



Disability White Paper Conversation Toolkit

Host your own conversation with your friends, family, community or colleagues about what we, as a society, can do to increase accessibility and decrease barriers for people living with disabilities in B.C.

A Message from the Leadership Team

The consultation on reducing barriers and increasing accessibility for people living with disabilities in British Columbia is a positive step towards realizing government's vision of becoming the most progressive place for people living with a disability in Canada.

This conversation will provide insights into what we, as a society, can do to make B.C. more accessible and inclusive.

Governments cannot support the needs of persons with disabilities in isolation. Support has always been provided by friends, family members, community and non-profit agencies, government and employers. That is why we have joined together to represent government, the disability community and the business community to support people in B.C. to live the life that they choose.

As part of the leadership team – government, business and the disability community – we encourage you to discuss each area, and invite you to take part in this conversation and make your voice heard.

We all have a role to play in supporting people with disabilities to fully participate in society and we look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



Carla Qualtrough
Chair of the Minister's Council
on Employment and Accessibility



Honorable Don McRae
Minister of Social Development
and Social Innovation



Tamara Vrooman
Co-Chair of the Presidents
Group and CEO of Vancity



We want to hear from you!

Whether living independently, landing that dream job, mastering life skills or competing in the Paralympics, people with disabilities are living independent, full lives – but there is more that can be done to reduce barriers and increase accessibility.

The B.C. government is having a conversation with British Columbians to better understand how government, businesses and communities can increase accessibility and decrease barriers for people living with disabilities. This feedback will inform the development of a White Paper – a document that reflects the voice of British Columbians – that will form the foundation for a Summit on the issues facing people with disabilities in British Columbia.

What's in the Toolkit?

This **Disability White Paper Conversation Toolkit** includes everything you need to host your own conversation with your friends, family, community or colleagues on what we, as a society, can do to make B.C. more accessible and inclusive, and submit your comments to government.

It is important to recognize that B.C. is committed to balancing its budget and reducing debt for future generations. The White Paper and Summit must include a conversation about how this fiscal commitment can be met, while at the same time reduce barriers and improve accessibility. Discussion of how well existing resources are used and ways we can apply our shared resources will be a very important part of the conversation.

To learn more about the Disability White Paper consultation, please visit <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper>.

Using the Disability White Paper Conversation Toolkit

To use this toolkit:

Gather together a group of people interested in issues facing people with disabilities. This could be your family, your workmates or members of your community group - any group with something to say about how we, as a society, can increase accessibility and decrease barriers.

Choose which of the six different areas you want to discuss. You can choose one or all six depending on your areas of interest.

- Innovation in disability services and more freedom for persons living with disabilities
- Personal supports, aids and devices
- Work and contribution
- Housing and accessibility in the broader built environment
- Social networks to support people in community
- Asset accumulation through the Registered Disability Savings Plan in particular

Assign someone in the group to take notes – they'll be responsible for recording the comments, ideas and solutions from your discussion. You may want to use a flipchart, pad of paper or a laptop – it's up to you.

Using these questions as a guide, start your discussion.

- Why do you think it's important that we reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities in B.C.?
- What can British Columbians do to welcome the contributions of people with disabilities, and what barriers can we remove?
- What would make it easier for people with disabilities to make contributions to the community, and what needs to be in place?
- What would B.C. be like as the most progressive place in Canada for people and families living with disabilities?

Submit your feedback electronically to disabilitywhitepaper@gov.bc.ca (word format) or you can mail your written submissions to: Disability White Paper, PO Box 9936 Stn Prov Gov, Victoria BC, V8W 9R2. Feedback must be received by 4 pm, March 11, 2014.

Innovation

Innovation is all about exploring a diverse range of new ways to support people with disabilities to live the life they choose, as well as looking at how we design and use existing programs and services.

From programs, technology and independent living to policy and processes and practices, innovation can lead to greater community inclusion, increased freedoms, and greater choices for people living with disabilities.

