years’ professionals to respond to children who are exposed to domestic violence and provide their families with appropriate support. The toolkit includes special considerations for safety planning and supporting women with disabilities who are affected by domestic violence.

In early 2016, a University of Victoria graduate student, with support from Disability Alliance BC and the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV), undertook a study to uncover the best practices related to supporting women with disabilities. To supplement the report findings, in Summer 2016, PODV met and presented the results to disability organizations and relevant stakeholders who echoed and validated the report’s conclusions and made further recommendations to continue the efforts to increase awareness about the issue of women with disabilities who experience domestic violence.

---

**PROFILES**

**Community in Action:**

Improving services for people with physical disabilities

Through innovative partnerships and collaboration, the BC Spinal Cord Injury Community Services Network (BC SCI Network) provides access to information and services 24/7. The BC SCI Network offers in-person and online services and support, training sessions, and unique programming, opportunities and activities that connect people with spinal cord injuries and many other physical disabilities throughout B.C. Since 2010, over 11,400 people have received services through the BC SCI Network,
which includes Spinal Cord Injury BC, BC Wheelchair Sports Association, BC Wheelchair Basketball Society, Neil Squire Society, and Sam Sullivan Disability Foundation. This number is expected to grow as government recently provided the BC SCI Network $5 million to enhance their services.

**Community in Action:**

**Helping victims of crime with disabilities navigate the Justice System**

From the moment a person who is a victim of crime reaches out for help from victim services or the police they must deal with a complex system of services. For many people with disabilities, these procedures and processes can create barriers to fair access – and to fair outcomes. Government is supporting Disability Alliance BC to create resources – including informational videos, picture-based help sheets, and service provider webinars – to better support people with disabilities who are victims of crime. This project improves access to victim and justice services and increases the ability of community-based victim service workers to provide accessible and inclusive interventions and work with other members of the disability community and anti-violence prevention and response sector.
Accessible Internet

Providing accessible internet and communications options for British Columbians

Improving Internet access and speeds in rural communities

As part of a commitment to rural connectivity, government is improving Internet access and speeds to rural communities province-wide. The installation of free public Wi-Fi in 25 highway rest areas are supporting businesses such as commercial trucking, keeping travellers connected, and improving safety. Over 4,500 households in B.C.’s most remote areas were connected for the first time through the BC Broadband Satellite Initiative.

Next Generation Network boosts learning opportunities for students

Students throughout B.C., even those living in the most isolated areas, now have access to high-speed Internet in the classroom to support their learning and development as the Next Generation Network (NGN) nears completion.

Over the past three years, more than 1,600 public schools in all 60 school districts have been successfully transitioned to the NGN. In some districts Internet speeds are up to 10 times faster than before, making it easier for teachers to bring online learning tools to the classroom so students can follow their passions and embrace B.C.’s new curriculum.

Meeting international standards in website accessibility

Government has met its commitment to upgrade gov.bc.ca to meet international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines [WCAG 2.0 (AA)]. While this milestone has been met, government continues to make improvements in all areas of government website infrastructure. This includes new software development, content design and implementation, assets management, corporate web governance, plain language, writing for the web, and timely responses to accessibility concerns raised by the public.

High-speed internet brings online learning tools to the classroom.
Continuing to make information easier to find online

The Disability Supports and Services resource webpage provides information about government programs and services that support people with disabilities in one convenient location, and is reviewed and revised regularly to ensure information is correct and up-to-date. People with disabilities can find links to a broad range of services, from fuel tax refunds, to accessible travel in B.C. A section on American Sign Language interpreter services was recently expanded and now includes information on how to request a sign-language interpreter for a variety of government services, including medical interpreting services, court services, and WorkBC Employment Services Centres. The Supports and Services webpage can be accessed at: http://gov.bc.ca/disabilityservices

Video Relay Services help people communicate through online app

Video Relay Services (VRS) was released in Canada in September 2016. With the online application, British Columbians who use sign language can communicate more easily and effectively with hearing individuals over the telephone. Learn more about VRS and download the app at: http://srvcanadavrs.ca

PROFILES

Government Connections:

Partnering with Internet service providers in rural communities

Isolation can be an issue for people with disabilities, especially when they live in rural or remote areas. To meet its goal to see every British Columbian with access to high-speed Internet, government has funded a number of programs.

Connecting British Columbia Program – $10 million has been invested benefiting more than 40,000 households in over 200 communities under the first phase of the program. This investment will enable service providers to expand or improve local infrastructure to deliver better Internet connectivity. Projects receiving grants in the first phase are:

- Columbia Basin-Boundary (rural): grant to Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation
- North Shuswap: grant to Mascon Cable Systems Inc.
- Squamish-Lillooet areas: grant to Base Technology Ltd.
• Various rural areas in the Cariboo area: grant to ABC Communications
• Bridge River Valley: grant to Minto Communications
• Port Alice: grant to Brooks Bay Cable Corp.
• Sunnybrae area: grant to Mascon Cable Systems Inc.
• Chilliwack remote areas: grant to Lookieloo
• Peace Region areas: grant to Peace Region Internet Society
• Granisle: grant to Village of Granisle
• Okanagan and Shuswap areas: grant to MYBC Datacom
• Lytton rural areas: two grants to Lyttonnet
• Chilcotin rural areas: grant to Tatlayoko Think Tank
• Chilliwack rural areas: grant to Network Integrated Communications
• Tsaxana: grant to Conuma Cable Systems
• Poole Creek: grant to Base Technology Ltd.
• 100 Mile House (rural): grant to ABC Communications
• Gulf Islands: grant to Beacon Wireless Inc.
• Copper Creek: grant to ABC Communications
• Kootenay Lake: grant to Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation
• Lake Kathlyn and New Hazelton: two grants to CityWest
• Parts of rural Okanagan: grant to ispeed Communications
• Sunshine Coast (Gambier Island, Keats Island, Port Mellon): grant to Base Technology Ltd.
• Upper Slocan Valley (Hills): grant to Red Mountain Internet Society
• Williams Lake (rural) (Dugan Lake and McLeese Lake): grant to ABC Communications

In Budget 2017, the Province committed an additional $40 million to expand the program.

**BC Broadband Satellite Initiative** - Over 4,500 households in B.C.’s most remote areas were connected for the first time through the initiative.
Business Matters:

TELUS Internet for Good pilot program

In this increasingly dynamic and digital world, access to the internet is becoming a necessity and low-income single parents often face barriers to obtaining internet access, including price, hardware, and education. TELUS is committed to overcoming the digital divide and has introduced the TELUS Internet for Good pilot program which addresses these barriers by offering low-cost Internet service to low-income single-parent families on disability or income assistance across the province. Approximately 18,000 families currently receiving assistance were provided coupon codes, allowing them to activate TELUS’ offer of Internet service for only $9.95 a month. To ensure a great experience, TELUS is offering participants speeds of up to 25 Mbps. In addition, through collaboration with BC Technology for Learning Society, families who cannot afford a computer can purchase a refurbished desktop computer for $100 or a refurbished laptop for $150. TELUS also partnered with Decoda to ensure that participants had access to free digital literacy programs to become comfortable using the Internet. Furthermore, to ensure that participants are able to stay safe online TELUS is showcasing its TELUS WISE (Wise Internet and Smartphone Education) program to promote online safety and security. This pilot program is entirely funded by TELUS and comes at no cost to the government or to taxpayers.

Community in Action:

Makers Making Change

The Neil Squire Society is actively promoting their Makers Making Change model that connects makers to people with disabilities, to create open source hardware solutions that are customized to individual needs. Unlike current manufactured solutions that are often unaffordable for many people with disabilities, this model is part of the new frontier in the innovative manufacturing and delivery of affordable assistive technologies and addresses the barriers preventing full inclusion of people with disabilities in society. For example, at the March 2017 #BCTech Summit in Vancouver, over 30 makers came together
to build LipSyncs. The Lipsync is a mouth-operated joystick for mobile devices. The LipSync can be affordably assembled at the community level by makers, engineers, student groups, skilled volunteers and hobbyists for less than $250.

An Access Makeathon was also held in Vancouver in January 2017 to spark collaboration and ideas for new solutions. This 48-hour event connected people with disabilities and teams of makers who built open source assistive technology solutions that directly addressed their needs.

To learn more about this project visit [http://makersmakingchange.com](http://makersmakingchange.com).

*Team Timothy working on customized joystick*

*Jim at the #BCTech Summit*


**Accessible Built Environment**

*Supporting the design of accessible public spaces and encouraging communities to incorporate accessibility strategies into their Official Community Plans*

**Making government buildings barrier free**

Government’s Barrier Free Accessibility Program includes a comprehensive field assessment of all government-owned buildings where the primary use is office, courthouse or health unit. The Barrier Free Design Standards are:

1. Access from the street to at least one main accessible entrance
2. Access from the parking area to an accessible entrance
3. Access to at least one accessible public washroom
4. Access to the elevator or lift where a publically accessible elevator or lift exists

Of the 89 active buildings in these categories, 88 buildings now satisfy basic barrier free access. Although the remaining building, the Rossland Courthouse, has heritage constraints, a project is underway to improve access to the building and it will be retrofitted, where possible, by 2018.

An example of a Barrier Free Accessibility Program project is the Nelson Courthouse, built in 1909 and designed by Francis Rattenbury, noted architect of B.C.’s Parliament Buildings. Numerous accessibility improvements have been implemented including a barrier free pathway from the designated accessible parking spot to the entrance, an additional designated accessible parking spot on Ward Street, new automatic door openers connecting the courthouse with City Hall, and a ramp installation from the main entrance to the main floor.

**Adopting National Building Code accessibility provisions**

In 2015, many updates were made to the National Building Code based on innovation in accessible design practices found across Canada and internationally.
Canada’s National Building Code reflects current commonly accepted practice on accessibility and will be used as a baseline for the next edition of the BC Building Code (in late 2017), while retaining B.C.’s variations that raise the bar for access. Furthermore, work is underway to provide a more comprehensive review for the subsequent BC Building Code in alignment with B.C.’s accessibility objectives.

**Accessibility improvements that honour B.C.’s heritage**

As part of the British Columbia, Canada 150: Celebrating B.C. Communities and their Contributions to Canada grant program, over 220 museums, archives, heritage sites and historic places are receiving a total of $7.6 million in funding to create meaningful legacies that honour B.C.’s unique and diverse histories, culture and heritage. Over 20 of the one-time grants of up to $100,000 were awarded to projects that increase site accessibility. All are expected to be completed by March 1, 2018. Projects include:

- Cole Island Interpretive Boardwalk Project – to increase intellectual and physical access to this new marine heritage trail and national historic site
- Port Clements History of Logging Outdoor Exhibit & Trail – to create a 250-metre wheelchair accessible pathway circling the 2.5 acre museum site, including interpretive signage highlighting significance of the historic logging equipment
- Caleb Pike Heritage Park – for upgrades to the building and park to provide full accessibility and safety with the construction of a path, ramp, and wheelchair accessible parking lot

**PROFILES**

**Community in Action:**

**Removing barriers through the Access4All Canada 150 Signature Project**

To celebrate Canada’s 150th birthday and the 30th anniversary of the Rick Hansen Man In Motion World Tour, the Rick Hansen Foundation launched the Access4All Canada 150 Signature Project. The project was designed to inspire and empower youth and community leaders across the country to create a more inclusive and accessible Canada. With funding support from the Government of Canada, the Rick Hansen Foundation granted over $1.5 million to schools and community groups to help
activate 55 large-scale “Barrier Buster” infrastructure improvement projects, removing physical barriers and creating awareness about accessibility across Canada. Projects are showcased on the Foundation’s website at http://www.rickhansen.com/access4all/Projects-Showcase

**Community in Action:**

**Technologies increasing independence and quality of life**

CanAssist at the University of Victoria develops innovative technologies and programs that address the unmet needs of people of all ages who live with a wide range of disabilities. Through its government-funded CanStayHome initiative, CanAssist has worked to develop new technologies designed to help seniors – particularly those with dementia and frailty – stay in their own homes longer, while reducing stress for their caregivers. CanStayHome will also involve the launch of Ability411, a new web-based assistive technology information service for seniors, their families and other care providers. CanAssist received $4.5 million from the Provincial Government to help people with a wide range of physical and cognitive abilities improve their independence and quality of life. Some of this funding will be used for the ongoing CanStayHome initiative. A portion will also be used to provide assistive technologies to agencies in B.C. that support children and youth with special needs.

“It’s great! It’s going to bring me so much independence in being able to go out without having someone come with me.” – Dick Alessio, CanAssist client

_CanAssist client, Dick Alessio, using the Hitch Lift that he received – with CanAssist staff member, Keir Maguire._
Community in Action: All Aboard the SS Sicamous Ship

Guests with mobility challenges can now access the second level of the SS Sicamous Ship in Penticton thanks to the installation of a new elevator. The ship, which once sailed the shores of Lake Okanagan, has been transformed into a museum and heritage site and is often used for weddings and other special events. Partial funding for the completion of this project was provided by the Government of Canada’s Enabling Accessibility Fund. Funding was also received from Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust (SIDIT) and the City of Penticton.

Community in Action: Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives Universal Accessibility Project

Visitors to the Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives can now enjoy a more accessible experience thanks to the Universal Accessibility Project. The museum entrance was opened up to improve the flow of visitors and better accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility devices. In addition, an accessible washroom was added on the main floor along with an indoor lift to access the museum’s second floor. New LED lighting was also installed to improve visual access to the museum collection. Partial funding for the project was provided by the federal Enabling Accessibility Fund.
Community in Action: Age-Friendly Communities Grants

The world’s population is rapidly aging, and B.C. is no exception. By 2031, close to 1.4 million British Columbians across the province will be 65 or older – almost a quarter of the province’s population. It is expected that 35% of these people 65 and older will have a disability.

Many B.C. communities across the province have already taken action to make their communities more age-friendly. These actions range from ensuring the needs of seniors and people with disabilities are taken into consideration in official community plans, to making changes to the physical environment of the community.

Vernon Community Garden age-friendly improvements

More people will be able to get their hands dirty with renovations being made to the West Vernon Community Garden. The Garden is centrally located within walking distance from several assisted living and seniors housing complexes and is one of the community’s largest and most urban community gardens.

Renovations to the garden will include new wheelchair accessible garden beds and the addition of a raised stand pipe for accessible water access for garden watering. It will also be made safer through leveled garden pathways.
Community in Action:

Telkwa Trail Network improvements

Building on its age-friendly community plan, the Village of Telkwa is developing additional plans for accessible trails, designing trails with hand rails, resting areas, level grades and building connections between neighbourhoods, woodland and sports fields.

City of Victoria conducts two pilot projects to improve intersection safety and accessibility

The City of Victoria is taking steps to make roadways safer and more accessible for people with disabilities by implementing two self-funded pilot projects. A number of intersections will retrofitted with truncated domes, or raised tactile surfaces. Truncated domes, inset into the sidewalk at crossings, alert pedestrians who are visually impaired to the transition from sidewalk to street and can help them align their direction with the crosswalk. Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) will also be installed in a number of locations throughout the city. APS provide more information than traditional audible signals which only announce the start of the visual walk signal. Two of the many features of APS are a push-button locator tone to assist individuals to locate the push button, and a vibratactile plate to indicate when the walk signal is activated to those who cannot hear the audible signal. Both pilot projects will be evaluated with a view to establishing new standards to make the City more welcoming and inclusive.
Accessible Housing

Supporting the availability of accessible, adaptable and visit-able housing options across British Columbia

Investing in affordable, accessible housing

Affordable, accessible housing allows people with disabilities to stay in their communities and access a range of support services, including employment training and family support. Recent projects include:

- Nine new units for people with developmental disabilities in Burnaby
- 20 of 71 new units of affordable rental housing at Chorus Apartments in Surrey, including three long-term lease homes for people with developmental disabilities
- 24 new units of affordable rental housing in Keremeos for seniors and people with disabilities
- A 10-unit townhouse complex for seniors and Aboriginal peoples in Vernon, including two wheelchair accessible units and four units that can be converted to support tenants with mobility issues

SAFERhome universal design standards provide buyers real choice

The SAFERhome Universal Design Housing Pilot Project has to date certified approximately 80 homes, located mainly at two sites in Chilliwack and Fort St. John. The pilot incorporates 19-point universal design standards during construction, providing buyers a real housing choice that easily adapts to changing needs without incurring any or much additional cost to retrofit the home.

Partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation to improve accessibility

In February 2017, government provided the Rick Hansen Foundation $5 million to create and pilot a LEED-style certification program that evaluates, measures, and rates the accessibility of commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential buildings and sites across B.C. Once rated, a building or site may be certified at one of two levels, ‘RHF Accessibility Certified’ or ‘RHF Accessibility Certified Gold.’ Organizations can then publicly list their certification level on the RHF Accessibility Certified Registry, operated by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), and purchase a site label or plaque to showcase
that the location is fully accessible. As part of the pilot, the Accessibility Certification will offer approximately 1,100 free ratings of commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential buildings in B.C. until March 2019. Free building ratings can be booked at: http://www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/Accessibility-Certification-Program/Certification

The Rick Hansen Foundation was also provided $4 million to create an accessibility fund to provide grants for public, private, First Nations and other groups to accelerate the adoption of universal and inclusive design principles. Buildings that have been RHF Accessibility Certified rating can apply for funding of up to $20,000 to complete an accessibility improvement project through the BC Access Grants Program until December 2018. Details can be found at http://www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/Grant-Programs/BC-Access-Grants-Program

Simplifying access to the Home Owner Grant

Government updated the Home Owner Grant disability regulations to align with the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act and BC Income Tax Act to reflect modern values and perspectives on people with disabilities. These changes have made it easier to qualify for the Home Owner Grant and increased consistency across provincial programs.

PROFILES

Community in Action:

The Right Fit Pilot Project: Facilitating occupancy of wheelchair accessible housing

People using wheelchairs who need affordable, accessible housing typically wait years before they are able to access suitable accommodation. The Right Fit Pilot Project is focused on shortening the length of time required for a person with a disability to find a suitable housing unit in Metro Vancouver. The findings from the three-year pilot project, which received funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the BC Rehab Foundation in Fall 2016, will inform the development of best practices to support the implementation of The Right Fit provincially. The project is a joint initiative with Disability Alliance BC, the City of Vancouver’s Persons with Disability Advisory Committee, BC Housing, Fraser Health Authority, Vancouver Coastal Health, the Individualized Funding Resource Centre and government.
Community in Action:

New homes for people with disabilities in Surrey

Individuals and families with low- to moderate-incomes and people with disabilities are benefiting from 71 new units of affordable rental housing at Chorus Apartments in Surrey. The building features 20 units, including three long-term lease homes for people who have developmental disabilities, helping them stay in their community and close to family and friends. Residents also have access to a range of support services, including employment training and family support.

Peninsula Estates Housing Society, a sister organization to Semiahmoo House Society, will manage and operate the new housing development. The inclusive nature of the apartments support the Society’s vision that people with disabilities live full and valued lives in their community.

Community in Action:

Fort St. John developer building to SAFERhome standards

Peace Enterprises undertook a $10-million, 40-unit building project using SAFERhome standards to develop Crosstown Apartments in Fort St. John. These standards include lowered light switches and thermostats, elevated electrical outlets, 36-inch wide doors, and 46-inch wide hallways, among other amenities. It’s the second build by the company using the 19-point standards, following on Avalon Villas near Northern Lights College.
Accessible Transportation

Providing accessible transportation options for people with disabilities

Improving accessibility and service on ferries

With the introduction of three Salish class ferries in 2017/18, BC Ferries continues to improve accessibility and service for people with disabilities. Features on the new ferries will include accessible washrooms on vehicle decks, elevator access from vehicle decks to the lounge and sun deck, induction loop hearing system and an increased number of wheelchair accessible spaces in general lounges and food service areas.

BC Ferries also implemented a pilot project at the Tsawwassen terminal for foot passengers requiring extra time to board and disembark the vessels. Passengers requesting assistance boarding or offloading the ferry will be boarded first to give these customers extra time to get a seat. These customers will be assisted off the vessel last, similar to an airline. The company plans to expand this program to other terminals in 2017/18.

Since 2004, all new vessels designed and built for the Inland Ferry System meet the Canadian Transportation Agency’s (CTA) Code of Practice: Ferry Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities. In particular, all passenger areas of new ships are fully accessible by persons with disabilities including viewing galleries, and lounges and washrooms (when available). By 2023, all Inland Ferries will fully comply with the CTA code.

Expanding and reviewing handyDART

handyDART is an accessible, door-to-door transit service for people who have disabilities that prevent them from using conventional fixed-route transit. This service is provided in both Metro Vancouver and across British Columbia and government and communities are working together to expand handyDART service hours. BC Transit partners with local governments outside of Metro Vancouver to provide handyDART service in over 40 communities. In 2017, Victoria, Chilliwack, Merritt and Kamloops are cost-sharing with government to provide expanded service of 8,000 annual service hours, helping people stay connected with their community and family and friends.

In Metro Vancouver, TransLink is adding 85,500 trips in 2017 as part of the Mayors’ Council’s 10-Year Vision. A total of 171,000 trips will be added over the next three years, which represents a 15% increase in service over 2016 levels.
In early 2017, TransLink completed a review of its handyDART policies and service delivery to improve responsiveness to customer concerns, service standards and quality, and the way the service is delivered. A Stakeholder Advisory Committee, comprised of handyDart customers, health and advocacy agencies, and frontline staff informed the development and assessment of handyDART service delivery models and policies. Recommendations from the review were endorsed by the TransLink Board on March 30, 2017, and include:

- Improving reservation convenience
- Reducing wait times and travel times
- Enhancing handyDART taxi service quality and accountability
- Ensuring trips are available when customers need them
- Ensuring handyDART is appropriately funded

Implementation of these recommendations is now underway. The Review and Recommendations to the TransLink Board can be found on the TransLink website at: [http://www.translink.ca/-/media/Documents/about_translink/governance_and_board/board_minutes_and_reports/2017/March/20170330_Public_Board_Meeting_Report.pdf](http://www.translink.ca/-/media/Documents/about_translink/governance_and_board/board_minutes_and_reports/2017/March/20170330_Public_Board_Meeting_Report.pdf)

The Seniors’ Advocate recently surveyed user’s experience with various aspects of handyDART service. The survey included handyDART service provided province-wide by both TransLink and BC Transit. While the project was undertaken by the Seniors’ Advocate, almost 7,500 users of all ages responded. The survey results suggest that while most clients are satisfied with the service when received, there are aspects of the service (e.g. ride availability, wait times, booking experience) that prevent it from meeting all of their transportation needs. A copy of the report is available on the Seniors Advocate website at: [www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/2017/02/Office-of-the-Seniors-Advocate-HandyDartSurveyResults_Feb2017-1.pdf](www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/2017/02/Office-of-the-Seniors-Advocate-HandyDartSurveyResults_Feb2017-1.pdf)

**Improving transit accessibility in communities**

BC Transit is already leading the way with fully accessible bus fleets for wheelchairs and strollers. BC Transit’s SmartBus BC program will provide technology enhancements to transit buses including Automatic Vehicle Locators, which will enable automated stop announcements to be introduced. In addition, many BC Transit systems offer various training programs for people to learn how to use the transit system, and also offer training to teach people how to travel with their mobility device on buses.
The 2016/17 Transit Minor Betterments Program improved transit accessibility in 13 B.C. communities including the Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Metro Vancouver, the Cowichan Valley, the Kootenays, Kelowna, Kamloops, Smithers, and Prince George. Projects included extending and paving bus pullouts, installing accessible concrete pads at bus stops, upgrading sidewalks and access paths, and installing shelters. This annual program, led by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, provides $1 million each year to improve access and increase safety for transit users in communities across B.C.

**Improving accessible taxi services**

There are now a minimum of 454 wheelchair accessible taxis approved to operate throughout B.C representing 16% of taxis in the province. Of these, the majority – 371 wheelchair accessible taxis – operate within Metro Vancouver.

In late 2016, the Passenger Transportation Board introduced a rule requiring that taxi companies that use new soft meters (taxi meters on a tablet or mobile phone) incorporate a “talking meter” function within six months. The talking meter function will make it easier for blind and partially sighted passengers to track their fare throughout the taxi trip.

In 2016, the Passenger Transportation Board standardized taxi licences in the Capital Regional District to require each taxi operator to dispatch wheelchair accessible taxis on a priority basis. As well, taxi operators must ensure the number of wheelchair accessible taxis in operation throughout a full day is at least proportional to the number of conventional taxis in operation. This builds on an initiative implemented in Metro Vancouver in 2015.
Moving ahead on accessible transportation

Planning and designing transportation infrastructure that all British Columbians can access without impediment is a government priority. Actions to date include the upgrade of key rest areas across B.C. to improve accessibility for people with limited mobility, and the development of accessibility guidelines for use in upcoming rest area improvements. The following rest areas received upgrades that include the installation of accessible washroom facilities, paving and pathways, wheelchair accessibility with access improvements, and accessible picnic tables:

- Williams Lake
- Baynes Sound
- Kennedy River
- South Taylor Hill
- Walloper I/C
- Kal Lake Lookout
- Lemon Creek
- Redgrave West

In addition to the above upgrades, construction on a new modern accessible rest area on the Okanagan Connector between Merritt and Peachland began in Spring 2017 with completion expected in late 2017.

As well, DriveBC is providing better access to their information for all users through Interactive Voice Response. The voice recognition system allows people to access DriveBC information hands free via the phone. In 2016, they received over 45,000 calls to the system.

At the Prince George Airport, barrier free access from the long term parking lot to the terminal will be created with the installation of an elevator funded under the B.C. Air Access Program. Funding under this program has also supported accessibility improvements, such as doubling the seating capacity and adding accessible washrooms at the Smithers Regional Airport, and construction of a terminal building at Bella Bella Airport which will provide more seating, more space for passenger traffic flow, accessible washrooms and a more comfortable facility with expanded services.
Accessible bus and transportation services for students

Through a new Student Transportation Fund announced in Summer 2016, students and families throughout B.C. are getting better, more accessible bus and transportation services. School districts receive funding to help parents with transportation costs and services, whether they use the usual yellow bus program or work with local transit operators. Examples of projects that support students with disabilities include:

- Retrofit of a minibus in the Quesnel School District
- An additional bus run in the Powell River School District
- Supports in the Rocky Mountain School District
- A new special needs bus route to decrease travel time by 25% in the Kamloops-Thompson School District
- Modification to the school bus in the Fraser-Cascade School District to increase wheelchair capacity from one to four

Fuel Tax Refund for Persons with Disabilities

Did you know that people with a qualifying disability can request a refund of up to $500 of the provincial Motor Fuel Tax paid in B.C. on fuel used in a vehicle they own or lease? Find out more about the Fuel Tax Refund program and other programs or services you may be eligible for at: http://gov.bc.ca/disabilityservices.

PROFILES

Community in Action:

TransLink pilots fare gate solution

There are conventional transit customers who, prior to the closure of TransLink’s fare gates in 2016, were able to travel the transit system without an attendant. With the fare gates closed, these customers could no longer travel independently. In June 2016, the TransLink Board directed staff to develop and implement a long-term solution for hands-free fare gate access for customers who are unable to tap in/out using a Compass Card.
TransLink is piloting a proximity-enabled radio frequency identification (RFID) card reader system that will provide customers access to the existing Compass Card fare gates. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to test the pilot installation and provide feedback. With testing underway at three pilot stations, TransLink is looking at options to have all stations outfitted with RFID capability by Spring 2018.

**Business Matters:**

**Getting people back in the driver’s seat**

GF Strong has expanded its driver rehabilitation program with a new specially modified minivan, thanks to ICBC funding. With the new van, more patients throughout B.C. now have the opportunity to develop their driving skills. The GF Strong driver rehabilitation program provides assessment, clinic and on-road rehabilitation, and low and high-tech vehicle modification recommendations to drivers who may have physical, cognitive, or visual disabilities. The program also includes a team of occupational therapists, licensed driving instructors and RoadSafetyBC representatives.

*GF Strong specially modified minivan*
Income Support

*Providing income supports, asset limits and earnings exemptions to people with disabilities that recognize their unique circumstances*

Policy changes support greater financial independence

Government is making policy changes that are helping to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Effective Oct. 1, 2017, disability assistance rates increased by an additional $100 per month, meaning a single person with the PWD designation will receive $1,133 per month, and a couple that both have the PWD designation will receive a total of $1,973 per month.

Also effective Oct. 1, 2017, earnings exemptions for people on assistance will increase by $200 a month which will encourage and support more people to work and earn as they are able.

Government will also develop and implement a province-wide poverty reduction strategy with legislated targets and timelines. The strategy will include a basic income pilot to test whether giving people a basic income is an effective way to reduce poverty and improve health, housing and employment.

Supporting families through child benefit exemptions

B.C. has the most comprehensive child benefit exemptions of any province or territory. Since September 2015, the following full exemptions have been introduced for income and disability assistance recipients:

- Child Support
- Canada Pension Plan Disabled Contributor’s Child Benefits
- Canada Pension Plan and WorkSafe BC Orphan’s Benefits
- EI Maternity and Parental Benefits
- Public Guardian and Trustee Payments
Simplifying the application process for people with disabilities

In September 2016, government simplified the PWD application process for people already in comparable federal and provincial programs. Anyone already determined eligible for the following programs can now complete a much simpler PWD application process:

- Community Living BC (CLBC)
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development’s At Home Program
- BC PharmaCare Plan P – Palliative Care
- Canadian Pension Plan – Disability

The new application process requires people already in these comparable programs to complete a brief application form to obtain the PWD designation without requiring they provide additional assessments by medical practitioners. These changes reduce red tape for people with disabilities and their families, and also cut paperwork for doctors and other health-care professionals.

Supporting increased participation through community inclusion, employment and connections

The Supporting Increased Participation (SIP) group, comprised of disability advocates and staff from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, works collaboratively to find policy solutions and strategies to support increased participation for people with disabilities in B.C. The group shares information and data to promote discussion around opportunities to improve services and social programs for people with disabilities. The group has helped bring about policy changes which have a real impact for people receiving disability assistance in B.C. including implementation of annualized earnings exemptions. Members of SIP include the Disability Alliance B.C., Inclusion BC, BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, Social Planning and Research Council, Community Legal Assistance Society, and Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division.
Supporting single parents to overcome barriers to the workforce

The first time Kirstin heard about the Single Parent Employment Initiative was through a link that her sister sent her online. As an unemployed single parent on disability assistance, she knew she might qualify for the program, which provides tuition and other supports. After connecting with her local WorkBC Employment Services Centre and being encouraged by her worker, Kirstin started the health care assistant program and was provided with funding that covered her tuition, pre-requisites and books. Kirstin is now employed as a health-care assistant and is the activities director at an assisted living facility and loves her job.

Annual earnings exemptions give people flexibility

“The reason I like the annual earnings exemption (AEE) is because I don’t have to worry anymore about going over my $800 monthly exemption limit. Two times a year I get paid three times a month and now with the new program I can keep all of the money I earn. The ministry lets me know how much I’ve made so far and how much I have left to earn before I reach my annual limit of $9,600. The AEE program helps me budget, feel more self-sufficient and encourages me to work.” – Roy Mitchell, Building Services Worker, The Cleaning Solution
Employment

Supporting and encouraging meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities in B.C.

Supporting employment with assistive technologies

Since launching in May 2015, the Technology@Work program, run by the Neil Squire Society, has served more than 1,100 people throughout B.C. and educated more than 1,900 employers on how to make their workplaces more accessible. Technology@Work provides streamlined access to assistive technology for people with imminent work or volunteer opportunities or who may be at risk of losing their job due to a work-related barrier. The program has strong partnerships and links with employers, assistive technology vendors, other programs and community organizations that support people with disabilities. More information is available at: [http://www.neilsquire.ca/individual-programs-services/technologywork/](http://www.neilsquire.ca/individual-programs-services/technologywork/).

In 2016/17, Technology@Work received 388 applications and completed 186 agreements to provide assistive technology to individuals with disabilities.

Helping people find sustainable and meaningful employment

The 84 WorkBC Employment Services Centres throughout B.C. provide a flexible range of employment-related supports to eligible job seekers to participate in services, and to obtain and keep a job. As of March 31, 2017, the Employment Program of BC has served over 95,000 clients with disabilities. Of case managed clients with disabilities, 38% have achieved a successful employment outcome or community attachment, such as a volunteer opportunity. To date, the Employment Program of BC investment to support employment services for clients with disabilities totals $231 million.

Increasing employment opportunities through work experience

The Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) program is focused on increasing employment opportunities for unemployed British Columbians. In 2016/17, CEP supported eight active agreements aimed at enhancing services and improved outcomes for individuals with disabilities with a total value of $5,365,629. In addition, over 800 individuals participated in CEP Research and Innovation Projects, and 30 participants gained valuable work experience and training CEP. The Rick Hansen Foundation, in partnership with the Victoria Disability Resource Centre and WorkBC
Employment Services Centres, is using CEP funding to provide specialized education and work experience for 14 people recruited for the role of access assistants. Access assistants will complete about 90 on-site accessibility surveys of medium- and large-sized buildings and community locations in Victoria and the Lower Mainland. The project builds on the success of a pilot project that helped seven people with disabilities gain work experience as accessibility specialists.

**Recognizing inclusive employers and employees**

B.C. celebrated its fourth Disability Employment Month in September 2017. As part of the third Disability Employment Month in 2016, Work BC Employment Services Centres across B.C. held over 30 events to promote and highlight employment services available to people with disabilities and employers. Events included:

- Open Houses at WorkBC Employment Services Centers to ensure people with disabilities have access to information, services and supports needed at their local WorkBC Employment Service Centre
- Job and community resource fairs for people with disabilities
- Meetings with individual employers and employer groups, and recognition of employers who have hired WorkBC clients with disabilities
- Presentations to a variety of community organizations to raise awareness of Disability Employment Month
- Community BBQs to bring the community together in recognition of Disability Employment Month and the contributions of people with disabilities in their communities

*Disability Employment Month Forum and Tea, Richmond*  
*Project Everybody Hiring Fair, Richmond*
Investing in post-secondary initiatives to support students with disabilities

Government continues to fund innovative post-secondary training programs aimed at increasing the success of people with disabilities in trades, technical and high-demand market programs. Highlights from 2016 include:

- College of the Rockies Employment Transitions Training – a modified trades specialty program for students with disabilities that provides work placement opportunities
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University Common Core – a 12-week program designed to provide students with disabilities with knowledge and experience in trades and industries including safety, hand and power tool use, and trades and apprenticeship skills
- Vancouver Community College Access to Automotive Trades and Access to Food Services – two eight-week programs that introduce students who are deaf and hard of hearing to five Red Seal trades: Auto Service Technician, Auto Collision, Auto Refinishing, Cook and Baker

PROFILES

Business Matters:

Presidents Group engages with employers

The Presidents Group, a change-driven network of business leaders who are engaging with employers across B.C. to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, has expanded to include 23 of B.C.’s top business leaders. Presidents Group members are from a range of industries, with small, medium and large businesses represented. All of the members are actively engaging with other employers to share their experiences as inclusive employers and talk about actions and strategies that will get more people with disabilities employed because they know – it’s just good business.

With funding from the Vancouver Foundation, the Presidents Group has hired two Accessibility and Inclusion Consultants to work with the business community to capture the experiences, learnings and best practices of accessible employers and
develop easy-to-use, practical and targeted resources and tools. These resources, available at [www.accessibleemployers.ca](http://www.accessibleemployers.ca), will help businesses – both large and small – to better identify and eliminate barriers in their recruitment and hiring processes and confidently and efficiently build an accessible, inclusive workplace.

Each September, Presidents Group members lead activities supporting Disability Employment Month to celebrate the accomplishments of employees with disabilities in the workplace, and the employers who support their success. By championing initiatives within their own organizations, participating on inclusive employment panels, and driving recognition activities like the illumination of the dome at Telus World of Science and the Canada Place sails in honour of Disability Employment Month, the Presidents Group is helping to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities and creating more accessible, inclusive workplaces that benefit all employees.

**Communities in Action:**

**Cerebral Palsy Association of BC prepares youth for post-secondary and employment opportunities**

Since 2008, the Cerebral Palsy Association of BC (CPABC) has provided 90 bursaries to people with cerebral palsy to pursue post-secondary education through the Tanabe Bursary Program. Bursaries help students complete their programs and begin employment, thus launching the next phase of their life and career.

“I am extremely thankful for the bursary offered through CPABC. The bursary makes it possible to pursue my professional counseling career with less financial strain.” – recipient, Tanabe Bursary

CPABC also offers a three to four month pre-employment program to help people with cerebral palsy develop hard and soft skills and prepare themselves for employment. The program provides small group work opportunities that focus on teamwork, communications, internet fundamentals and adaptation for the work environment. Over 20 youth have graduated from the program since 2015.
CPABC also offers Youth Without Limits Support Groups as an opportunity for learning, sharing experiences and relationship building in a safe and welcoming environment. Since January 2016, over 100 youth with disabilities have gathered to share various commonalities on self-esteem, disability and identity, mental health issues like anxiety and depression, and a sense of community.
Business Matters:

SAP Autism at Work

At SAP, a multinational technology company, they are creating greater value by focusing on people’s unique abilities and providing a work environment that considers the needs and skills of each employee. This innovative approach has led to the creation of the Autism at Work program which has set a goal to hire 650 individuals on the autism spectrum by 2020. In the Vancouver office, there are already 13 Autism at Work program participants and 15 across Canada as of May 2017.

“Having a full time job for me has been a great enabler – because of it, I’ve become more willing to leave my shell and experiment. I’ve grown more acclimatized to social events such as being at noisy restaurants. I’ve even tried dancing – which I was horrible at – but it was fun. Having a job has also warded off one of my biggest worries and concerns for the future. In general now, I just can’t stop smiling, and that’s just in stark contrast of my high school years. I’ve never felt more like myself than I do today.” – Matthew, Autism at Work participant

Government Connections:

Technology@Work helps Lori help others

Lori was born with a genetic eye condition and has been living with deteriorating vision for 40 years. With the assistive technology products provided by the Technology@Work program, delivered by the Neil Squire Society, she is able to continue to help others in her role with the Canadian Council for the Blind. Lori uses multiple platforms including magnification technology software, a screen reader, text-to-speech scanning software and a portable electronic magnifier tablet.

“This program has provided me with not only assistive technology, but portability as well. Guaranteed I could not afford the equipment without the program and would not be a contributing member of society. The equipment helps me, but it also helps me help others.” – Lori, Technology@ Work participant
Government Connections:

Supporting employment through WorkBC Employment Services Centre

“I was out of work after a number of injuries, looking for work that was flexible and still within my field of study/experience but there was a lack of well-paying work. I decided to try the Grand Forks WorkBC Employment Services Centre in hopes they would have better leads to posted employment, access to computers and a knowledge base. Through a couple training courses and in conversation with my case manager, I was able to embark on self-employment/ small business start-up. I am a small business owner with four employees and looking to expand to eight.” – Andrew, small business owner

“I am an older worker who has been out of work since 2010 due to medical issues and on long-term disability. My skills and physical limitations made it difficult to find sustainable employment in the area. The Creston WorkBC Employment Services Centre worked with me to help me retrain as a driving instructor. I attended a Class 5/7 Instructors Training Program and began a new driving instructor business. I now work an average of 30 hours per week and am enjoying my new career. The new business is going well. The support that I received from WorkBC is one of the main factors that helped get my business running and consequently allow me to donate training time to support youth in our community.” – Bill, driving instructor.
Vancouver Airport Authority models inclusive hiring practices

The Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR) is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce representative of the community and customers they serve. When para-rugby national champion Byron Green needed help raising money for a new competition wheelchair for the Rio Olympics, YVR was on board. They matched all proceeds raised through an employee-led fundraising campaign to help Byron purchase his new wheelchair. After competing in Rio, Byron, an engineer, was looking for flexible employment in his field that would allow him to continue his rigorous training schedule. YVR hired Byron as a permanent, part-time Junior Project Engineer and provided him with the flexible schedule he needed.

“It’s awesome to find an employer that could be that flexible, which is not common in engineering.” – Byron Green, Paralympian and YVR employee

YVR also piloted a project encouraging university co-operative education students with disabilities to voluntarily self-disclose in their applications. Steven Woo, an individual living with low vision, was one of the successful applicants for a co-op opportunity with YVR’s Marketing and Communications Department. Along with his assistance dog, Horatio, Steven spent four summer months as a Community Ambassador on the YVR Flight Crew. Upon graduation from Langara College, Steven joined YVR as a permanent, full-time Communications Assistant and now leads YVR’s Explorer Tour program.

“Steven is a key member of our Community Relations team and brings his own experience and insight that helps us to grow our programs to ensure we meet the needs of our broader community. He has helped us evaluate our own internal systems and processes which help our organization grow its mandate to be accessible – we are all learning together.” – Jenny Duncan, YVR manager

“The organization is very open to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. It has made me feel comfortable being here and speaking openly about the accommodations I need to do my job.” – Steven Woo, YVR employee
Vancity continues as a leader in inclusive hiring practices

Vancity continues to explore opportunities to promote inclusive hiring practices. From January to September 2016, 22 Vancity branches worked with local disability employment community partners to hire neurodiverse individuals into permanent part-time roles. Vancity also partnered with the Vancouver School Board to host four students with diverseabilities in a three-month work placement at Vancity head office.

In June 2016, Vancity was recognized for its work as a champion for inclusive hiring at the Open Door Group’s UnTapped Awards Gala and Dinner. Vancity received the Diverse and Inclusive Culture Champion (large business) honour for their innovative Workplace Inclusion (WIN) employment program for people with diverse-abilities. In October 2016, they were also recognized by the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion at their BEST Employment Celebration where they received the Champion of Diversity employer honour for the WIN program and for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for a BEST job seeker, Hans Ming Hun, who is now a proud Vancity employee.

“Hans is a positive presence in our branch. It’s been rewarding to see him open up and watch his list of duties grow. One of the most helpful tasks that Hans takes care of is our AML Sunflowers, which is a time-intensive data-entry task and so important from a compliance perspective. Since Hans has taken this duty over, I haven’t received ONE late or reminder email!"
Healing Hands Landscaping finds the perfect candidate

Suzanne Kenchington, owner of Healing Hands Landscaping, providing design, installation and maintenance services in Burnaby, has worked hard to develop a diverse and hard-working team. With the assistance of Ready, Willing and Able, which supports inclusive employment, vocational education and training for people with disabilities, Kenchington hired Trevor as a labourer. Trevor’s tasks include clearing areas, leaf clean up and pruning. Trevor has not only enhanced the company environment, his positive and professional attitude has not gone unnoticed.

“Trevor is loyal, dedicated to his job and has brought a fresh new perspective to our crew. [His] fabulous personality and strong work ethic are qualities that we look for in all of our employees. He’s a great communicator and is always looking to do more where he can.” – Suzanne Kenchington, Healing Hands Landscaping

According to a recent survey conducted by the Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship at the University of British Columbia, employers who hire through Ready, Willing and Able rate employees who have an intellectual disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder as well as or better than the average employee in getting along with coworkers and contributing to positive workplace morale and spirit. Ready, Willing and Able was highlighted at this year’s Zero Project Conference in Vienna, which focuses on the rights of people with disabilities globally and provides a platform for innovative solutions that assist its goal of creating a world without barriers. The conference, attended by over 70 countries, recognized Ready, Willing and Able as one of the innovative approaches happening around the world to support employment, decent work and meaningful vocational education and training of persons with disabilities.

As of June 30, 2017, Ready, Willing and Able, along with 68 provincial service agencies, has facilitated 241 jobs in B.C., contributing to over 60 local labour force employers. Ready, Willing and Able is a national employment initiative delivered in B.C. by Inclusion BC and the Pacific Autism Family Network.
Financial Security

Helping people with disabilities become more financially independent through initiatives such as the Registered Disability Savings Plan

Raising awareness of the RDSP through partnerships

The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Action Group continues to work hard to increase access and uptake of the Federal RDSP program. Over 33% of individuals in B.C. between the ages of 0 and 49 who are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) now have an RDSP, making B.C. the province with the highest per capita intake in the country.

Access RDSP, an RDSP Action Group member partnership between Plan Institute, Disability Alliance BC (DABC), and BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) with support from the Vancouver Foundation, is taking concrete actions to help people who are eligible, get an RDSP. They offer one-on-one help with the RDSP and DTC, offer free RDSP information sessions, operate a disability planning hotline, provide Indigenous navigation supports, and distribute the Endowment 150 grant to jump-start RDSP savings.

Since launching the program in September 2016, BCANDS has made 1,882 calls and are currently helping 461 Indigenous clients in completing their DTC and RDSP requirements. DABC has made 2,000 phone calls and helped 312 clients. Plan Institute has provided one-on-one support to 1,372 individuals and distributed 573 Endowment 150 grants. Together, the partners have reached 1,292 people through 51 RDSP information sessions and have made 215 partnership referrals to directly connect people with the supports and resources they need to open an RDSP. 85% of people supported through Access RDSP have either successfully opened an RDSP or are actively engaged in the process.
Celebrating RDSP Awareness Month

B.C. has proclaimed October 2017 as the fourth RDSP Awareness Month to raise awareness among people with disabilities, and their families and friends about the benefits of RDSPs as a tool to save for the future. In 2016, the RDSP Awareness Month celebration kicked off with a wheelchair rugby game with national and provincial players, organized with help from the BC Wheelchair Sports Association. Team Canada para rugby player Byron Green, as well as RDSP holder Julia Ansbacher, also shared with the crowd how they are using their RDSPs to help them save for the future.

“My dream is to change the world and help people less fortunate than me. Since I am saving money in my RDSP I know I am on the right path so that all of these things can happen.” – Julia Ansbacher, RDSP holder

Wheelchair rugby demonstration, RDSP Awareness Month

Julia Ansbacher, RDSP holder
RDSP Guide now more accessible

In 2016, the National Network for Equitable Library Service re-produced B.C.’s guide “How to Start and Manage a Registered Disability Savings Plan in British Columbia” in accessible e-text and DAISY formats, as well as hosted American Sign Language (ASL) videos of the guide on their website. View these formats online at: http://nnels.ca/items/how-start-and-manage-registered-disability-savings-plan-british-columbia

B.C.’s Guide: How to Start and Manage a Registered Disability Savings Plan in British Columbia, now available in accessible e-text, DAISY format and American Sign Language

Improving access to the Disability Tax Credit with new certification options

A new measure brought forward by the federal government adds nurse practitioners to the list of medical practitioners that can certify the impacts of impairments for Disability Tax Credit (DTC) applicants. The DTC is a federal income tax credit and is required to open an RDSP. The addition of nurse practitioners means that a medical doctor is no longer required for DTC certification. For many rural and remote British Columbians, this makes the DTC process much more accessible as nurse practitioners are their first and most frequent point of contact with the health care system.

Tax filing initiatives make dollars and sense

Tax Assistance and Information for People with Disabilities (Tax AID DABC) is a program which assists people in B.C. receiving disability assistance to get caught up on income tax filing from previous years. Since launching in 2015, Tax AID DABC has helped 539 people file 1,591 years of taxes which will result in nearly $1.2 million in additional money and benefits for those individuals. By filing, people will also enjoy greater access to other programs which require up-to-date income tax filing, including RDSP grants and bonds, subsidized housing programs, and premium assistance.
PROFILES

Community in Action:

Garry receives support through Access RDSP

Forty-nine year old Garry contacted the Disability Alliance BC in November 2016 about opening an RDSP. Due to his age, he needed to open an RDSP by December 31, 2016 to activate government grants and bonds. He was given Disability Tax Credit support then immediately referred to Plan Institute for RDSP support. Two advisors started working with Garry within an hour of referral to help him open his RDSP, including providing a personalized letter to help him fulfil the requirements. Garry opened his RDSP on December 12, 2016, and received $9,000 in government grants and bonds! He was then referred back to Disability Alliance BC, where he was supported in filing taxes that would benefit his RDSP. Plan Institute then followed up to help him with his Endowment 150 application.

Community in Action:

TaxAID Disability Alliance BC success stories

Names have been changed for confidentiality purposes.

Baxter lives in a supported care facility in Vancouver and had not filed taxes for many years. He worked with his social worker and a Tax AID advocate to gather documentation that had previously been lost or stolen during periods of homelessness. Tax AID DABC helped Baxter file 10 years of tax returns. He received thousands of dollars in GST/HST credits, B.C. Sales Tax credits, and carbon tax credits.

Merlin is a father of two young children. He has difficulty with paperwork because of his disabilities and got help from a Tax AID advocate to get caught up on his taxes. Merlin was thrilled to use his tax benefits to pay for extra-curricular activities for his children.

Jessa came to Tax AID DABC for help with several years of taxes. She used part of the tax benefits she got to pay tuition for a continuing education course in landscaping. She is now completing her final semester and hopes her landscaping diploma will give her the tools to pursue a more stable financial future.
Inclusive Communities

Building and fostering inclusive, welcoming communities throughout B.C.

Making Captain Underpants more accessible

Pemberton Public Library volunteers deserve an award for their work recording – complete with funny voices and sound effects – a Captain Underpants book for kids with print disabilities. This book is now part of the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) collection. NNELS works with domestic and international partners, libraries, readers, and Canadian publishers to establish an online library of books and other resources in DAISY, MP3 audio, and e-text formats for individuals with print disabilities. NNELS is funded and supported by provincial and territorial governments. Captain Underpants is just one of many titles NNELS added to their collection of books for young readers in 2016. Like all NNELS titles, they can be read using a wide variety of software tools and devices, including free and open-source technology.

Improving access and inclusion for Indigenous people

To bring awareness to the unique contributions of Indigenous people with disabilities, B.C. has proclaimed November as Aboriginal (now Indigenous) Disability Awareness Month since 2015. This came about through the efforts of the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) and support through proclamations from the First Nations Summit and the Métis Nation BC.

BCANDS continues to work with Indigenous communities across Canada to expand this recognition, and the Province of Saskatchewan, the Assembly of First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations came on board by proclaiming Indigenous Disability Awareness Month in 2016.

Gender-Based Violence Campaign

In 2016, the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV) participated in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Awareness Campaign which launched on November 25 – the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women – and ended on December 10 – Human Rights Day. The PODV awareness campaign included a day dedicated to people with disabilities featuring blogs on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3), and on creating inclusive services for women with disabilities who are experiencing violence.
Relaxed performance makes theatre more accessible

An emerging artistic format called “relaxed performances” makes theatre more accessible for people who benefit from a more casual performance environment. These performances feature a laid-back approach to noise and movement from the audience. The intensity of light and sound cues are reduced and the house lights remain on low throughout the show so audience members can leave and re-enter as needed. Additional staff may be on hand to assist with seating and access, and space is available for those who might need a bit of quiet time. Relaxed performances offer a way to reach new audiences and create a more dynamic theatrical experience for everyone.

A relaxed performance by Scottish entertainer Jess Thom at the 2017 PuSh Festival in Vancouver celebrated relaxed performances from both the performer and the audience perspectives. Jess has Tourette syndrome, and her “Backstage in Biscuit Land” show was unpredictable, fun and relaxed – and the audience was encouraged to move around and make noise. In the past year, relaxed performances have also been put on by Carousel Theatre for Young People and Bard on the Beach. The PuSh Festival and Bard on the Beach also offer VocalEye described performances for those with low vision and blindness.

Helping people with disabilities find their voice

Communication Assistance for Youth and Adults (CAYA) offers a wide range of technology for those who need assistive communications technology due to disabilities that affect their speech, including cerebral palsy, stroke, Parkinson’s disease and Lou Gehrig’s disease (ALS). These technologies give people with communication disabilities the opportunity to participate in daily communication like talking on the phone, ordering food in restaurants and speaking with their friends and family. Since 2005, the program has helped more than 2,300 British Columbians participate more fully in daily life, and an additional $4 million of funding from government is helping them continue to improve technology and services for adults with communication disabilities.
Government Connections:

Making information more accessible

The Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services team worked with Deaf children and youth to translate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into American Sign Language. The video is available online through the Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing website and is posted on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HX-2_yYIAPA

Community in Action:

Summer camp provides a world of understanding

At the Deaf Youth Today summer program, operated by the Family Network for Deaf Children, Deaf kids get to play, learn and socialize with other Deaf and hard of hearing children while learning leadership and life skills. Also, 95% of the staff is Deaf, making the Family Network for Deaf Children the largest summer employer of Deaf young adults in B.C.

Last summer, Deaf Youth Today organized a visual media camp, leveraging the media skills that staff had developed during their years at Gallaudet University, the only university in the world for Deaf and hard of hearing students. The highlight project was #WHYISIGN, an ASL video reflecting many of the core values Deaf Youth Today stands behind, and the reason staff are so passionate about what they do. View the video, as well as more information on the summer program, at: http://www.fndc.ca

“Deaf Youth Today taught me who I am as a Deaf person and to understand myself as I began learning how to be a leader from the role models that surrounded me.” – AM

“This program has taught me so much including the development of my identity, confidence, language, social skills, and Deaf culture.” – BS
Business Matters:

3Spheres™ Collaborative Service Robotics

A new partnership between engineers and computer scientists at JDQ Systems Inc, Developmental Disabilities Association (DDA), University of BC (UBC), Simon Fraser University, and BC Institute of Technology has been formed to develop a prototype of a 3Spheres™ Collaborative Service Robot by June 2018. The robot is intended to help people with developmental disabilities reach their personal goals and achieve greater independence. The focus of the research includes autonomous navigation, human and object recognition, human-robot social interaction and “robot as a concierge” appointment and reminder management. More info and videos at: http://www.jdq.com/3spheres/

“Collaboration with JDQ builds upon our extensive experience in mapping and navigation, which evolved into research into intelligent wheelchairs and collaborative robotics. The collaboration with DDA to support people with developmental disabilities offers an opportunity to work with those deeply familiar with their needs, and a chance to develop and test our ideas with the intended users.” – Jim Little, Computer Science Professor at UBC

“As Project Manager, I look forward to the acceleration that university engagement will trigger. The creation of a high quality, collaborative service robot is a long-term effort that requires an innovative combination of research expertise and mature entrepreneurship.” – Jon Morris, President of JDQ Systems

Community in Action:

BCANDS celebrates its 25th anniversary

Over the past 25 years, the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) has been recognized for their efforts and achievements in supporting Aboriginal people with disabilities in B.C. In August 2016, BCANDS received the 2016 Canadian Medical Association’s National Excellence in Health Promotion Award for its work within the Indigenous disability sector. In April 2017, BCANDS served as a member of Canada’s Civil Society’s delegation in Geneva as they presented to the United Nations on Kelsey and Evelyn, Indigenous Navigators, BCANDS
the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As the only organization of their kind in Canada, BCANDS provides a variety of disability and health-related services to 200 First Nation communities in B.C. In addition to their national leadership of Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, BCANDS is also a partner of Access RDSP, providing RDSP and DTC navigation support to Indigenous people living in B.C.

**Community in Action:**

**Accessible books improve quality of life**

“One of our patrons who registered for the NNELS service in 2015 was an elderly gentleman who had been a voracious reader throughout his life but had recently lost his sight. He couldn’t come into the library himself, so our staff taught his wife how to use NNELS and fix him up with the service at home. With little else to do, he “read” several books a week through the NNELS service as well as our traditional CD audiobook collection. His wife told us that this service significantly improved his quality of life and thanked us for the materials that kept him content and busy throughout the day.”

Mackenzie Public Library Assistant Librarian Jenny LeBlanc and Library Director Anna Babluck holding a DAISY player in front of a mosaic of The World’s Largest Tree Crusher. Photo: Alice Pek
Community in Action: 

Art gallery supports creativity

Artrageous Splash is a unique class for adults with developmental disabilities available through the Ladysmith Waterfront Art Gallery that supports personal growth and community inclusion. Participants paint murals and furniture, and they can sell their creations as part of an exhibit every April. All sales revenues are kept by the artist. The gallery’s goal is to inspire each participant to explore new ideas and put those ideas into action.

“The social inclusion and sense of pride felt by each student when they complete a project in our class is evident by the smiles on each of their faces when they walk out our door,” said Gail Ralphs, class instructor and vice-president of the Arts Council of Ladysmith & District.

Community in Action: 

PotteryWorks Studio celebrates diversabilities

PotteryWorks Studio in New Westminster is an artistic haven full of support, opportunities and achievement for people with developmental disabilities. The studio is committed to bringing out the unique artistic skills and diverse abilities of each individual artist. The studio’s newly revamped location provides artists with the opportunity to display and sell their creations, demonstrate their work and show off their individual styles.

“It means a lot for these individual artists to be able to show people their skills and have people purchase their work. It really gives them a boost of confidence and self-esteem, which is exactly what many of our artists need to grow,” said Deidre Blackmore, art facilitator at PotteryWorks.
Community in Action:  
Rugged wheelchairs to open White Rock waterfront for those with disabilities

Everyone should be able to access B.C.’s wonderful coastline and beaches. Thanks to the hard work of Self-Advocates of Semiahmoo, a dedicated group of adults with developmental disabilities formed by the Semiahmoo House Society, and generous public donations, White Rock’s beach is now more accessible for people with mobility issues. The chair, which has larger wheels which don’t sink into the sand, is publicly available at Feral Boardsports in East Beach with a small cost for use, allowing people with mobility challenges to rent the chair and experience the sand and shores, sometimes for the first time.

Community in Action:
Promoting inclusion and building community interactions

Kyle’s Kitchen, one of the Community Integration Service Society’s programs in Port Coquitlam, is providing people with developmental disabilities skills in food preparation for future employment opportunities. The program provides employment skills and training for participants to live more independently, with past participants currently working at Starbucks, McDonalds, Boston Pizza, Avon, and more.
Emergency Preparedness

Incorporating the needs of people with disabilities into emergency planning and meeting those needs during an emergency response

Addressing preparedness needs with planning tools and resources

Government continues to take steps to meet the recommendations of the March 2015 Earthquake Consultation Report and is working collaboratively to address the unique preparedness needs of vulnerable British Columbians. In consultation with Disability Alliance BC (DABC), government developed a comprehensive emergency planning guide for people with disabilities. It makes recommendations on personal emergency planning using the five-stage functional needs framework: Communication, Medical, Independence, Supervision and Transportation.

Government also invested $150,000 for DABC to work with local emergency programs throughout B.C. and make recommendations on how to integrate the functional needs framework into their planning and response, including reviewing response, communications and evacuation plans, as well as reception centre facilities, public education materials and annual exercises. This will help toward meeting the collective goal to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities in all communities’ emergency planning in B.C. by 2024.

PROFILES

Emergency Preparedness:

An emergency plan for every community

Since July 2016, Disability Alliance BC (DABC) has trained 266 people in 14 communities in B.C. This includes five training sessions that were delivered in Spring 2017 in the Sea-to-Sky region, the Interior, and the North.

“DABC is responsive to each community’s priorities and helps them identify key areas they want to focus and build on to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are included in their emergency response plans,” says Karen Martin, Project Coordinator. “It is inspiring to see, in each community we are working with, how enthusiastic emergency program staff and volunteers are to ensure people with disabilities are integrated across the different components of their programs.”
Improved accessibility ensures safer exit

Following a building condition and barrier free assessment, accessibility updates have been made at Government House, the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor of B.C., to accommodate the needs of people with mobility challenges in the event of an emergency. A ramp from the ground floor to the first level was installed to ensure accessibility and safe exit. Other accessibility improvements include the design and renovation of barrier free washrooms on the main floor, completed as part of B.C.’s Barrier Free Accessibility Program.

**Ramp installed at Government House, Victoria**
Consumer Experience

Creating a welcoming, accessible B.C. for consumers and travellers with disabilities:

- Providing goods and services to residents with disabilities
- Providing goods and services to people with disabilities who travel to B.C.

Students envision more accessible tourism

For over 20 years, the BC Tourism Industry Conference has been providing a forum for tourism businesses and stakeholders from across B.C. to come together and learn from experts and each other about the key issues, challenges and best practices in the industry. The February 2017 conference featured an accessibility competition hosted by go2HR in partnership with Destination BC, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Tourism Industry Partners, and Whistler Blackcomb. Aspiring student tourism professionals developed and presented realistic business scenarios. Finalists included:

- Okanagan College, who presented a new activity-based tourism business or service that supports the development of the Thompson Okanagan Rail Trails as an accessible tourist destination
- BC Institute of Technology, presenting an accessible, activity-based business idea supporting the development of the Fraser Valley as an agri-tourism destination
- Royal Roads University, with a business idea that supports the development of accessible agri-tourism on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands
Supporting visitor centre improvement projects

In 2016, B.C.’s 114 Visitor Centres served more than 2.9 million visitors at their physical location and around their community. In both 2016 and 2017, Destination BC provided $300,000 through its Visitor Services Innovation Fund to assist the Community Visitor Centres throughout B.C. in meeting the evolving expectations of the people travelling and those requiring accessibility assistance. Highlights of accessible projects completed with funding from the 2016 Innovation Fund include the production of 3D maps at Tumbler Ridge Visitor Centre that enhance the ability to bring the terrain of Tumbler Ridge to life, including the UNESCO Global Geopark. People who are blind or have low vision can learn and understand the landscape of the area through touch. Accessibility improvements were also completed at the Thompson Okanagan Connector Visitor Centre, where the main entry doors at the visitor centre were replaced, allowing for automated push button entry. As well, accessibility updates were made to the washrooms including doorways, accessible toilets, auto-sensing taps, and height-adjusted countertops.

Improving park accessibility

The BC Parks Accessibility Advisory Committee, created in 2015, provides advice and feedback to make BC Parks more welcoming and enjoyable for visitors with disabilities. It helps BC Parks evaluate accessibility efforts and draws upon the diverse expertise and experiences of members from disability organizations and government to improve accessibility within the park system. Since June 2016, the Committee has supported BC Parks on their work with SCI BC’s Access North Initiative as well as their Access Audit Tool, which will provide BC Parks greater capacity to spot opportunities for improvement in park accessibility. The Committee and SPARC BC worked with BC Parks on a survey that was sent to users of disability parking placards, to get their thoughts on barriers to participation, communications and accessible park facilities.

BC Parks is also moving ahead with a three year Accessibility Initiative which will assess current facility conditions related to accessibility and developing a plan to make sure renovated and new frontcountry facilities are accessible to attract new visitors to BC Parks. As part of this initiative, BC Parks will be developing accessibility standards based on Universal Design principles specific to the outdoor built environment.

People with disabilities and their camping party can camp for free in BC Parks if they receive Persons with Disabilities benefits from the BC government, have a child registered through the At Home Program, or live on reserve and receive disability
assistance under the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Income Assistance Program. In 2016/17, over 20,000 eligible park visitors with disabilities and their families camped for free in BC Parks’ frontcountry campsites.

Supporting accessible tourism

Resort communities face unique challenges as seasonally dependent economies. New projects help build and diversify what they have to offer tourists. Examples of recent accessibility-related projects include Tofino’s MacKenzie Beach Access, where a beach access ramp, parking area and accessible washroom and change room were completed in 2016. Osoyoos has been upgrading trails as part of their Trail Development and Connectivity Project, paving two kilometres of trail and a gravel parking lot and constructing a ramp to make the trail accessible at its mid-point. Additional lighting and paving is expected in 2017.

A full list of other Resort Municipality Initiative accessibility related projects can be found in Appendix D.

B.C. strives to be an inclusive travel destination to people of all abilities. The Hello BC website – [hellobc.com](http://hellobc.com) – has comprehensive accessibility information, including transportation information, accessibility ratings for many accommodations, and accessible attractions and tourism businesses. Tourists can experience B.C.’s famous scenery with accessible hiking, kayaking, sailing or gliding trips, visit Canada’s first wheelchair accessible cave theatre, or rent a TrailRider for some self-paced outdoor exploration. Winter sports are well represented in B.C., with many ski hills offering adaptive ski and snowboard programs. The website was also designed with accessibility in mind – its responsive format can be viewed on mobile devices and the site has been audited to ensure alternative text for images, page titles and meta-descriptions are all accurate and in place.
ICBC creates an inclusive and diverse workplace

ICBC is actively working to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace for both employees and customers. They have built partnerships with The Open Door Group and BC Partners in Workforce Innovation to increase the number of people with disabilities employed at ICBC, and take advantage of their expertise to identify potential barriers to the attraction and recruitment of people with diverse-abilities. ICBC continues to make accessibility a priority at its offices throughout B.C., making changes to parking lot stalls, sidewalks, door widths, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, and reception workstations. In 2015, the Rick Hansen Foundation toured the Lansdowne Driver Licensing Office, bringing a heightened sense of pride and responsibility for ICBC to accommodate its customers with accessibility issues. ICBC was praised for the projects already implemented, and was encouraged to place even more focus on items like colour and sightlines, camera placements, audible alerts to customers, and washroom enhancements. ICBC now ensures that all facilities are constructed and designed to the standards of the Rick Hansen Foundation.

Business Matters:

Bank of Montreal celebrates employee diversity

Bank of Montreal (BMO) is committed to celebrating diversity and creating an environment where everyone can excel. Two employees who are distinguishing themselves for their excellent customer service skills are William Ko and Hollie Haggie. William is a tenured BMO employee of 23 years at the University Market Place Branch in Vancouver. William is a pro at connecting with his customers, leveraging his warm smile, positive body language and his assistive technology seamlessly. He frequently receives positive feedback from his customers and has a strong track record of performance. William uses technology such as the
in-branch iPads to proactively offer solutions to meet his customers’ banking needs.

Hollie’s reputation for providing exceptional service at a competing institution caught BMO’s attention. Despite her growing success as a customer service representative at her previous place of employment, Hollie faced barriers in her workplace. She has a hearing impairment and wasn’t able to communicate using standard telephones which created a dependence on others. BMO provided Hollie with the accommodations and technology she needed to enable her to be independent and successful in her role.

Business Matters:

Accessibility upgrades at the Vancouver Convention Centre

In 2016/17, the Vancouver Convention Centre, which hosts 550+ events and receives hundreds of thousands of visitors per year, added 16 inclusive restrooms for guests, previously used as family rooms. These private spaces include an infant changing station and are wheelchair accessible. These new washrooms are in addition to having accessible stalls and amenities in restrooms throughout the facility.

Business Matters:

Accessibility enhancements at BC Place

Guests attending events at BC Place will benefit from several new accessibility features. The new seating configuration allows guests with mobility challenges to access virtually any vantage point in the seating area, with reserved accessible platforms integrated into the stadium seating throughout the spectator bowl – from the halfway line, to the end zones, to the Club Lounges. BC Place has also made modifications to their dedicated accessible entrance and enhanced their guest transport carts to ensure any guest requiring assistance can now be transported directly from their vehicle to their seating location, without barriers. Dedicated storage areas have also been added for guests to store their wheelchair or mobility devices while they enjoy an event.
Community in Action:

Accessibility at Barkerville Historic Site

Barkerville, founded in 1862, is the largest heritage site in western North America. Approximately 90% of the site is accessible via ramps, and includes two wheelchair accessible trails: a two-kilometre trail from the town to Lowhee campground, and the 750-metre Barkerville Cemetery Trail, which provides unique views and includes five rest stops along the route and an informational kiosk. There are three campsites at Barkerville. Lowhee campground is located along Highway 26, two kilometres east of Barkerville and contains 87 wheelchair accessible sites. Forest Rose campground is located three kilometres from Barkerville on Bowron Lake Rd. with 54 wheelchair accessible campsites, a group picnic shelter, horse paddock rentals, coin-operated showers and flush toilets. Government Hill campground has 21 wheelchair accessible campsite tables.
Community in Action:

Improving access and inclusion in Northern BC

Through Spinal Cord Injury BC’s (SCI BC) Access North initiative, a number of projects are improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities in Northern B.C. A major focus of the initiative has been to catalogue the accessibility of the region’s outdoor recreation spaces. To date, the accessibility of over 440 Regional Parks, Forestry Recreation Sites, BC Parks, and other tourism sites has been assessed and catalogued in a database that will be made available to the public through a new AccessibleBC.ca website in September. Further, Access North Days highlight exceptional examples of accessible outdoor spaces in communities throughout Northern B.C. and encourage seniors, residents, tourists, people with disabilities and the general public to come out and enjoy these areas. SCI BC’s Access North staff is also working with community groups to improve passenger rail accessibility and expand and improve upon the three accessible train stations, located in Valemont, Prince George and Prince Rupert, to provide a universally accessible travel platform system.
Appendix A: Community and Employer Partnerships in support of accessibility

Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) have eight active agreements with a total value of $5,365,629 aimed at enhancing services and improved outcomes for individuals with disabilities. For more information on CEP visit: http://www.workbc.ca/CEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Approved Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities Accessibility to Technical Occupations – Labour Market Partnership Project</td>
<td>Between September 12, 2016 and January 20, 2017, the Applied Science Technologists &amp; Technicians of BC (ASTTBC) engaged the services of a consultant to conduct research by performing employer, industry and persons with disabilities focus group consultations to explore and identify current and future labour market trends, potential skills or training gaps, barriers to employment for persons with disabilities and potential pathways to employment for persons with disabilities in the lower mainland applied science or engineering technology and technical specialists sector. The project explored and identified employers committed to supporting the professional integration of persons with disabilities. ASTTBC will create a strategy with recommendations including, but not limited to, future training needs as well as longer-term integration and employment strategies for industry employers and persons with disabilities.</td>
<td>$40,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Approved Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCI BC Access North – Job Creation Partnership Project</td>
<td>Between May 16, 2016 and March 31, 2017 this project provided work experience for 16 participants in the Regional Districts of Northern Rocky, Peace River, Fraser Fort George, Bulkley Nechako, Kitimat Stikine, Cariboo, Skeena Queen Charlotte, and Central Coast. Participants received work experience and skill enhancement in assessment of outdoor recreational spaces, universal design, office administration, event planning and development and community consultation, which will increase their employability. A minimum of 150 outdoor recreational spaces in Northern B.C. were assessed using a project developed accessibility checklist, rating system, virtual tours and videos. The project will facilitate Access North Days in eight Northern B.C. communities. Five participants gained further marketable skills while assisting in the development of the Centralized Park Database by inputting data from a minimum of 300 sites, prepared information to be posted to the web-site, and compiled reports.</td>
<td>$199,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Recovery after First-Episode Psychosis: A Critical Period – Research and Innovation Project</td>
<td>Between March 1, 2015 and February 28, 2018, the Fraser Health Authority will use the Individual Placement Support model of treatment and assess the incremental effectiveness of this model when treating unemployed Early Psychosis Intervention clients. The intent is to enhance understanding of interventions related to employment success in a representative sample of clients with early psychosis.</td>
<td>$561,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Approved Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Partners Workforce Innovation Pilot Project – Research and Innovation Project</td>
<td>Between March 16, 2015 and March 16, 2018, the BC Centre for Employment Excellence (a division of Social Research and Demonstration Corporation) will carry out a pilot project to establish a centralized coordinator body within participating employer sectors that would facilitate the hiring of people with disabilities, from across all spectrums of ability and who are referred and supported by local disability-serving agencies and employment-ready agencies. The project will determine whether such a coordinated, demand-side focused approach is more effective at meeting the needs of employers and job seekers with disabilities.</td>
<td>$637,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Access BC – Job Creation Partnership Project</td>
<td>Between August 1, 2016 and July 29, 2017, this project provided work experience in the role of Access Assistant for up to 14 eligible participants; from communities of the Lower Mainland and the Victoria area; gaining skills in the professional field of accessibility. Participants gained skills through training, field experience and analytical user testing of accessibility evaluation tools and materials to understand and apply inclusive/universal design principles and practices of evaluation including data capture relating to accessibility surveys of community infrastructures, building, parks and venues. Participants built community relationships to help raise awareness of positive inclusive/universal design to increase accessibility and will contribute to improving participation in the labour market for people with disabilities in British Columbia.</td>
<td>$676,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Approved Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Income Information for Disabilities Assistance Recipients – Research and Innovation Project</td>
<td>Between February 1, 2016 and January 31, 2019, the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation will carry out a pilot project to develop an income calculator website for Persons with Disabilities receiving disability assistance. The calculator, enhancements to information supports and training of case managers will improve access to accurate information for Persons with Disabilities receiving disability assistance, including providing them with income estimations for specific job opportunities and a personal account to track earning exemption totals and see the effect of earnings on their disability assistance.</td>
<td>$696,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Mentorship Support Project – Research and Innovation Project</td>
<td>Between September 1, 2015 and August 31, 2018, ConnecTra will carry out a Employment Mentorship Support Project. Through Innovative Research and Case Study, this project will focus on determining quantitatively and qualitatively whether the Employment Mentorship Support method constitutes an effective approach to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities in B.C.</td>
<td>$892,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking Skills at Work – Research and Innovation Project</td>
<td>During the period February 1, 2017 and January 31, 2020, this project will test an approach that uses Cognitive Remediation Therapy (CRT) in addition to the existing Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) services to individuals with severe mental illness. The primary purpose of the study is to test whether CRT, in conjunction with the current IPS program, will improve employment outcomes (competencies, frequency of work and change in earnings) for people with severe mental illness.</td>
<td>$1,661,004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Age-Friendly Communities Grants

The Age-Friendly Communities Grant program is a partnership between government and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). Each successful local government receives up to $20,000 from UBCM to help undertake a variety of activities – from developing and implementing policies and plans and/or developing projects that enable seniors to age in place and facilitate the creation of age-friendly communities.

More information about Age-Friendly BC can be found at: http://www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly.

The following communities have received 2017 Age-Friendly Communities Grants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Application Description</th>
<th>Approved Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village of Burns Lake</td>
<td>A housing study is being planned for the Lakes District, which includes the Village of Burns Lake, six First Nations bands and six unincorporated communities. Within this area, there are 8,000 residents, 20% of whom are 55 and older – a percentage that is predicted to increase. This project will enhance the Village of Burns Lake’s efforts to retain current and emerging seniors in the community while improving their quality of life.</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache Creek</td>
<td>An age-friendly action plan will be developed to identify specific mental, physical and social barriers in the existing community infrastructure. The goal is to achieve an understanding of how age-friendly Cache Creek is. The plan will also determine future actions to effectively respond to an aging population.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Regional District</td>
<td>This community mapping project will engage multicultural older adults in developing an online map as a tool for service providers, caregivers and municipal/regional planners. The resource will help seniors navigate regional services and resources while increasing their comfort level with the Internet and computers.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Application Description</td>
<td>Approved Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowichan Valley Regional District (Mill Bay)</td>
<td>Working with Island Health, the Cowichan Valley Regional District will do an age-friendly assessment to analyze the needs of Mill Bay seniors and develop an action plan to address those needs.</td>
<td>$19,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creston</td>
<td>This project is designed to provide dementia support services for the town’s residents through the Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors, which provides an opportunity for seniors to participate in community activities as well as physical and educational activities. Staff and volunteers will receive training to provide dementia support, develop social networks for seniors and caregivers, and help older adults cope with the challenges of aging and memory changes.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village of Granisle</td>
<td>Expanding on an earlier Healthy Granisle project, the village is developing both indoor and outdoor programming to help improve the overall health and well-being of its residents, including the local First Nations community of Tachet. The goal is to encourage increased participation in healthy community activities such as healthy cooking classes, Tai Chi, walking/hiking the local trails, and learning how to use exercise equipment safely.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelowna</td>
<td>To support the Kelowna Community for All Ages Action Plan, this community assessment will include an all ages and abilities audit for local parks with a focus on accessibility, safety features and recreational amenities. It will also include an accessibility audit of city buildings and facilities.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Kitimat</td>
<td>An age-friendly plan will work to improve services for seniors. It will enhance the Better at Home program, and establish a resource that will help address social isolation, provide access to services such as food boxes and increase awareness on aging in place. The plan will also explore a partnership with the Elders of Kitimaat Village.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Application Description</td>
<td>Approved Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village of Lytton</td>
<td>The Village of Lytton wants to make sure facilities and services are in place to properly serve the needs of the local senior population, including First Nations Elders, so that seniors may remain close to their families as they age. Building on information from an earlier age-friendly assessment, this project will review the assessment results, prioritize opportunities and create an action plan to address current gaps identified in seniors’ housing requirements.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of MacKenzie</td>
<td>Responding to a demand for accessible housing for seniors, the Seniors Housing and Health Services Assessment will focus on community planning to increase the accessibility of housing and services for seniors. The health services component will explore the availability and uptake of services such as home care and assisted living options, as well as work with BC Housing to implement programs that can help seniors age in place.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional District of North Okanagan</td>
<td>This funding is for a seniors’ social program that will provide education and activities on a wide variety of topics including chair yoga, hearing loss and hearing aids, safety and avoiding scams, and flu shots. The program provides intergenerational social opportunities with elementary school students performing and assisting with events. This project will also assist with the replacement of appliances in the hall in order to accommodate increasing participation at seniors’ events.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen</td>
<td>The Naramata Age-friendly Community Planning Project will focus on planning social and physical environments that promote healthy aging and support seniors to maintain social ties to the community, family and friends.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Application Description</td>
<td>Approved Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell River</td>
<td>Seniors Together Powell River is a half-day project once a month that starts with a healthy lunch and provides speakers on topics such as medical needs, physical activity and social opportunities. It will introduce seniors to services in the community, and provide activity programs that promote healthy living and social inclusion.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverton</td>
<td>The Silverton Age-friendly Project will develop workshops and social programming focused around food, nutrition and community food security. School groups will be invited to participate, as well as representatives from the community that work in food security, production and processing.</td>
<td>$12,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>A provincially focused two-day summit will strengthen Surrey’s capacity to develop an effective and realistic seniors’ action plan for its residents using new ideas for programming, strategic partnerships and funding. Surrey is working with partners like the BC Centre for Hip Health and Mobility, United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Raising the Profile Project.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernon</td>
<td>This two-part project will: develop new infrastructure to improve the accessibility for those with mobility challenges to one of the community’s largest urban community gardens, and develop new programming to engage more seniors in the gardens. A best-practices document will also be developed to guide upgrades to the other two community gardens in Vernon.</td>
<td>$19,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Application Description</td>
<td>Approved Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>An age-friendly community plan will be created to identify the needs of older adults in the District of Wells. The plan’s development will include consultations with a diverse range of community members.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Vancouver</td>
<td>The City of North Vancouver and the Districts of North Vancouver and West Vancouver are working to create a Dementia Friendly North Shore Action Plan with residents and community partners. The goal is to improve dementia awareness and expand the current dementia-friendly North Shore committee to lead the process for the development and implementation of an action plan.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: 2016/17 Community Gaming Grants supporting accessibility

Community Gaming Grants are provided to a wide variety of not-for-profit organizations delivering programs and services to British Columbians. The program supports six sectors: Arts & Culture, Sport, Environment, Public Safety, Human & Social Services, and Parent Advisory Councils and District Parent Advisory Councils.

Funding is distributed to organizations in communities throughout the province. The nature of the programming ranges from disability sports, to enhancement of youth, to public health and community education.

For a full list of community gaming grant recipients please visit: [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/gambling-in-bc/reports-publications-statistics](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/gambling-in-bc/reports-publications-statistics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Profit Organization</th>
<th>Community Programming</th>
<th>Approved Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC Blind Sports and Recreation Association</td>
<td>Physical activity programming provided throughout B.C. for blind/visually impaired persons of all ages to build skill levels and to meet other persons who are blind/visually impaired.</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>Supportive programs and services that focus on the strengths and talents of deaf and hard of hearing individuals to create opportunities for individuals to gain employment, connect with their friends and families, participate in communities, and create multiple successes.</td>
<td>$125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Regional Chapter of Muscular Dystrophy Canada</td>
<td>Services for persons with neuromuscular disorders throughout BC and the Yukon, including: education, support, assistance with acquiring mobility and respiratory equipment, and advocacy.</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit Organization</td>
<td>Community Programming</td>
<td>Approved Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of BC</td>
<td>Services for persons with ALS throughout B.C., including outreach, mobility equipment loans, mobile clinics, support groups, free counselling, and transportation to medical appointments. Public awareness programming and workshops for caregivers are also delivered.</td>
<td>$183,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia Lions Society for Children with Disabilities</td>
<td>“Helping give children abilities” through programs such as the BC Easter Seals Camps which provides overnight summer camping experiences for children and teens with physical and/or mental disabilities throughout B.C.</td>
<td>$220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Wheelchair Sports Association</td>
<td>Wheelchair sports and physical activity opportunities for individuals with physical disabilities. Programming is provided for all ages and skill levels. Specialized wheelchairs are loaned to new participants to prevent financial barriers.</td>
<td>$218,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Alliance BC Society</td>
<td>Services to support people with all disabilities to live with dignity, independence and as equal and full participants in the community.</td>
<td>$190,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Resort Municipality Initiative accessibility related projects

Through the Resort Municipality Initiative, government invests $10.5 million annually in 14 resort communities for projects that help support local tourism infrastructure, amenities and programs. Recognizing the importance of accessible tourism, the following accessibility related projects have been supported through the Resort Municipality Initiative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Expected Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Fernie</td>
<td>Visitor Information Centre Project</td>
<td>The Visitor Information Centre Project consists of four components: landscaping improvements, reconfiguration of the interior spaces including enhancements to the Nature Centre, renovation of the washrooms to make them accessible, and signage improvements.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Golden</td>
<td>Highway 1 Corridor Enhancement</td>
<td>As part of a Highway 1 Corridor Enhancement project, the accessibility component is focused on a pedestrian connectivity corridor from the TransCanada Highway 1 to downtown. Approximately 800 netres of paving and switchback fencing will enable wheelchair access.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village of Harrison Hot Springs</td>
<td>Beach and Lagoon Improvements</td>
<td>Beach and Lagoon Improvements will involve several projects that improve the overall tourism infrastructure in the Village associated with the waterfront area. A key component will be enhancing the aesthetics and accessibility of the lagoon walkway as well as creating view points along the waterfront.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Expected Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Kimberley</td>
<td>Winter Ski Shuttle</td>
<td>The Winter Ski Shuttle facilitates the movement of visitors from accommodation on the ski hill throughout the community to patron shops and stores throughout the day and after skiing. Kneeling BC Transit busses facilitate the movement of people with mobility challenges.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Kimberley</td>
<td>Sullivan Mine Interpretive Train Project</td>
<td>As part of a larger project, work included construction of a paved path from the Powerhouse Station to the Powerhouse entrance for improved wheelchair accessibility.</td>
<td>2013/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Osoyoos</td>
<td>Waterfront Enhancement Project</td>
<td>As part of a larger project, waterfront enhancements will include an accessibility ramp to the water to enable those with disabilities or mobility issues to enjoy the beach and lake. The project also includes a visitor activity centre, walkways, passive recreation areas, and pier and supportive amenities. Recently completed work on Gyro Beach has made the area fully accessible. The next phase of work will include a pier to the lake, which will be completely accessible.</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Osoyoos</td>
<td>Trail Development and Connectivity Project</td>
<td>The Town of Osoyoos has been upgrading trails to improve walkability, accessibility and hiking experiences. Completed work includes paving two kilometres of trail and a gravel parking lot, and the construction of a ramp to make the trail accessible at its mid-point. Additional lighting and paving is expected.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Expected Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Osoyoos</td>
<td>Marina Ramp</td>
<td>The marina ramp addition makes both sides of the marina handicapped accessible.</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Revelstoke</td>
<td>Williamson Lake Park Upgrade Project</td>
<td>This project will include improvements to Williamson Lake Park, including an accessible day use building, new viewing deck, enhanced fishing facilities, a wheelchair accessible path to the beach, and landscaping.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Revelstoke</td>
<td>Downtown Washroom Facilities</td>
<td>This project involved renovating the washrooms in the downtown core to provide better facilities for tourists and installing automatic doors to improve access for those with mobility challenges.</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Revelstoke</td>
<td>Business and Visitor Information Centre</td>
<td>This project involved installing an elevator in the Visitor Information Centre, a two story building, to ensure access for all visitors.</td>
<td>2013/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Rossland</td>
<td>Museum/Visitor Centre renovation</td>
<td>A large component of the renovation will be to make the washrooms accessible.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Tofino</td>
<td>Installation of Mobi-Mats</td>
<td>This project will provide beach access for wheelchairs and strollers from May to October each year by installing 150 feet of beach access mats, from the foreshore to the water.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Tofino</td>
<td>MacKenzie Beach Access</td>
<td>This project saw the construction of a beach access ramp, parking area, and an accessible washroom and change room.</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Tofino</td>
<td>Windy Hill Lookout</td>
<td>This project created a wheelchair accessible lookout on Tofino’s Main Street with views of Tofino’s working harbour and Clayoquot Sound.</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Expected Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Ucluelet</td>
<td>Big Beach Visitors Access</td>
<td>Current access to the beach is very steep and limits accessibility. Part of this project will include an accessible trail to the Big Beach area.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beach Access Mats</td>
<td>The District of Ucluelet will install wheelchair/stroller accessible beach mats for persons with mobility issues to provide an opportunity for accessibility at Big Beach. There will also be a signage component to the project to identify the accessibility feature.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terrace Beach Access Project</td>
<td>The current trail to Terrace Beach is difficult to find and accessibility is poor. This project will rework the trail to Terrace Beach focusing on making it accessible and will include way-finding for tourists.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resort Municipality of Whistler</td>
<td>Conference Centre Improvements</td>
<td>Recent improvements have included the construction of an accessible lift to enable use of the stage area by people with disabilities. Other potential projects focused on accessibility improvements will be considered.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Expected Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resort Municipality of Whistler</td>
<td>Village Square Mall Rejuvenation</td>
<td>This has been a multi-project undertaking which has included the construction of an accessible ramp from the Whistler Village Day lots to the Village entry at Village Gate Boulevard and accessibility improvements on the Cultural Connector. Future projects will include access gate improvements to facilitate pedestrian access and for those with disabilities, ramp improvements adjacent to the Whistler Conference Centre as well as to other areas.</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resort Municipality of Whistler</td>
<td>Valley Trail Mons Crossing</td>
<td>The project included construction of a paved valley trail railway underpass between the Cypress Place subdivision and Nesters Crossing inclusive of trail approaches and lights. The construction is a collaboration with a third party private developer to allow Valley Trail sections to be connected north and south of the railway. There is now a continuous accessible Valley Trail from Meadow Park to Whistler Village and the Upper Village.</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Accessibility-related resources and funding opportunities

Funding Programs

For Individuals

Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Designation / Income Assistance

BC Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities provides disability assistance and supplements to provide greater independence for people with disabilities, including security of income, enhanced well-being, and participation in the community.

More information: [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities/disability-assistance](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities/disability-assistance)

Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D) Benefit

Canada Pension Plan (CPP) provides disability benefits to people who have made enough contributions to the CPP and who are disabled and cannot work at any job on a regular basis.


Federal tax credits and deductions for persons with disabilities

Tax credits and deductions are available for persons with disabilities, their supporting family members, and their caregivers. Information is available on the Canada Revenue Agency website.


Housing Adaptations for Independence (HAFI)

HAFI provides financial assistance to help eligible low-income seniors and people with disabilities in British Columbia continue to live in the comfort of their home.

Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

This tax credit assists eligible individuals 65 and over and persons with disabilities with the cost of certain permanent home renovations to improve accessibility or be more functional or mobile at home.

More information: [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/income-taxes/personal/credits/seniors-renovation](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/income-taxes/personal/credits/seniors-renovation)

2014 Building Access Handbook

The content of the new handbook has been updated, from the 2007 edition, to align with the 2012 BC Building Code. This update also includes adaptable housing guidelines, which were added to the BC Building Code in 2009.


Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Fund

Available through the Rick Hansen Foundation, the Accessibility Fund is a $4 million program that provides grants of up to $20,000 for public, private, First Nations and other groups to accelerate the adoption of universal and inclusive design principles across a wide variety of buildings, including housing and public spaces. More information: [https://www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/Accessibility-Certification-Program](https://www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/Accessibility-Certification-Program)

Choice in Supports for Independent Living (CSIL)

This is a self-managed care option for home support services where funds are provided to eligible clients to purchase and manage their own home support services.

Employment Program of BC

The Employment Program of BC (EPBC) provides comprehensive employment services and supports based on an individuals’ need. EPBC is delivered by contracted service providers through 84 WorkBC Employment Services Centres throughout BC, ensuring that British Columbians can access services and supports.


Endowment 150

Endowment 150 promotes financial literacy and provides access to available tax credits and benefits. To help those who want to save, Endowment 150 offers one-time $150 gifts to Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSP). To receive the Endowment 150:

• You can provide a RDSP number and verification of a minimum $25 deposit
• You are eligible for the Federal Disability Tax Credit

More information: http://www.rdsp.com/endowment-150/

Disability Tax Credit

The Disability Tax Credit is a non-refundable tax credit used to reduce income tax payable on the income tax and benefit return. A person with a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions may claim the disability amount once they are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit.


Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)

The RDSP is a long-term savings plan to help Canadians with disabilities and their families save for the future. It is available from all banks and most credit unions across B.C.

More information: http://www.rdsp.com/what-is-it/
Access RDSP

Plan Institute, Disability Alliance BC (DABC), and the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS), with support of the Vancouver Foundation, offer Access RDSP, a program to increase the number of British Columbians who have an RDSP through various supports and services. DABC provides assistance with Disability Tax Credit (DTC) applications and information and workshops about the RDSP. Plan Institute operates an RDSP and disability planning information hotline (1-844-311-7526), hosts RDSP workshops, and helps individuals and families with low-incomes save for their future through the Endowment 150 Fund, which provides a one-time $150 gift to help their RDSP grow. BCANDS provides RDSP and DTC navigation assistance to indigenous British Columbians.


RDSP Grants and Bonds – Government of Canada

The Government of Canada will pay the following into your RDSP:

- matching grants of up to $3,500 per year, depending on the amount contributed and your family income. The maximum government grant contribution is $70,000 over your lifetime.
- bonds of up to $1,000 per year for low-income and modest-income beneficiaries. No contributions are necessary to receive the bond. The maximum government bond contribution is $20,000 over your lifetime.


Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER)

The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for eligible BC residents who are age 60+ and pay rent for their homes.

Home Owner Grant for People with Disabilities

The Home Owner Grant reduces the amount of property taxes you pay each year on your principal residence. If you’re a person with a disability, or you live with a relative who has a disability, and you meet certain requirements, you may be eligible for a higher grant amount. A Home Owner Grant application is included with your property tax notice.

More information: [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/reduce/home-owner-grant/person-with-disabilities](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/reduce/home-owner-grant/person-with-disabilities)

Transportation Supplement for People with Disabilities

Effective Jan. 1, 2018, people on disability assistance will get a new $52 transportation supplement. This creates fairness, and helps people connect with their communities by giving them the freedom to work, shop and participate in social activities.

Anyone who wants an annual bus pass will be able to get one, and anyone who already has a bus pass can keep it – they will no longer have $52 deducted from their monthly support. People can also use the supplement to pay for other transportation needs.

More information: [https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017SDPR0060-001661](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017SDPR0060-001661)

Fuel Tax Refund for Persons with Disabilities

Individuals with certain disabilities may apply for a refund of the provincial Motor Fuel Tax they pay on gasoline, diesel or propane used in their vehicle up to a maximum of $500 per calendar year.

More information: [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/sales-taxes/motor-fuel-carbon-tax/fuel-tax-refund](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/sales-taxes/motor-fuel-carbon-tax/fuel-tax-refund)

Camping for free at BC Provincial Parks

Camping parties with an eligible person with disabilities can camp for free at BC Provincial Parks.

Angling Licence Fee Reduction Program

In this program, any British Columbia residents with disabilities may apply for a Non-Tidal Angling Licence at the reduced fee of $1.12.

More information: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/licences/#FeeReduction

Discounted BC Ferries’ fares for residents of B.C. with permanent disabilities

Discount fares are available for BC residents who have a permanent disability (passenger fares only). To receive the discounted fare, people with disabilities must apply for a BC Ferries Disabled Status Identification Card, which is presented to the Ticket Agent at the terminal.


For Municipalities, Communities and Groups

Age-Friendly Communities

The Age-Friendly grant program provides grants of up to $20,000 to local governments to support age-friendly planning, policy development, implementation and recognition, provided through a partnership between BC Healthy Communities Society and the Union of BC Municipalities.


Job Creation Partnerships/Community and Employer Partnerships (JCP/CEP)

This initiative increases employment opportunities for unemployed British Columbians through the use of agency and business partnerships, shared information and technology, and innovative processes and practices. Fact sheets are available online.

Community Gaming Grants

Community Gaming Grants support eligible not-for-profit organizations that deliver community programs that benefit B.C. citizens. A variety of gaming grants are available to communities through the Ministry of Finance.

More information: [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/gaming-grants](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/gambling-fundraising/gaming-grants)

Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities program:
Local and regional projects – Government of Canada

The Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities (OF) program helps people with disabilities prepare for, obtain and maintain employment or self-employment.


Sports-related grant programs

ViaSport administers sport-related grant programs funded by the Government of BC that encourage sport participation and healthy living, develop high-performance athletes and improve delivery of sport and recreation programs to benefit all residents.

More information: [http://www.viasport.ca/grant/bc-sport-participation-program](http://www.viasport.ca/grant/bc-sport-participation-program)
For Employers

Technology@Work – operated by the Neil Squire Society

Technology@Work provides assistive technology equipment, products and services to enable British Columbians with disabilities to secure and obtain work.

More information: http://www.neilsquire.ca/individual-programs-services/technologywork/

Community and Employer Partnership Fund

The Community and Employer Partnership Fund is focused on increasing employment opportunities for unemployed British Columbians, including people with disabilities, through the use of agency and business partnerships, shared information and technology, and innovative processes and practices.


Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities - Government of Canada

Through funding for organizations, the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities program helps people with disabilities prepare for, obtain and maintain employment or self-employment.


Training Tax Credit for employers

The Training Tax Credit provides refundable income tax credits for employers who employ apprentices enrolled in apprenticeship programs administered through the Industry Training Authority.

More information: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/income-taxes/corporate/credits/training/employer
Resources

Emergency preparedness for people with disabilities

Workshops, online training and downloadable resources to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are included in emergency planning and response.

More information: http://disabilityalliancebc.org/program/emergency-preparedness/

Planning for the future: Age-friendly and Disability-friendly Official Community Plans

This key document provides an introduction to Official Community Plans and outlines guidelines and examples to help ensure that seniors and people with disabilities have the opportunities and support they need in their communities.


BC Healthy Communities Society: Plan H Program

This Program, managed by BC Healthy Communities Society, supports local government engagement and partnerships across sectors for creating healthier communities, and provides learning opportunities, resources, and leading-edge practices for collaborative local action. Toolkits and additional information are available online.

More information: http://planh.ca/

2014 Building Access Handbook

The content of the new handbook has been updated, from the 2007 edition, to align with the 2012 BC Building Code. This update also includes adaptable housing guidelines, which were added to the BC Building Code in 2009. The handbook is available online.

Making Space for Everyone: Accessible, Inclusive and Safe Communities

An overview of areas of design to improve accessibility and inclusion to better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities related to mobility, hearing, vision and cognitive challenges.


Accessible Community Garden Guidelines

Basic steps and planning ideas to ensure that community gardens are accessible for people with disabilities to enjoy and participate.


Creating Healthy Communities

Includes tools and actions to foster environments for healthy living, including: outdoor activities, building community and connecting neighbors to each other.


BC Human Rights Code

Online version of the BC Human Rights Code, including information about discrimination and the complaints process.

More information: [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/human-rights-protection](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/human-rights-protection)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Information about the UNCRPD which acts as outline of human rights for people with disabilities related to all facets of everyday life.