Here are a few questions for you to consider:

- Why do you think it's important that we reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities in B.C.?
- What can British Columbians do to welcome the contributions of people with disabilities, and what barriers can we remove?
- What innovations would make it easier for people with disabilities to make contributions to the community, and what needs to be in place?
- What would B.C. look like as the most progressive place in Canada for people and families living with disabilities?

Now it is time to join the discussion below:

Personal supports, aids and devices

Personal supports, aids and devices enable people with disabilities to carry out the activities of daily living and fully participate in the life of their community.

Personal supports help to level the playing field for people with disabilities as they are the building blocks for improving access to income, employment and increased freedoms.

Here are a few questions for you to consider:

- Why do you think it's important that we reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities in B.C.?
- What can British Columbians do to welcome the contributions of people with disabilities, and what barriers can we remove?
- What personal supports, aids or devices would make it easier for people with disabilities to make contributions to the community, and what needs to be in place?
- What would B.C. look like as the most progressive place in Canada for people and families living with disabilities?

Now it is time to join the discussion below:

Work and Contribution

The employment rate for people with disabilities is 18 per cent lower than for people without disabilities. Reducing barriers to employment and increasing community inclusion helps to ensure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to work and contribute as they are able.

Fostering diverse workplaces that include employees with disabilities can improve the capacity of B.C. businesses to compete in the global economy and ensure people with disabilities have the opportunity to contribute to the economic growth of the province.

Here are a few questions for you to consider:

- Why do you think it's important that we reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities in B.C.?
- What can British Columbians do to welcome the contributions of people with disabilities, and what barriers can we remove?
- What would make it easier for people with disabilities to work or contribute to the community, and what needs to be in place?
- What would B.C. look like as the most progressive place in Canada for people and families living with disabilities?

Now it is time to join the discussion below:

Housing and accessibility in the broader built environment

When we think about the “broader built environment,” we are thinking about the world around us — our homes, communities, buildings, transit systems and anything that has been built up in our environment.

Creating and improving accessibility in our homes, towns and cities enables people with disabilities to live life as they chose, live where they wish to live, and enjoy the same freedoms as their fellow citizens.

Here are a few questions for you to consider:

- Why do you think it's important that we reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities in B.C.?
- What can British Columbians do to welcome the contributions of people with disabilities, and what barriers can we remove?
- What would make it easier for people with disabilities to make contributions to the community, and what needs to be in place?
- What would B.C. look like as the most progressive place in Canada for people and families living with disabilities?

Now it is time to join the discussion below:

Social Networks to Support People in Community

Having a strong social network is important for every British Columbian.

Social networks may include friends, family, co-workers, neighbours or more widely spread contacts within a community. A support network can be made up of people or organizations that you can turn to for help with favours, assistance during challenging times, or for just having fun.

Here are a few questions for you to consider:

- Why do you think it's important that we reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities in B.C.?
- What can British Columbians do to welcome the contributions of people with disabilities, and what barriers can we remove?
- What would make it easier for people with disabilities to create social networks in your community, and what needs to be in place?
- What would B.C. look like as the most progressive place in Canada for people and families living with disabilities?

Now it is time to join the discussion below:

Asset Accumulation through Registered Disability Savings Plan

Having the ability to accumulate assets can give people living with a disability and their families' comfort, knowing that resources are available for necessary services and supports.

The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) is a national, tax-deferred, long-term savings plan for people with disabilities who want to save for the future, as well as for families who want to help ensure the financial security of their loved ones with a disability.

Here are a few questions for you to consider through an asset accumulation and RDSP lens:

- Why do you think it's important that we reduce barriers and increase accessibility for people living with disabilities in B.C.?
- What can British Columbians do to welcome the contributions of people with disabilities, and what barriers can we remove?
- What would make it easier for people with disabilities to make contributions to an RDSP, and what needs to be in place?
- What would B.C. look like as the most progressive place in Canada for people and families living with disabilities?

Now it is time to join the discussion below: