

## 2018 Progress Update - Building a Better B.C. for People with Disabilities

The 2018 Progress Update - Building a Better B.C. for People with Disabilities provides an overview of the policies, programs and activities helping make B.C. more inclusive for individuals with disabilities. It showcases a selection of the work that government, community and businesses have been doing to improve accessibility throughout B.C.

### Table of Contents

- [Inclusive Government](#)
- [Accessible Service Delivery](#)
- [Accessible Internet](#)
- [Accessible Built Environment](#)
- [Accessible Housing](#)
- [Accessible Transportation](#)
- [Income Support](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Financial Security](#)
- [Inclusive Communities](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [Consumer Experience](#)
- [Appendix A: Community and Employer Partnerships in Support of Accessibility](#)
- [Appendix B: Age-Friendly Communities Grants](#)
- [Appendix C: 2017/18 Community Gaming Grants supporting accessibility](#)
- [Appendix D: Resort Municipality Initiative accessibility related projects](#)
- [Appendix E: Tourism Events Program](#)
- [Appendix F: Accessibility-related resources and funding opportunities](#)

### Message from the Premier

British Columbia is a province built by diversity of experience, of culture and of ability. As you read through this report, you will learn about some of the creative and inspiring ways that people are creating a more accessible province for people with disabilities. You will also learn about people, organizations and communities working to break down the barriers that still exist.

Identifying barriers, dispelling myths, and ending stereotypes are all part of building a better British Columbia. We have made remarkable progress by working together — and we will continue to do more, because a province where diverse voices are heard and acknowledged is a stronger, more vibrant province.

Creating lasting change for the future depends on our actions and our attitudes today. Dignity, respect and opportunity — this is our vision as we work towards building a more inclusive and accessible British Columbia.

**Honourable John Horgan**

Premier of British Columbia

## Message from the Minister

This report is a chance to honour and celebrate the progress we've made in breaking down barriers for people with disabilities. It is also a reminder that there is still more work to be done.

As part of our poverty reduction strategy consultation, we heard from thousands of people with disabilities about the challenges they face on a daily basis. People told us about the lasting impacts of social isolation, and about inaccessible services and infrastructure.

This report outlines some of the ways government is working with communities and organizations to make B.C. a more inclusive place for people of all abilities. Over the coming months, we will be talking to people in the disability community, businesses, Indigenous groups and municipalities as we shape a new vision for an accessible B.C. This includes moving forward with accessibility legislation that will help further our goals to create a better, more inclusive province.

As we go forward, we will work closely with people with disabilities and the organizations that support them to remove more barriers and ensure everyone can fully participate in our communities.

**Honourable Shane Simpson**

Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

## Inclusive Government

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

## Work-Able Internship Program for Graduates with Disabilities

The Work-Able Graduate Internship Program is a 12-month paid internship with the B.C. Public Service for recent post-secondary graduates who self-identify as having a disability. Since September 2015, 22 different host ministries have

provided 50 twelve-month internships. This program offers learning, coaching and mentorship as well as an opportunity for mentors and supervisors to benefit from the interns' unique perspectives and experiences.

“The most valuable thing I learned through the Work-Able internship was how much work and collaboration is required in the BC Public Service. Working for Government gave me a new perspective on how I viewed and understand the public sector. When you first start as an intern, you may feel as though some of the work you're doing does not have a significant impact. But as you start to see and understand the connections and linkages between employees, divisions, branches and Ministries, you will start to see how important your small pieces of work really are”.

- Work-Able Intern

“Working with our intern was a game changer for me. I learned so much about invisible disabilities in the workplace, and this has informed how I hire, how I manage people, and how I show up in the workplace”.

- Work-Able Mentor

“My experience as a supervisor has been rich with learning - about diversity and inclusion, a range of challenges and supports. I have seen our intern bring to our team and ministry (and beyond) valuable experience, expertise and opportunities for growth as an organization”.

- Work-Able Supervisor

## Moving Forward with a New Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan

In the fall of 2017, the Province announced a three-year Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan to recruit and develop qualified public servants who represent the diversity of people in British Columbia; people with disabilities, visible minorities, women, Indigenous people and the LGBTQ2S+ community. Through the Action Plan government wants to remove barriers to employment for British Columbians seeking a career in the Public Service, and ensure a respectful and inclusive work environment.

## Promoting Accessibility & Inclusivity During AccessAbility Week

To celebrate the contributions of British Columbians with disabilities, the Province proclaimed May 27 to June 2, 2018 as AccessAbility Week. The week kicked off with an accessibility awareness celebration at the B.C. legislature. Communities throughout the province hosted events and supported activities that promoted inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities.

May 28, 2018 was proclaimed as Rick Hansen Day, recognizing the contribution that Rick Hansen has made to create a more inclusive B.C. and Canada. The proclamation was accompanied by a \$10-million grant to help the Rick Hansen Foundation further its existing programs and push forward with new innovations to make communities more accessible and inclusive.

## Growing the Role of the Employee Accessibility Advisory Council

The Employee Accessibility Advisory Council raises awareness and helps to address the barriers employees with disabilities may face in the public service. Over the past year, the Council members created an Accessible Workplaces poster, blogged on Accessibility week, Disability Employment Month, Autism Awareness Month and the Great BC Shakeout. They also provided input about accommodation to the public service recruitment process.

## Increasing Accessibility for B.C. Voters

Elections BC developed several measures that made the 2018 Referendum on Electoral Reform accessible to all voters. Canadian National Institute for the Blind subscribers received a recorded message when their voting packages were mailed. Voters that read Braille could request a Braille template to use to complete their voting package. Sight-impaired voters could also use text to voice software to listen to the Voter's Guide and other information on the Elections BC website. Referendum Service Offices and Service BC offices offered voting package pick-up and drop-off and provided assistance to voters. Elections BC also conducted referendum presentations at assisted living facilities, senior housing complexes, a stroke recovery group, and at the Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre with an interpreter to translate the presentation into sign language.

## Accessible Canada Act

In June 2018, the federal government announced Bill C-81: the proposed Accessible Canada Act (the Act). The proposed Act focuses on eliminating barriers to accessibility and discrimination. It would expand the existing rights and protections for people with disabilities and make Canada barrier-free in areas under federal jurisdiction.

## Community in Action

### Include Me!

Community Living BC's (CLBC) include Me! Helps CLBC create more inclusive services by measuring quality of life from the perspective of the individuals CLBC serves, including rights, interpersonal relations and social inclusion. Surveys are conducted by nearly 50 self-advocates who are hired, trained and paid competitive

wages to do peer-to-peer interviews. In the last year, surveyors have conducted about 1,500 surveys with more than 17 service providers. One include Me! surveyor describes the job as one of the best he's ever had.

## Business in Action

### Accessibility for ICBC Employees

ICBC fosters a culture of diversity and inclusion by creating a supportive workplace for current and prospective employees who are living with a disability. The Living with Disabilities Employee Resource Group has been actively building awareness of the needs of people living with disabilities. This voluntary, employee-driven workplace community, is focused on providing a sense of belonging and connection.

The recruitment team has also created strategic partnerships to help attract more candidates with disabilities. Internal surveys show that the percentage of ICBC employees who identify as having a disability (visible or invisible) increased from 5% in 2015 to 8% in 2017.

### Supporting the Indigenous Disability Sector

Since 1991, the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) has offered supports and services to Indigenous individuals and families living with disabilities. BCANDS works with Indigenous and non-Indigenous disability and health related organizations, Indigenous leadership and communities, and provincial, territorial and federal governments. BCANDS is currently the only organization of its kind.

In 2017, BCANDS presented to the United Nation's International Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Geneva. Many of the recommendations BCANDS made related to Indigenous disability were recommended to Canada for action by the CRPD, including recognizing November as Indigenous Disability Awareness Month annually.

BCANDS has Special Consultative Status to the United Nation's Economic and Social Council as a Non-Governmental Organization and can provide expert analysis on Indigenous disability issues directly to the UN.

In May 2018, government provided BCANDS with \$180,000 to help expand their Urban Disability Case Management program which provides services and supports to Indigenous individuals and families living with a disability residing in any of the province's non-First Nation communities. Indigenous Disability Case Managers work with clients to develop an understanding of their disability-related needs, history and background. They then coordinate disability supports and services so

that the identified needs are met.

In 2018, BCANDS received the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health's National Champion of Mental Health Award. BCANDS also received the 2018 Doctors of BC Provincial Excellence in Health Promotion Award for their collaborative work in the Access RDSP Program.

## Accessible Service Delivery

Delivering more accessible government services to people with disabilities

## Community in Action

### Helping Victims of Crime Navigate the Justice System

People with disabilities who have been the victims of crime have unique support needs as they navigate the justice system.

The Disability Alliance BC (DABC) project "How I Need to Know: Helping People with Disabilities who are Victims of Crime through the Justice System Process" is supporting accessible justice for people with disabilities. It includes five graphic enhanced videos, four American Sign Language/captioned videos, and an accompanying series of information sheets in French and English which explain how the justice system works and what victims of crime can expect as they navigate the justice system. DABC has reached more than 220 people over the last year through conferences, webinars and information sessions to help raise awareness and promote better practices to prevent violence against people with disabilities in the community.

## Government in Action

### Improving Services for Individuals who are Deaf & Hard of Hearing

The Ministry of Health has provided \$1 million to the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH) for a new Centre of Excellence. The centre will provide hands-on experience with the latest hearing aids and assistive listening devices, one-on-one peer support, aural rehabilitation classes, employment counselling, and interpretive services. A refurbished hearing aid program will also be available for those who cannot afford new hearing aids.

In 2018, the Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (PDHHS) started to use web-based video programs like Video Relay, Skype and FaceTime, to deliver services in B.C. Services include sign language instruction, workshops and training sessions.

The PDHHS also provides workshops and consultative services to government

partners to promote awareness and understanding of inclusion issues related to the Deaf community.

## Barrier Free Government Buildings

The first phase of government's Barrier Free Accessibility Program is now complete. Eighty-Nine government-owned buildings have been assessed to determine their level of meaningful accessibility and to identify areas for improvements such as automatic door openers, accessible pathways, and improved signage.

In Phase 2, roughly 80 more buildings throughout the province are undergoing assessments, the results of which will inform accessibility planning and improvements.

## Improving Accessibility at Service B.C.

Service B.C. staff receive inclusion, inclusive language, and diversity training to provide better services for all people. To establish a common standard of service excellence, Service BC works with the Institute for Citizen-Centred Services to provide a nationally-recognized training program for managers and frontline staff called Certified Service Manager and Certified Service Professional certification.

The Service BC Contact Centre utilizes the free TELUS Relay Service for citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing or experience difficulty with speech. Citizens simply dial 711 and communicate to TELUS through Teletypewriter (TTY), and the message is relayed to Service BC.

## Improving Education Supports for Students with Disabilities

Supports to help students succeed, such as extra time to read exam questions or speech to text software, are now more readily available in B.C.'s public education system. The Ministry of Education has adopted a universal model of supports for provincial assessments which ensures more access to appropriate supports for all students with identified needs. The Province is also working to ensure that provincial assessments comply with WCAG 2.0 international accessibility guidelines.

Since its launch in 2012, the BC campus Open Education program has helped approximately 90,000 students save as much as \$9 million through an online repository of Open Education Resources (OER) that includes open textbooks and ancillary resources. These OERs use an open license, making digital versions freely available to students and faculty. The OER collection continues to grow and provide high quality alternatives to expensive commercial textbooks. Open textbooks represent an innovation in education that eliminates textbook costs,

increases access to education, and provides instructors with customizable teaching resources.

## Making Health Care More Accessible

Government continues to put patients at the heart of health care. In May 2018, government launched the new primary health-care strategy. This strategy will see government fund and recruit more doctors, nurse practitioners and other health professionals to work in team-based care environments that put patients at the heart of healthcare and increase accessibility.

### B.C. Surgical and Diagnostic Imaging Strategy Aimed at Reducing Wait Times

The B.C. Surgical and Diagnostic Imaging Strategy has set targets to reduce wait times for the health care British Columbians need. By the end of March 2019, the hope is to accommodate 9,400 more surgeries:

- 4,000 additional hip and knee
- 900 dental
- 4,500 other surgeries

Tele-health helps people with chronic conditions get health care support in the comfort of their own homes. Patients can send their information and readings to their health care provider using home health monitoring equipment such as tablets, Bluetooth blood pressure monitors, pedometers and other devices. The tele-health program also helps patients learn about self-management and improving their health outcomes.

## Taking STEPS Forward

The B.C. Initiative for Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (BC-IPSE), under STEPS Forward, ensures that students with developmental disabilities can access post-secondary education. With funding from CLBC, STEPS Forward supports people on six campuses in B.C.

## Supporting Student Access to Assistive Services & Technology

The Student Services Branch at the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, partnered with Assistive Technology BC, to develop a web portal for Disability Coordinators at public post-secondary institutions that helps them connect students with assistive services and technology. They also deliver informational workshops that provide information and guidance to students with communication disabilities about accommodation services, assistive technology, financial assistance and self-advocacy.

## Making Justice More Inclusive

In 2018 the Ministry of the Attorney General surveyed permanent and circuit court facilities in the province. Nearly 90 buildings were assessed for accessibility and improvements, including automatic door openers and accessibility ramps. In addition to addressing issues of mobility, a strategy is also being developed to carry out auditory, visual and additional modifications in future years.

## Foundry Victoria Officially Opens its Doors to Youth

Foundry is a network of centres and e-health services co-created with health and social service partners, young people and families. The centres provide young people, aged 12 to 24 years who are living with mental-health and substance-use challenges, with a safe and judgment-free environment where they can feel comfortable asking for help and accessing the services they need.

Foundry Victoria is one of seven sites that are now open in the province, joining two locations in Vancouver (Granville and the North Shore), Kelowna, Campbell River, Abbotsford and Prince George. An additional four centres are in development.

From January 2017 to March 2018, Foundry recorded a total of 35,791 visits at six open centres.

## Accessible Internet

Providing accessible internet and communications options for British Columbians

## Connecting Rural Communities

Connectivity helps reduce isolation for people with disabilities, especially when they live in rural or remote areas. The Province provides funding through the Rural Dividend Program to support rural, remote and Indigenous communities in pursuing economic development and diversification projects, including improvements to digital connectivity. An additional \$83 million in funding from federal, provincial and local partners has been announced since January 2018 to ensure greater connectivity for all British Columbians.

## Government in Action

### Connectivity in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

With a population of 37,896 across 73,361 square kilometers, isolation can be a problem for individuals with disabilities in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. The province has invested \$1.9 million to help with the construction of a new

fibre-optic network. Higher speeds and more reliable connection will remove barriers to individual internet access.

## My Family Services

In August 2018, the Ministry of Children and Family Development launched My Family Services (MyFS) an online tool to help families access children's autism funding information. Families can communicate with ministry staff and submit documentation through the portal. As of September 10, 2018, over 1300 families had registered for MyFS.

## CLBC's Clients Help Design New Website

With the addition of an accessibility tool bar, simplified navigation and an interactive office locator map, CLBC's new website makes it easier to find the information clients need.

The new design was developed in consultation with people CLBC serves and their families, community partners, and staff through interviews and focus groups. The website contains accessibility features including plain language and ReadSpeaker.

## Business in Action

### Vancity Makes Online Banking Accessible to All

Vancity has made its website easier to access for all its members, including those with visual impairments, by creating pages that enable the use of a screen-reading aid. All images have text that describes the image and title attributes that tell users where a link will take them if they click on it. The website complies with international standards of the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C).

### Accessible Employers Website Improves Website Accessibility (PG1, Presidents Group)

The Presidents Group continues to lead the way in supporting accessibility in the workplace. The website [accessibleemployers.ca](http://accessibleemployers.ca), which features resources, information and tools to help employers build more accessible, inclusive workplaces has been upgraded to meet WCAG2.0 AA. New accessibility features of the website include keyboard navigation, video transcripts, and alt/title tag descriptions of images.

## Community in Action

### Makers Making LipSyncs

Support for the Neil Squire Society's LipSync keeps growing. The Makers Making Change program, which connects makers to people with disabilities who need assistive technologies, has now built hundreds of Lipsync devices. Telus employees built 175 LipSync devices over the course of six weeks. Bell held a build event, where 40 were made in a day.

The LipSync is a mouth-operated joystick that enables people with little or no hand movement to operate a touchscreen device, PCs, and laptops. The device can be made for less than \$300 worth of parts.

## Accessible Built Environment

Supporting the design of accessible public spaces and the built environment

### Rural Dividend Program Paying Off for Accessibility

Government Rural Dividend Program provides funding to rural, remote and Indigenous communities for economic development and diversification projects. The District of Peachland is using the funding to build a wheelchair-accessible boardwalk. Improving the accessibility of the waterfront trail will support Peachland's retail core, expand the platform for events and strengthen tourism.

Other accessibility projects include:

- Trail and lighting improvements in Chetwynd
- Construction of a wheelchair accessible trail in Granisle
- Completion of the Downtown Accessibility and Tourist Attraction Project in Quesnel

### Improved Standards of Accessibility in the B.C. Building

The updated B.C. Building Code will improve standards of accessibility and safety. The updated Code takes effect on Dec. 10, 2018. New buildings will have a higher level of accessibility for people with disabilities. Changes include improved accessibility in small retail stores and common areas in condominium and apartment buildings, as well as more wheelchair spaces in buildings where fixed seating is provided.

### Accessibility Projects on Heritage

After reviewing accessibility standards from around the world, Heritage BC developed an Access Audit Checklist to use at provincial heritage sites to help create more universally accessible spaces. Heritage BC will also produce a comprehensive guide for other heritage properties to use to conduct their own access audits.

## B.C. Parks and SPARC BC Co-Presenting Research Results at the BC Protected Areas Research Forum

SPARC BC partnered with B.C. Parks to survey 20,000 British Columbians with mobility challenges about their experiences using B.C. Parks. The partners presented the results at the BC Protected Areas Research Forum conference held at the University of Northern British Columbia in December 2018.

## Accessible Housing

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

### Right Fit Pilot Project: A Good Fit

The Right Fit Pilot Project (RFPP) is a three-year, multi-partner initiative that brings housing and disability service providers together to address challenges facing wheelchair users who need affordable, wheelchair-accessible homes and independent living supports in Metro Vancouver.

People who use wheelchairs typically wait years to find suitable homes. Challenges include high demand, limited supply of accessible, affordable housing and lengthy wait lists for securing independent living supports and equipment, as well as the lack of a centralized marketplace or standards for matching accessible housing features and needs.

Since the project launched in 2017, the team has implemented and tested systemic changes, developed a new accessibility checklist to standardize supply and demand data sharing, and established a new case management model to help connect wheelchair users with housing and service providers.

As of September 2018, five project applicants have found a match and were placed in wheelchair-accessible units. The affordable housing crisis has significantly limited the pace at which the project can match individuals to suitable vacancies and dozens of people are still working with the navigator team to find suitable homes. The major challenge for the project has been the tight supply and very limited turnover rates of subsidized accessible rental units in Metro Vancouver.

BC Housing is offering eligible providers extra subsidies as an incentive to hold units for longer while the project team works to place suitable candidates.

## Spotlight

Soran has used a wheelchair since a spinal cord injury in Iraq, and he and his brother Asos moved to Canada in July 2016. Soran was living in a small non-accessible apartment that was also far from his school.

By the time Soran and Asos approached the RFPP in April 2018 they had spent almost two years reaching out to different people and organizations in the hope of finding a suitable accessible home. Navigators matched the brothers with a co-op vacancy in downtown Vancouver, and they moved in on September 1st.

We received great service and the navigators are very helpful and friendly,” said Asos. "They were always in contact with us via telephone, email and fax. They also wrote me support letters that I feel contributed greatly to securing our new home.”

## BC Housing Investing & Planning for the Future

BC Housing continues its mission to make a positive difference in people’s lives and communities through safe, affordable and quality housing. New accessible housing includes:

- A six-bedroom group home for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities in Salmon Arm
- Working with CLBC in New Westminster to develop a group home for individuals with mental and physical disabilities
- Developing a 4-bedroom home dedicated to mental and dual disabilities in Maple Ridge
- Fully wheelchair accessible unit for adults with developmental disabilities in Powell River
- A group home in Chilliwack

All common areas in and around new buildings allow for universal access. At least 5% of the total units built through B.C. Housing is required to be wheelchair accessible.

## Community in Action

### Technology Increases Independence Among B.C. Seniors

CanAssist at the University of Victoria develops innovative technologies and services. Their CanStayHome initiative helps vulnerable seniors to remain in their own homes for as long as safely possible. These solutions help reduce stress among family members and other care givers and may reduce the need for one-on-one care.

Two CanStayHome projects nearing completion are the Caregiver Intercom and Ability411. The Caregiver Intercom is an alternative to a standard phone for seniors who cannot answer a landline or cellphone because of cognitive and physical challenges. Ability411 is a website and service that will provide seniors, their families and care providers with information about assistive technologies,

including personalized responses to their questions.

## Housing Needs Reports – Planning for the Future

The 2018 Local Government Statutes (Housing Needs Reports) Amendment Act requires local governments to develop reports at least every five years that identify current and projected needs for different types of housing in a community, such as accessible and supported housing. Local governments must consider the housing needs reports when amending community and regional plans, creating local policies, and making development decisions that relate to housing.

A \$5 million, three-year provincial funding program, administered by UBCM, will support local government to develop the reports.

## Raising Awareness for Inclusive Housing

CLBC is working to help raise awareness of inclusive housing

CLBC has hosted regular education events on inclusive housing. In 2018, CLBC hosted sessions at the annual BC Non-Profit Housing Association conference. This conference brings together non-profit housing providers and developers, municipalities and other stakeholders.

## Home Adaptations for Independence

BC Housing's Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) program provides financial assistance for home modifications to eligible low-income British Columbians with mobility or health issues. In 2018, 350 properties are more accessible thanks to the HAFI grant.

## CARMA Program Helps Develop Accessible Housing after Closure of the George Pearson Centre

George Pearson Centre houses 114 people with a broad range of disabilities and it remains the last significant institution of its kind in British Columbia. The Community and Residence Mentors Association (CARMA) is working with Pearson residents and partner agencies to plan for the closure of the Centre by 2030 and to assist residents with resettling in the community.

Once the Centre is closed, fully accessible replacement housing and a community health centre will be built on the lands. The new design has state-of-the-art assistive technology that enables greater independence. The first group of 50 residents will resettle in their new homes in 2022.

## Accessible Transportation

Providing accessible transportation options for people with disabilities

### Traveling by BC Ferries Now More Accessible

BC Ferries is taking significant steps to make their services more accessible. They introduced audio induction loop hearing systems onto two ferries this year, the Queen of Oak Bay and the Queen of Surrey. This technology will be included on all vessels moving forward. Upgrades on the two Spirit class vessels will include improved washroom and elevator safety features, an induction loop hearing system, and new emergency safety features for passengers with disabilities.

BC Ferries is adding tactile and braille signage on board vessels, including in washrooms, stairwells and elevators. The Salish Class vessels and the Spirit of British Columbia already have the updated signage package, and the Spirit of Vancouver Island will be updated during its mid-life upgrade.

Two new minor Island Class ferries are currently under construction. They will feature a lounge on the vehicle deck for enhanced accessibility, as well as accessible washrooms, visual information screens and induction loop hearing systems. The Island Class ferries will also include a new, accessible slide-based marine evacuation system.

New major class vessels are set to enter service mid-2020. BC Ferries is exploring new technology, such as location transponders for wayfinding. The transponders will improve accessibility for passengers during travel.

### B.C. Bus Pass Program

Following consultation and feedback from stakeholders, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction improved the B.C. Bus Pass program for individuals on disability assistance. The transportation supplement, separate from the actual disability and hardship rate, is available to all people receiving disability assistance and can be used for an annual bus pass or for other transportation needs, such as handyDART or taxi. The supplement is also flexible. People can apply for the B.C. Bus Pass at any time during the year or cancel their bus pass and use the supplement for other transportation costs. The supplement creates fairness and will help people connect with their community, giving them freedom to work, shop and participate in social activities.

### Enhanced Accessibility a Priority for TransLink

TransLink will acquire 80 vehicles between 2018 and 2020 that will expand capacity on the Expo, Millennium, Evergreen and Canada Lines.

Accessibility features on the new vehicles include next station announcements, door-side indicator lights, flex spaces for mobility devices and designated seating for seniors and people with disabilities. TransLink obtained input on operational issues and vehicle design from a volunteer group of transit users with a variety of disabilities.

Accessibility upgrades are underway at a number of SkyTrain and SeaBus stations, and will continue through 2019. They include improved elevators, escalators, wayfinding and curb ramps. Accessibility improvements at transit exchanges include upgraded sidewalks and access paths, more shelters, and benches, wayfinding, and tactile strips.

## BC Transit Continues to Improve Accessibility

BC Transit has expanded on existing policies and programs, and now requires drivers to call out stop information for passengers.

The \$11.8 million SmartBus BC project is being implemented by BC Transit with funding from the federal, provincial and local governments. A key piece of the SmartBus BC program is BC Transit's NextRide system that features Automatic Vehicle Locators which provides customers with real-time information on the location of their bus and its predicted arrival time. Customers can access this information from a BC Transit website using an internet connected mobile device or desktop. Buses will feature automatic voice announcements and passenger information displays. Select major bus terminals will have wayside passenger information displays that will visually display anticipated bus arrival times. NextRide has been implemented in Nanaimo, Comox Valley, Squamish, Whistler and Kamloops and will be introduced on Kelowna and Victoria buses by spring 2019.

## Improvements in Highway Accessibility

The 2017/18 Transit Minor Betterments Program improved transit accessibility in 23 communities across B.C. Projects included extending and paving bus pullouts, installing wheelchair accessible concrete pads at bus stops, upgrading sidewalks and access paths, and installing bus shelters. Led by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, this program provides \$1 million each year to improve access and increase safety for transit users in communities across B.C.

The ministry is developing a 10-year plan for 100% mobility access to rest area washrooms. A new accessible rest area on South Taylor Hill was completed in November 2017. A brand new modern accessible rest area on the Okanagan Connector (H97C) between Merritt and Kelowna opened in February 2018.

DriveBC is also improving accessibility. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) is the voice

recognition system that allows people to access DriveBC information hands free via the telephone. In 2017, there were over 72,000 calls to the system, an increase of 60% over 2016.

## Expanding, Reviewing handyDART Service in B.C.

HandyDART is an accessible, door-to-door service for people unable to use conventional transit. The service expanded by approximately 8,000 annual hours in 2017/18. The expansion included increases in Kamloops, Victoria, Chilliwack and Kelowna and will continue in 2018/2019.

BC Transit is implementing a new handyDART registration that matches applicants to the most appropriate transit services for their needs. This will include assessment consultations with occupational therapists. To date, the new process has been implemented in nine communities, most recently in Campbell River, Prince George and the Shuswap.

In Metro Vancouver, TransLink continued to increase HandyDART service as part of TransLink's 10-Year Vision. In 2017, TransLink committed to add 171,000 trips over three years. In June 2018, TransLink approved an additional 76,000 trips by 2021.

## Government in Action

### TransLink Rolls Out Universal Fare Gate Access Program

TransLink's Universal Fare Gate Access Program eliminates the need to physically tap in or out with a Compass Card, enhancing accessibility for individuals using SkyTrain and SeaBus services. After consultation with the disability community and a successful pilot in 2017, TransLink began rolling out proximity-enabled sensors at all SkyTrain and SeaBus stations. This technology automatically opens fare gates using a radio frequency identification (RFID) card. The program is now complete and all stations are fully accessible.

## Community in Action

### Reducing Accessibility Barriers in Victoria

The City of Victoria dedicated \$70,000 in 2018 from its Accessibility Reserve Fund to install accessible pedestrian signals at several locations throughout the municipality. With guidance and advice from its Accessibility Working Group, Victoria is completing improvements at Cecilia Ravine Park including a new wheelchair accessible pathway, play equipment and public washroom. Victoria is also developing a citywide Accessibility Framework to reduce barriers to city services and facilities, on-line resources, transportation infrastructure, and public spaces.

## Income Support

Providing income supports and financial assistance

## Poverty Reduction Strategy

People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty than other British Columbians. B.C.'s first Poverty Reduction Strategy which will be released in early 2019, will lift thousands of people out of poverty, create more opportunities to break the cycle of poverty and make it easier for people to participate in their community. More than 8,500 people took part in a broad public engagement on poverty from November 2017 to March 2018. Many individuals with disabilities and disability organizations participated in the consultation which included round tables held in 28 communities throughout the Province as well as meetings, and online consultation.

Legislation has been passed that will:

- Commit government to reduce B.C.'s overall poverty rate by 25% and child poverty rate by 50% in the next five years
- Establish an independent advisory committee that will include a person with disabilities
- Require the Minister to consult with representatives from disability groups when updating the strategy

## Making Progress with Moving Forward Steering Committee

The Province has been working with the Moving Forward Steering Committee, which includes representatives from community advocates, to improve policies, programs and service delivery for people receiving disability or income assistance. As a result, the Province clients can now provide consent to allow ministry staff to discuss their information with an agency or a designated individual or allow ministry staff to request specific ministry services on their behalf.

Individuals who prefer the support of an advocate can nominate an agency or individual to work with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

## Eliminating MSP Premiums

The B.C. Government will eliminate Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums by January 1, 2020, saving individuals up to \$900 a year, and families up to \$1,800 a year. Government has already cut MSP premiums by 50% as of January 1, 2018 and increased the threshold for premium assistance by \$2,000.

## Post-Secondary Communication Access Services – Grants & Workshops

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training has financial programs for post-secondary students with disabilities for assistive technology, complete B.C. student loan forgiveness, or transcribing, interpreting and communication services. Grants and bursaries such as the Severe Permanent Disability Benefit or Repayment Assistance Plan for Students with Disabilities help students overcome financial and accommodation barriers. For example, the Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities provides up to \$12,000 per year to pay for exceptional education-related services and adaptive equipment.

## Accessible Dentistry

Individuals with disabilities that need general anaesthetic for their dental procedures will have less time to wait thanks to an increase in the number of dental surgeries that B.C. hospitals will perform. The total number of surgeries will grow by 15% in 2018-19, from 6,200 to 7,100, the largest one time increase in dental surgery in British Columbia.

## Employment

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

## Increasing Employment Opportunities

The Presidents Group continues to champion increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Whether they're engaging with the community, adding resources and information on [accessibleemployers.ca](http://accessibleemployers.ca), or participating in panels, roundtables or training sessions, this group of business leaders, are making sure that employers throughout B.C. are aware of the business benefits of building accessible, inclusive workplaces.

More than 250+ individuals have attended Presidents Group training sessions on topics like how to develop a diverse and inclusive hiring strategy or how to retain an inclusive workforce. Since January, Presidents Group members have participated on 10 panels to share their experiences and learnings about building inclusive workplaces, reaching more than 1000+ attendees.

The Presidents Group earned Pacific Autism Family Network's 2018 Game Changers Achievement Award for its work in authentic inclusion. Pacific Autism awards this honour to organizations who advance the employment opportunities available to individuals with a developmental disability.

The Presidents Group has created the Community of Accessible Employers to give all BC businesses an opportunity to join the inclusive employment movement.

Hiring people with disabilities is good for business but it can be hard to know where to start, or how to improve on what already being done. By joining the Community of Accessible Employers, businesses can learn from other employers and business owners about best practices and innovative approaches to creating an accessible and inclusive workplace. Businesses will also receive access to a custom-tailored resource toolkit.

To join the Community of Accessible Employers, please visit [accessibleemployers.ca](http://accessibleemployers.ca). And best of all, it's free!

## Community in Action

### Ready, Willing & Able

Ready, Willing and Able is a national program that engages, educates, and supports employers to hire people with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Over the last few years Inclusion BC has delivered the program in communities throughout the province, including Prince George, Mission, Fort St John and Vancouver. Ready, Willing and Able connects employers with local employment agencies who support adults with intellectual disabilities and ASD. This past year, 218 jobs were secured in B.C. Two thirds of employers said they would “definitely” or “probably” hire again within the next 12 months.

### Federal Funding for Innovative Neil Squire Society Initiatives

The Neil Squire Society has been granted up to \$10 million for its Working Together with Employers and Enhancing Employability (Working Together) program. This program recognizes equitable employment is essential to an inclusive community and develops individuals' skills to help them achieve their employment goals.

The Society also received more than \$3 million through the federal Accessible Technology Program, which invests in technological and digital initiatives that remove current barriers to digital services.

### The TYDE is Turning

The Transitioning Youth with Disabilities and Employment (TYDE) Project addresses the low employment outcomes of working age individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder with a specific focus on youth transitioning to adulthood.

Led by researchers at University of British Columbia along with government and community stakeholders, the research network includes Autism Society of BC, BCANDS, CLBC, Pacific Autism Family Centre, government, and many more partners.

Over the next five years, TYDE will develop and test an online interactive learning environment for youth with intellectual disabilities or young people on the autism spectrum.

## Diversity at HSBC

Renu Sangha has been with HSBC for two and a half years, currently as a Business Analyst in the Transformation group. Renu has a Bachelors' of Science and Bachelors of Business Administration from Simon Fraser University and a Certified General Accountant designation. Renu is deaf and uses sign language to communicate. She also utilizes an interpreter when needed.

At HSBC, Renu has been able to hire an interpreter for three days a week for four hours a day, allowing her to have an interpreter at key group meetings. She is able to work two days a week from home, and conduct meetings virtually using assistive technology. Renu says she has always had managers who are supportive and advocate for the small accommodations she may require, such as booking meetings in advance so she can ensure her interpreter is present.

## SAP Labs Leading the Way

SAP Labs Vancouver is leading the way in accessible recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities. The facilities team have been steadily transforming the dark, 1950's-era building into a warm, welcoming, and forward-looking workplace that's accessible for people with disabilities.

An accessibility audit helped SAP Labs Vancouver identify various areas for improvement in their city-block sized work space. The effective use of signage and wayfinding ensures that interior pathways are easy to navigate. Wide doorways and walkways, as well as gentle slopes, allow people with mobility or vision disabilities to move comfortably throughout the building and outside.

Strategically-placed emergency strobe lights and a comprehensive emergency plan make sure that all SAP staff are safe in the event of an emergency. Bathrooms, kitchens and the employee gym have been upgraded to ensure that they are easily accessible to all.

A \$20,000 grant from the Rick Hansen Foundation as well as a \$20,000 matching investment from SAP will enable further accessibility upgrades and infrastructure improvements.

SAP has also committed to a diversity and inclusion strategy that supports all aspects of operations. SAP's Autism at Work program seeks to ensure that its workforce is representative of the wider population, with a target to hire 650 people on the autism spectrum globally by 2020. By creating an inclusive environment, SAP Labs Vancouver office can recruit new talent from a broader group of people, while demonstrating its commitment to improved accessibility.

## Government in Action

### WorkBC Success in Smithers

WorkBC helps people find jobs, explore career options and improve their skills as well as help employers fill jobs, find the right talent and grow their businesses.

For people with disabilities, WorkBC offers a wide variety of disability-related services and supports. WorkBC supported Jesse, a young person with Downs Syndrome, to find work in Smithers. Together, Jesse and WorkBC completed a Customized Employment Development Discovery process to map his strengths. Jesse then completed and developed an employment profile that highlighted his abilities. As a special Olympian, Jesse's dream job was to work in a sports store. WorkBC worked with Jesse and the manager of a local Sport Check to establish a position that was right for everyone. Jesse received some training, job coaching and hands-on assistance before becoming a sales advisor with Sports Check.

### Improving Accessibility for In-Demand Job Training

In June 2018, government announced new, one-time funding totalling \$1.5 million to support students with cognitive, mental-health or physical disabilities in training for high demand jobs.

Twenty post-secondary institutions received \$75,000 each to provide job-specific training, mental health assistance, or help instructors develop tools to better support students.

Vancouver Community College also received \$150,000 in August 2018 from the Vancouver Foundation to expand its accessible employment training programs that provide deaf and hard of hearing students with certified trades training in four major industries: food services, transportation trades, salon and spa, and technology.

### TeenWork

2018 has marked a year of expansion for TeenWork, which is now offered in Greater Victoria and the Lower Mainland. This youth employment program, developed by CanAssist, provides support to teenagers with a broad range of

physical, cognitive and mental health barriers in finding and retaining part-time employment while attending high school.

A TeenWork job coach provides on-site job coaching and supports teens in working toward complete workplace independence—an important stepping stone for young people as they transition to adulthood. During fiscal 2017-18, TeenWork reported a 92% success rate for participants finding paid employment during their time in the program.

## Supporting Future Entrepreneurs with Disabilities

The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP), through Community Futures, reduces the obstacles that people with disabilities or ongoing health issues may face when looking for financing. In 2017-18 Community Futures Rural EDP disbursed \$1.5 million in loans, served 307 clients, helped to create or maintain employment for 124 individuals and created or expanded 52 businesses in the province. In 2018, the Community Futures Urban Entrepreneurs Disability Program was launched to support entrepreneurs living in Greater Victoria and Greater Vancouver that have a disability or ongoing health issue.

## Financial Security

Helping people with disabilities become more financially independent

### Tax AID DABC Secures \$1.5 Million in Tax Benefits for People

Since 2015, Tax AID DABC has provided free tax-filing support for people receiving Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers to Employment (PPMB) benefits.

Between 2015 and 2018, Tax AID DABC has helped 632 people with disabilities secure an estimated \$1.5 million in income tax benefits. Income tax filing is essential for determining access to other programs, including Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) grants and bonds, Medical Services Plan coverage, recreation programs, and subsidized housing.

In 2018, the Province provided DABC with \$1.14 million to expand the program to three other regions where they will work in partnership with the Active Support Against Poverty Society in Prince George, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society in Kelowna and Together Against Poverty Society in Victoria.

## Community in Action

Tax AID DABC Success Stories

Names are changed for confidentiality purposes

### **Justin**

As a young person with a disability, Justin had never really appreciated the significant benefits of income tax filing. With support from his mom he reached out to a Tax AID DABC team member and got help filing five years of income tax returns. He was thrilled when he found out he would receive over \$2,700 in tax related benefits. In a message of thanks to DABC, Justin's mother said "he really appreciated [DABC's] approach - you were helpful, pleasant, friendly, respectful. Thank you, thank you for all that you did".

### **Mike**

Mike and his adult son Toby both have disabilities and live together so that they can better support one another. Mike had not filed his income taxes for six years. With help from the Tax AID Ki-Low-Na advocate in Kelowna, they were both able to get caught up on their taxes and will receive more than \$7,500 in benefits.

## **Access RDSP is Making a Difference**

The Access RDSP partnership - Plan Institute, BCANDS and DABC and funded by the Vancouver Foundation - assists eligible individuals in B.C. to open RDSPs. The partners offer one-on-one support for individuals, as well as information sessions, a disability hotline, and Indigenous RDSP Navigation supports. They also help individuals and families access the Endowment 150 grant.

In the spring of 2018, Access RDSP was awarded the Excellence in Health Promotion award by the Doctors of BC for demonstrating creativity and initiative to improve and protect the health and safety of British Columbians.

To date, the partners have logged BCANDS has helped close to 3,000 people navigate the process of apply for the RDSP and distributed 1128 Endowment 150 grants.

To learn more about Access RDSP, [please visit rdsp.com](http://rdsp.com).

## **RDSP Action Group: Improving Financial Stability across B.C.**

The RDSP Action Group continues to champion Registered Disability Savings Plans, increasing the financial security for persons with disabilities and their families in B.C. The Group has worked closely with the federal government and the legal, disability, and financial sectors, to improve uptake in the RDSP program. As of August 2018, 31,038 British Columbians, or 40%, of eligible people now have an RDSP, making B.C. the province with the highest per capita uptake in the country.

The RDSP Group has updated their guide to opening and managing an RDSP. Accessible copies are available on the [RDSP Action Group page](#).

Names have been changed for confidentiality purposes.

### **Sarah**

Sarah had not heard about the RDSP until a friend told her about it and the support she could get from Access RDSP to apply. Due to the severity of her disability, Sarah is no longer able to work and has been receiving provincial disability assistance for three years. Sarah's doctor was not familiar with the RDSP and was not sure whether Sarah would qualify for the RDSP. Sarah, her doctor, and her Access RDSP advocate worked collaboratively to apply for the DTC. After a few months of waiting, Sarah was notified that she had been approved. She is currently in the process of opening her RDSP and will be eligible for retroactive grants and bonds going back five years.

### **Loubna**

Loubna has had an RDSP for six years. She had used the proceeds of a personal injury award to accumulate significant grants and bonds but was distraught when her application to renew her DTC was denied as she faced losing her RDSP. An Access RDSP team member helped to review her application. They worked with her and her physician to submit additional information regarding her health restrictions. After receiving this information, the CRA changed their decision and approved Loubna's application to renew her DTC. Once she confirmed this with her financial institution they were able to keep her RDSP open and renew her hopes for a financially secure future.[JJPS6]

In June 2018, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology released *Breaking Down Barriers*, which included 16 recommendations to simplify the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) program and increase its usage. The report recognized the work of B.C.'s RDSP Action Group and recommended that the federal Ministry of Families, Children and Social Development study and adopt a similar model.

## **CRA Reinstates Disability Advisory Committee**

In November 2017 the federal government reinstated the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), that provides a voice for people with disabilities in the tax system.

The DAC is currently addressing barriers related to the Disability Tax Credit, a non-refundable tax credit that helps persons with disabilities or their supporting persons reduce the amount of income tax they may have to pay.

## Inclusive Communities

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

## Supporting Community-Based Initiatives

In May 2018, the Province provided \$500,000 to DABC to create and administer a grant program for projects that promote greater accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities in B.C. Eligible community-based accessibility projects will focus on areas including employment, emergency planning, cultural engagement, recreation, education and other forms of community participation. Successful projects will receive between \$10,000 and \$40,000 in early 2019.

## Communities Celebrating AccessAbility Week

During British Columbia's first AccessAbility Week, May 27 to June 2, 2018, communities throughout the province hosted events and supported activities that promoted the importance of inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities. The province provided \$10,000 in funding to the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to support accessibility awareness events in communities throughout B.C.

## Re-Imagining Community Inclusion

In May 2018, provincial representatives met with key organizations engaged with community living services to discuss what inclusion for adults with developmental disabilities should look like in 10 years. The Re-Imagining Community Inclusion Initiative flows from those discussions. This initiative is about ensuring that every person with an intellectual or developmental disability has the right and opportunity to live a good life, across all domains, and to the best of each person's unique abilities and interests.

Rooted in the lived experience of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the initiative will further engage a partnership table of stakeholders to help develop a shared vision and a collaborative, system-wide approach to the provision of community living supports and services over the next 10 years.

## B.C. Benefits from Barrier Buster Grants

McGirr Elementary School in Nanaimo used a \$30,000 Barrier Buster grant to create an inclusive playground. The school created wheelchair-friendly access to the main playground area, provided landscaping to create a more calming and safe space, and introduced inclusive play equipment. A fully accessible gathering space also provides teachers with an outdoor classroom that encourages socialization and learning in a relaxed natural setting.

Other projects funded by the grant include accessible fishing facilities in Peachland and installing accessibility features in Prince Rupert. In total, nearly \$400,000 was invested across the province to help remove barriers and increase inclusion.

## Inclusion for All

Inclusion BC has been working with people with developmental disabilities and their families since 1955. In May, the Provincial Government provided \$270,000 to hire community inclusion advocates to support young people and their families. Inclusion BC advocates take the time to understand a family's needs and help them explore solutions to often complex challenges. They also help families and individuals strengthen their own problem-solving and advocacy skills. In the first three months of the program, the advocates have supported nearly 100 people.

## Community in Action

### Theatre for Everyone

The Arts Club Theatre Company is proud to offer live VocalEye Described Performances at two of its venues for patrons who are blind and partially sighted.

The Arts Club Theatre also offer relaxed performances. These inclusive experiences provide accommodations such as dimmed lights or lowered sound levels to meet the needs of people with Autism or other conditions who benefit from a less restrictive audience environment.

In addition, the theatre offers a visual story to help prepare patrons for the experience of being at the theatre. The visual story walks patrons through each aspect of the theatre and can help individuals with anxiety to enjoy their experience.

### All Welcome at Skookum

SKOOKUM is one of B.C.'s most eclectic festivals with a mix of contemporary music, food, and art. Held in beautiful Stanley Park, the event organizers are continually improving their efforts to ensure the festival is accessible and inclusive.

An Accessibility Center provides a recharging station for wheelchair batteries or other assistive technology, stores equipment such as oxygen tanks or insulin, and provides information about festival accessibility. The Centre also has options for patrons who are deaf and hard of hearing, including Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) as well as SubPac Tactile Sensation Systems. The festival venue is navigable for people in wheelchairs and raised viewing areas are available at the three main stages. Guided tours of the venue mean that patrons with visual impairments can navigate the festival.

## Accessible Library Service

The National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) makes copies of books in accessible formats available to readers in Canada who have print disabilities. In 2018, NNELS worked on six projects to improve community inclusivity and enhance access to reading materials through public libraries. Projects included working with the Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) to create ten audiobook recording kits complete with headset microphones, USB keys, instructions, and a bright red shipping case. Any public library in Canada can borrow a kit to record books for people with print disabilities. NNELS also worked with the Vision Impaired Resource Network (VIRN) to produce 15 different print-braille children's books which have been distributed to every province and territory. In the last year NNELS has added 19,193 EPUB files and 3,539 audiobooks to the online collection, including simultaneous release of award winning books. As of April 2018, there were nearly 35,000 titles in the NNELS collection.

## Community Asset Mapping

CLBC Community Councils are using community asset mapping to build connections and increase inclusion and belonging for all people. CLBC Community Councils are made up of people with disabilities, family members and community partners. In 2018-2019 Community Councils are partnering with organizations and citizens across B.C. to co-host events that will map and share information about places and resources that are inclusive and welcoming.

## Widening Our World Awards

Each year, Community Living BC (CLBC) recognizes people or organizations whose build communities where people with disabilities feel welcome, valued and respected, through the provincial Widening Our World (WOW) awards. Last year, 47 nominees were recognized for their efforts. Recipients included Eve Reinarz who has worked in the Nanaimo area for over 20 years. Her recent projects include work on access to healthy food and inclusive art.

## Gary Birch Recognized with Order of British Columbia

Dr. Gary Birch is a British Columbian who is making a difference for people with disabilities. He is a Canadian Paralympian, an expert in brain-computer interface and executive director of the Neil Squire Society. Following a 1975 auto crash that left him a quadriplegic, he became fascinated with assistive technology and developing new technologies to improve the quality of life for people living with physical impairments across Canada.

Dr. Birch earned his degree in electrical engineering at UBC and went on to earn a doctorate in electrical engineering. Under his leadership, the Neil Squire Society has supported over 10,000 people with disabilities to develop computer skills, find employment, and become more active members of their communities. It has also operated Technology@Work since May 2015, providing assistive technology to individuals who have a work-related barrier due to disability.

Dr. Birch continues to lead a team of researchers developing and deploying innovative assistive technologies. He sits on many advisory committees and boards and continues to play an important role in furthering the independence of people with disabilities in Canada.

Dr. Birch was inducted into the Terry Fox Hall of Fame by the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons in 1998. He became an officer in the Order of Canada in 2008, was awarded the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012 and received the Order of British Columbia in 2017.

### Vancouver Park Board Increasing Accessibility at Beaches and Pools

Two of Vancouver's most popular beaches are now more inclusive for people with mobility challenges.

The Vancouver Park Board installed a Mobi-Mat, a non-slip beach access path, at Kitsilano Beach in May 2018. The first Mobi-Mat was installed at English Bay Beach last summer. The Park Board also has ten new water wheelchairs available at various beaches and pools across the city. The floating chairs provide safe access to the ocean, with the assistance of an attendant.

### Prince George Gets First Universally Accessible Playground

Spinal Cord Injury BC and B.C. Parks partnered to install BC's first playground with universally accessible design elements. Designed and installed by Habitat Systems Inc., the playground is located at Purden Lake Park, east of Prince George. It includes wheelchair-accessible ramps that take users to a unique piece of equipment that allows them to experience various movements, such as swinging. In 2018, 25 schools received \$105,000 for a universally accessible playground and 26 schools received \$90,000 for a standard playground.

### Giving Wheelchair Basketball a Spin

In 2018, Fort St John hosted the sixth annual Bo Hedges Wheelchair Basketball Challenge. Bo Hedges is a three-time Paralympian who competes with Team Canada at Wheelchair Basketball Tournaments throughout the world. For those who are keen on wheelchair basketball, Fort St John offers a summer program that is open to everyone. Chairs, hoops, and basketballs are all provided!

## People In Motion Move Mountains

This year, People In Motion and its successful adaptive snow sports program, Powderhounds, have partnered with Baldy Mountain resort and BC Adaptive Snowsports (BCAS) to provide “Baldy Blue Jays Adaptive Sports”. This adaptive sports program supports people with physical and cognitive disabilities to get out and enjoy mountain sports.

## Special Woodstock

Special Woodstock is a free, accessible, and inclusive festival that has been celebrating music and art for the last 19 years. Special Woodstock is held outside Duncan and has three stages that feature musicians with disabilities as well as local bands. The festival also features exhibitions of the work of visual artists with disabilities. Festival attendee Amanda describes the day as one in which “everyone helps each other”.

## VEPC - Family & Community Care Programs

In 2018 the Victoria Epilepsy and Parkinson's Centre began the Family and Community Care Programs to support single parents with epilepsy or seizures with caring for their children.

The services offered allow parents to go out in the community with the extra support of a supervisor or babysitter to assist the parent when required. Parents and children are safer and happier and more able to engage with community activities. The Community Care Program aims to provide clients with epilepsy companions who can provide a range of activities and support. The program supports individuals with epilepsy or seizures to get out into the community and become more involved in community activities.

## Government in Action

### ICBC Supports Services for Brain Injury Survivors

Through the community grants program, ICBC is supporting services for individuals with a brain injury in five communities across B.C. In Campbell River, the grant is supporting the development of Linda's Place; a treatment and accommodation centre for brain-injured clients being developed by the Campbell River Head Injury Society. The Centre will provide housing for brain injury survivors above treatment rooms. The treatment rooms will provide space for specialists to support brain injury survivors to access help in their community.

## Emergency Preparedness

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

## An Emergency Plan for Every Community (DABC1)

Disability Alliance BC's (DABC) "A Functional Needs Framework for Every Community" initiative supports communities to integrate the Functional Needs Framework (FNF) for emergency planning into their community response plans. The FNF approach looks at functional limitations such as: seeing, hearing, mobility, and how these impact an individual's ability to respond in disasters. DABC has provided training to more than 500 Emergency Program representatives and community members from 57 local communities, eight regional districts and four First Nations communities. These communities represent 46% of B.C.'s population with potentially as many as 314,000 people with disabilities living in these communities.

## Shake Out for All

Each October, ShakeOutBC helps British Columbians prepare to respond and protect themselves for a major earthquake. Resources for individuals with mobility challenges show how to find a safe position during an earthquake. There are also tips and advice on emergency planning for individuals with disabilities. In 2017, 3,437 people from disability organizations put the good advice into practice as part of the British Columbia Shake Out Event.

## Community in Action

### Burnaby Improves Safety with Strobe Light Fire Alarm System

The Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion has been providing innovative social, recreational, and inclusive employment services for people with disabilities and their families for over 60 years. With a \$30,000 Barrier Buster grant from the Rick Hansen Foundation, the organization installed strobe light alarms to the existing fire alarm system at Still Creek Centre. This critical safety feature makes their 20,000 square-foot building safer for the many users who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

### Inclusive Emergency Planning in Metchosin

Metchosin has a specialized response plan for community members that need specific assistance in an emergency, including people with disabilities. Metchosin Emergency Operation Centre works with the Seniors Information Resource Centre to manage the specialized plan. The emergency preparedness work was supported with an age-friendly community grant of \$14,750. These funds will be used to raise

awareness among vulnerable groups and upgrade the district's emergency reception area. The Centre will undergo some accessibility upgrades to ensure that the needs of all members of the community can be met during an emergency. ds of all members of the community can be met during an emergency.

## 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.

## Recognizing Accessibility in the Okanagan

Okanagan Accessibility was formed in Vernon in 2016. The group promotes the importance of making public areas accessible to everyone, whether they use a mobility aid or perhaps need assistance due to visual impairments or hearing difficulties. As a group, they discuss places in the community that excel at accommodating accessibility needs. The group then presents these businesses with an 'Okanagan Accessibility' sticker to display in their window. The stickers let members of the community know that the business is accessible. Business displaying the sticker in Vernon include Scotiabank, Safeway and Home Hardware.

## Accessible Prescriptions

Accessing the important medication information on the print label of a prescription is a challenge for people who are blind, deafblind or sight-impaired. Access for Sight-Impaired Consumers (ASIC), an independent, consumer-driven advocacy coalition, has been working with retail pharmacies to ensure that important information such as dosage and potential side effects is available for sight-impaired consumers. Using the ScripTalk Reader, detailed medication information in the form of a small inexpensive radio-frequency identification (RFID) label can be attached to any medication container.

All of the information encoded on an RFID label is read aloud simply by placing the prescription bottle on the ScripTalk Reader and pressing a button. The ScripTalk Reader is provided free of charge by many pharmacists throughout B.C.

## Changes to Insurance Products

Every year British Columbians are injured in car accidents. Sometimes these injuries cause a life changing disability which requires medical care for support and recovery. The Province has introduced changes to legislation to modernize ICBC and provide insurance products that help consumers who are injured in a car

accident. British Columbians injured in a crash, whether or not they were at fault, are now eligible for up to \$300,000 towards their medical care and recovery, up from a previous maximum of \$150,000.

In addition, starting April 1, 2019, ICBC accident benefits will cover a greater variety of treatment services and significantly increase the amount covered for treatments so customers don't have to pay out of pocket. ICBC accident benefits will also include significant increases to wage loss, home support and other benefits.

## Accessible Communities Make for Accessible Tourism Opportunities

Spinal Cord Injury B.C. (SCI BC) has established Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with all of B.C.'s regional and provincial tourism agencies. The partners work together to establish a coordinated approach to the development of accessible travel and tourism products and services.

The first MOU was established with the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA). Through this relationship, SCI BC supported TOTA's successful bid for the region's Biosphere designation, which includes accessibility as a component of sustainability, and their nomination for the World Travel and Tourism Council's 2018 Tourism for Tomorrow Awards, for which they received the Destination Award.

## Working to Improve Accessibility at B.C. Parks

In 2018, B.C. Parks partnered with the Rick Hansen Foundation to train B.C. Parks staff and park operators in accessibility and universal design. Over 115 participants completed a two-day training course in ten locations across the province and 12 staff completed a five-day Accessibility Leadership course. The accessibility leaders will continue to deliver accessibility training and advice to B. C. Parks staff and park operators.

B.C. Parks has developed its own accessibility auditing and progress tracking tool and has completed over 66 accessibility audits in front-country parks. After each assessment, the information is made available to the public. B.C. Parks plans to complete audits of all remaining front-country parks in 2019.

B.C. Parks has also developed a Park Facility Universal Design Guide to ensure all future construction and maintenance of park facilities is as accessible as possible. The Design Guide includes access requirements, comments and guidelines on campsites, park furniture, washrooms, signage and trails.

In northern B.C., more than 450 accessibility audits have been completed by Spinal Cord Injury BC through the Access North Project. The [Access BC website](#) provides

in-depth accessibility specifications for each audited site.

## YVR Flying the Flag for Accessibility

Universal access is a fundamental component of customer care at Vancouver International Airport (YVR). This includes accessible washrooms, service animal relief areas, 24/7 customer care and all aspects of the terminal design and operations.

In collaboration with YVR, Spinal Cord Injury BC created a series of videos that provide advice and guidance for travellers with a disability. YVR and Spinal Cord Injury BC host an annual airport tour to prepare individuals using a wheelchair or other wheeled mobility device for air travel. The tour includes an opportunity to go through the check-in process, security screening and to learn about and test the transfer chairs used by airlines at YVR. YVR also partners with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) to provide accessibility tours.

YVR worked with the Canucks Autism Network to develop a resource kit and video series to assist families and individuals living with autism. These resources help individuals and families prepare for their upcoming trip and highlight the check-in process, security screening and boarding process. YVR is the first airport in Canada to implement the pilot program, YVR Autism Access Sticker, which provides an expedited airport process for families and individuals living with autism. This sticker is a self-identification tool for individuals living with autism, and when requested, is applied to the boarding pass. The sticker communicates the specific needs of passengers to airport employees, who then provide an expedited airport process through screening and customs.

YVR worked with the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH) to conduct an audit of services offered at the airport. As part of an accessibility trial in August 2018, YVR installed hearing loop systems at two Information Counters. This system improves the volume and clarity of sound delivered to the customer, thereby improving the experience for individuals who are hard of hearing and seeking assistance at these counters.

Most recently, YVR partnered with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) to launch the Fly Calm initiative. Resources include an interactive website with a number of tips and instruction videos as well as an on-the-go colouring book to help reduce traveller stress before a flight.

For more information about accessibility at YVR, [visit yvr.ca](https://www.yvr.ca).

## Supporting Accessible Tourism

The Resort Municipality Initiative has supported projects in eleven communities throughout the province. Projects include supporting trail enhancements, facility

upgrades and accessible transportation that ensure that B.C. communities can continue to provide goods and services to travellers with disabilities.

Located between the Canadian Rocky Mountains and Columbia Mountain ranges, the Town of Golden is visited by tourists from all over the world. Making sure that visitors and residents can access all the amenities is important. The town has been working on improvements to the highway including accessible pedestrian connectivity between the highway and downtown. Funded through the Resort Municipal Initiative, the town has also completed trail enhancements including the construction of fencing and gravel surfacing for multi-modal use by people with disabilities.

## Appendix A: Community & Employer Partnerships in Support of Accessibility

Community and Employer Partnerships have four active agreements aimed at enhancing services and improved outcomes for people with disabilities with a total value of \$3,217,036. For more information on Community and Employer Partnerships, [please visit WorkBC](#).

### Personal Income Information for Disabilities Assistance Recipients - Research & Innovation Project

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 (PWD) receiving disability assistance. The calculator, enhancements to information supports and training of case managers will improve access to accurate information for PWD 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.

**Approved funding:** \$696,820

### Thinking Skills at Work - Research & Innovation Project

During the period of 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.

**Approved funding:** \$1,661,004

## Optimizing Employment Outcomes for People Living in the Downtown East Side - Research & Innovation Project

During the period of September 1, 2018 to February 29, 2019, this pilot will test an innovative approach that uses Individual Placement Support (IPS) and Peer Support (PS) to help at-risk individuals accessing primary care services in the downtown east side (DTES) to gain meaningful employment. The pilot will assess the effectiveness of the intervention and present a final report that will serve to inform key stakeholders in further understanding of the unique labour market issues of the DTES and influence care services of the future.

**Approved funding:** \$364,235

## Techability: Aligning Diverse Abilities to Technical Occupations - Research & Innovation Project

During the period September 17th, 2018 to January 31st, 2020, an occupational framework/matrix of 20 technical occupations will be developed through the testing of occupational alignment with a minimum of 42 research participants recruited for 84 job-shadowing opportunities.

The framework/matrix will be used to quantify the risk and mitigation strategies and accommodation requirements for people receiving disability assistance in each of the 20 technical occupations and through the pilot project will be developed and refined to demonstrate its applicability and scalability for supporting the recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities in the technical sector and other sectors in British Columbia.

The Framework/Matrix and other resources identified through the project to support the employment integration of people with disabilities in technical occupations will be made available through the TECHAbility webpage which will be developed as a part of this project. The information from the case studies will also identify situations where there is an inaccurate perception of risk or suitability of a person with a disability for a given occupation.

**Approved funding:** \$494,977

## Appendix B: Age-Friendly Communities Grants

The Age-Friendly Communities Grant program is a partnership between the Government of B.C. and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). Each successful local government receives up to \$25,000 from UBCM to help undertake a variety of activities. From developing and implementing policies and plans and/or developing projects, the grant enables seniors to age in place and facilitates the creation of age-friendly communities.

More information about Age-Friendly BC can be found at [gov.bc.ca/agefriendly](http://gov.bc.ca/agefriendly).

The following communities have received 2018 Age-Friendly Communities Grants:

## Cache Creek

### Seniors Housing Needs Assessment

Building on its 2017 age-friendly community assessment, Cache Creek hopes to gain a better understanding of existing seniors housing conditions in the village to enable aging in place. Community engagement, including surveys and focus groups and a community housing profile will help determine the current conditions and need for seniors' housing.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Capital Regional District

### Pender Island Community Bus

A recent study on the quality of life of seniors on Pender Island recommended improving public transit for older adults who no longer can, or wish to, drive. This project, undertaken by Moving Around Pender, will engage seniors and seniors' organizations to identify how a reliable community bus service can promote greater participation by seniors in community activities, support seniors to access local goods and services, and facilitate seniors aging in place on the island.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Castlegar

### Age-friendly Assessment & Action Plan

An age-friendly assessment and action plan will be developed in collaboration with older adults, caregivers, service providers and Interior Health staff to determine gaps in services and supports and lead discussions on how to implement change. The plan is community driven by an existing age-friendly advisory team currently working with seniors' events in Castlegar and the Regional District of Central Kootenay.

**Amount:** \$25,000

## Columbia-Shuswap Regional District

### Helping Seniors Access Nutritious & Safe Food

Developing a sustainable nutrition program and resources to help seniors access safe, healthy food is the goal of this project. It will include seasonal workshops offered by dietitians, farmers, chefs and food outlet owners on how to access affordable, quality food; identify effective and economical ways to prepare food; and select the foods that will help to prevent chronic diseases.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Cranbrook

### Age-Friendly Assessment Program

Cranbrook's Age-friendly Advisory Committee will serve as the age-friendly champion for the community by developing a vision, gathering momentum for change and encouraging action. Surveys, public consultations and collaboration with other regional age-friendly committees will assist in the development of an action plan that prioritizes the needs of older adults in the community.

**Amount:** \$18,193

## Fort St. John

### Age-friendly Assessment & Action Plan

A multi-phase approach will move Fort St. John forward as an age-friendly community, with city staff working with stakeholders, organizations and individuals in the community. The assessment will focus on the inventory of age-friendly assets, identify barriers and needs and determine priorities for Fort St. John's older adult population.

**Amount:** \$25,000

## Fraser Lake

### Fraser Lake Walk & Roll Project

The Walk and Roll Project will provide opportunities for social interaction, learning and physical activities for seniors living in this rural community by increasing the use of the community vehicle. Monthly excursions will be arranged for seniors and their caregivers to access recreation facilities for activities, such as aquafit, or to attend a cultural event, such as live theatre or a speakers' series in neighbouring communities.

**Amount:** \$7,186

## Kaslo

### Advocating for Vulnerable Seniors

This project will help vulnerable seniors identify and pursue services and financial supports with the help of community outreach and support workers. Examples include social benefits, legal aid, disability, health, housing and pension needs. The project builds on Kaslo's 2015 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Kent

### Centennial Park Fitness Circuit

With a growing aging population, the District of Kent recognizes the importance of keeping seniors physically active and engaged in their communities. The Fitness Circuit Project is an opportunity to create an age-friendly, low-barrier physical activity venue, which helps seniors enhance their health and well-being and increase their social interaction.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Kitimat

### Age-friendly Action Plan

Kitimat is responding to a recent housing study that identifies the district as a community that has a large population of 65 and older residents that is expected to increase rapidly in the coming years. The action plan will assist the district in updating the official community plan, a crucial step in identifying the needs of seniors and providing for future updates to improve and enhance seniors' services. The plan builds on Kitimat's 2014 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$23,550

## Ladysmith

### Age-friendly Ladysmith: Walkability/Accessibility

This project recognizes the challenging landscape of Ladysmith and the limited transportation and transit services. It also addresses the fact that the percentage of residents aged 65 and older is higher than the B.C. average. Proposed activities include a scooter map to identify the safest routes to access key public locations, such as health and retail services, as well as the installation of a bench and railings

by the drugstore. Businesses will also complete an age-friendly assessment.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Langley

### Age-Friendly Strategy Implementation Projects

The township has two age-friendly projects in development: an age-friendly business-recognition pilot program, including dementia-friendly training for local businesses; and the development and delivery of social programs at community gardens throughout the township, including the installation of new garden plots in Yorkson Community park. The project builds on the Township of Langley's 2015 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Lillooet

### Seniors Housing Strategy & Age-Friendly Community Action Plan

Lillooet will partner with seniors and St'át'imc Elders to conduct community forums, workshops and surveys to develop an age-friendly needs assessment and action plan to inform the district's official community plan, bylaws, policies and its seniors housing strategy. The committee will also engage with those who assist older adults who cannot attend public gatherings, and staff of Interior Health and the First Nations Health Authority.

**Amount:** \$25,000

## Lytton

### Age-Friendly Seniors Housing Project

The Village of Lytton's Age-friendly Seniors Housing Committee wants to enable seniors and elders to remain in the community and close to their families, as it believes aging in place is critical for the continued health and well-being of older adults. This project is focused on identifying preferred options for seniors' housing requirements, driven by community input, values and knowledge.

**Amount:** \$14,860

## Maple Ridge

### On the Move: Seniors Transportation Initiative

Focusing on increasing community accessibility and improving social participation for older adults, this project will combine research on designing an effective transportation system, training for volunteer drivers and promotion of the initiative to relevant community organizations. It will create a plan for a community bus co-operative that engages seniors and will help provide them with recreation and healthy living activities. The project builds on Maple Ridge's 2016 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Metchosin

### Age-Friendly Engagement Project

Increasing communication and awareness of emergency preparedness and assistance for Metchosin's 2,000 older adults is the focus of this project. Enhancing the district's emergency reception centre/warning centre with accessible options will ensure that individual needs of the community's seniors are met during emergency situations. The project builds on Metchosin's 2012 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$14,750

## Montrose

### Age-Friendly Assessment & Action Plan

A task force of seniors' representatives and service providers will engage with residents throughout the assessment and development of an age-friendly action plan. A workshop, including task force members from neighbouring communities (Rossland and Trail), that are also undergoing age-friendly assessments, will identify areas for collaboration and resolve overlap.

**Amount:** \$24,898

## Nelson

### Age-Friendly Nelson: Implementing the Action Plan

The implementation of Nelson's age-friendly action plan, completed in 2017, will address systemic issues that affect older adults. This includes applying an age-friendly lens to the city's Active Transportation Plan; addressing priority issues like snow removal to aid those in scooters and wheelchairs; and supporting Nelson CARES Society in developing a transportation system to improve seniors' access to health and community supports, including trips for social and recreational outings

to reduce social isolation.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Osoyoos

### Age-Friendly Community Plan

Osoyoos has a very high seniors' population and will engage with them through surveys and open houses to develop its age-friendly community action plan. With a goal to help seniors live life actively and free from barriers, the project will also work with municipal staff and Interior Health to address issues related to transportation, affordable housing, social inclusion and health services.

**Amount:** \$19,875

## Penticton

### Fit Start Program

Encouraging older adults to become and stay active is an important public-health priority for the retirement community of Penticton. This program will offer flexibility exercises, aerobic conditioning, strength training and an educational component on lifestyle changes and arthritis disease management.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Powell River

### Seniors for Seniors: Powell River Seniors Coalition

The Seniors for Seniors Action Table will meet to discuss local barriers to age-friendly communities, plan and implement initiatives and advocate for policies and programs in their neighbourhoods. Several engagement meetings will identify champions in the community to join the table, which will work closely with the City of Powell River to advocate on behalf of seniors and assist in addressing the key priority areas outlined in the age-friendly community plan.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Prince George

### Active Seniors! Active Communities!

City staff will work with the seven community associations in Prince George to develop age-friendly recreational programs, activities and events, including

intergenerational programs that will foster respect and learning between seniors and youth. The Prince George Council of Seniors will play a key role in the development phase, program promotion and recruitment for seniors' participation.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Quesnel

### Age-Friendly Assessment & Strategic Plan

Quesnel recognizes that resident retention, including seniors, is important to the long-term vibrancy of its community. This assessment of the city's age-friendly capacity will set the foundation for the development of a plan, priorities and activities to enable more seniors to age in place. The assessment will include consultation in a world café setting, meetings with relevant groups and organizations, and outreach to isolated seniors.

**Amount:** \$25,000

## Richmond

### Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan

Richmond's dementia-friendly community action plan will ensure that those living with dementia, their families and caregivers, as well as all Richmond residents feel supported and connected in their communities. This will include creating access to tools and resources to help them age in place independently, safely and with a better sense of inclusion and belonging. The plan builds on Richmond's 2015 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$25,000

## Rossland

### Age-Friendly Assessment & Action Plan

The community of Rossland will be engaged in the age-friendly assessment and action planning through questionnaires, in-person conversations and making connections at existing community and stakeholder events. A workshop including task force members from neighbouring communities (Montrose and Trail), that are also undergoing age-friendly assessments, will identify areas for collaboration and resolve overlap.

**Amount:** \$24,989

## Saanich

### Cedar Hill Social Club

A new, vibrant social club will combine two existing clubs, one of which was experiencing diminishing membership. Neither were financially sustainable individually. It will provide an opportunity for many individuals to enjoy the benefits of expanded social, cultural and physical activity programs. The Cedar Hill Social Club will be located within a recreation centre, and the district hopes to grow the membership for it to become self-sustaining. The project builds on Saanich's 2012 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$14,992

## Salmo

### Seniors Quality of Life

With an overall goal of improving the quality of life for older adults in the community, the Village of Salmo is improving transportation options with a scooter rodeo, to address mobility and safety, and expand its volunteer driving program. Other activities include enhancing existing social opportunities, securing an outreach coordinator to train and support seniors using their new website and hosting elder abuse prevention workshops. The project builds on Salmo's 2017 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Sechelt

### Age-Friendly Trails Guide

The District of Sechelt, Sunshine Coast Regional District and Town of Gibsons will partner on an age-friendly/accessible trails guide, which will identify existing accessible trail networks and user-friendly accesses to parks, neighbourhoods and other amenities on the Sunshine Coast. The guide will highlight trails that are welcoming to all ages and people with diverse levels of mobility and endurance. The project builds on Sechelt's 2012 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Smithers

### Accessible Books for Seniors

The town of Smithers is working with its public library to create an inclusive atmosphere by offering larger-print and audio books for older adults and visually impaired members of the community. By encouraging reading, library use and community participation, the project co-ordinators hope to help combat isolation of its seniors. The project builds on Smithers' 2017 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$3,000

## Stewart

### Stewart Seniors Centre

The District of Stewart will renovate an existing facility into a seniors' centre. This was identified as a need in the community to better the lives of residents, many of whom no longer have family near and rely on the community for support. It will serve as a gathering place to hold meetings of the seniors' steering committee, social and recreational activities, information and communications, and health care and other services.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Surrey

### Mobile Community Care for Seniors

The Mobile Community Care for Seniors will provide basic support resources to the aging population, who are unhoused or unsettled due to various circumstances. The goals of the Mobile Community Care for Seniors are to support seniors in finding a home, ensure they have access to basic needs, and that they remain engaged and independent in their community. This project builds on Surrey's 2012 recognition as an age-friendly community and supports the City of Surrey age friendly strategy framework.

**Amount:** \$14,919

## Trail

### Age-friendly Assessment & Action Plan

Trail's age-friendly assessment and action plan project will identify strategic priorities and establish concrete actions for making Trail an age-friendly community. A workshop including task force members from neighbouring communities (Montrose and Rossland), that are also undergoing age-friendly

assessments, will identify areas for collaboration and resolve overlap.

**Amount:** \$24,898

## Wells

### Increasing walking accessibility in Wells

The District of Wells will work to increase community accessibility through two pilot programs to improve residential snow removal for seniors and people with disabilities and to increase outdoor seating to provide rest areas, with bench installations on routes designated by seniors and community members. Both these programs will reduce isolation and improve overall accessibility for older adults.

**Amount:** \$14,900

## West Vancouver

### Dementia-Friendly Action Plan Implementation

The District of West Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver are implementing a project that will educate staff, elected officials and the residents of the three North Shore communities about dementia, and how they can facilitate greater independence and a higher quality of life for people living with and at-risk of dementia. The plan will also support the development of dementia-friendly educational materials that can be adapted and shared with other communities. The project builds on West Vancouver's 2012 recognition as an age-friendly community.

**Amount:** \$15,000

## Appendix C: 2017/18 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 and Culture, Sport, Environment, Public Safety, Human and Social Services, and Parent Advisory Councils and District Parent Advisory Councils.

Over 3,000 projects throughout the province received funding to support programming ranging from disability sports, to enhancement of youth, to public health and community education.

For a full list of community gaming grant recipients please visit the [Gaming Grants Paid to Community Organizations report \(PDF\)](#).

- Abbotsford Community Services - \$186,000
- ACPD - Action Committee of People with Disabilities Society - \$143,000
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of British Columbia - \$196,500
- Autism Society of British Columbia - \$250,000
- BC Wheelchair Sports Association - \$162,500
- British Columbia Blind Sports and Recreation Association - \$250,000
- British Columbia Epilepsy Society - \$117,000
- British Columbia Schizophrenia Society - \$145,000
- C.N.I.B. - Vancouver Island Region - \$100,000
- Canadian Mental Health Association - Kelowna and District Branch - \$242,400
- Canadian Mental Health Association - Prince George Branch - \$100,000
- Canadian Paraplegic Association (BC) - \$250,000
- Children's Hearing and Speech Centre of BC Inc. - \$100,000
- Comox Valley Child Development Association - \$250,000
- Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of British Columbia - \$250,000
- Disability Alliance BC Society - \$190,000
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Society for British Columbia - \$132,000
- Garth Homer Society - \$131,793
- Merritt Youth and Family Resources Society - \$250,000
- Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, BC and Yukon Division - \$250,000
- Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, Coastal Regional Chapter - \$210,000
- Neil Squire Society - \$135,000
- Okanagan Similkameen Neurological Society - \$100,000
- OPTIONS Community Services Society - \$225,000
- Pacific Assistance Dogs Society - \$250,000
- Richmond Centre for Disability - \$100,000
- Salt Spring and Southern Gulf Islands Community Services Society - \$250,000
- Sources Community Resources Society - \$203,000
- Special Olympics British Columbia Society - \$140,625
- Stroke Recovery Association of British Columbia - \$203,000
- The Center for Epilepsy and Seizure Education British Columbia - \$136,400
- The Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC and Yukon Branch - \$250,000
- Together We Can Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education Society - \$127,100
- Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - \$125,000
- Work Wellness and Disability Prevention Institute - \$189,000

## Appendix D: Resort Municipality Initiative accessibility related projects

Accessibility-related projects funded through Resort Municipality Initiative:

### City of Fernie

- Visitor Information Centre Project
  - Anticipated Completion: 2018
  - The 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.

### City of Golden

- Highway One Corridor Enhancement
  - Anticipated Completion: 2018
  - As part of a larger project, the accessibility component was completed in 2017 and focused on a pedestrian connectivity corridor from the TransCanada Highway One to downtown. Approximately 800 metres of paving and switchback fencing have been completed to enable wheelchair access.
- Trail Enhancements
  - Anticipated Completion: 2018
  - As part of a larger project, trail enhancements include the construction of fencing and gravel surfacing for multi-modal including by people with disabilities.

### Village of Harrison Hot Springs

- Beach and Lagoon Improvements
  - Anticipated Completion: 2018
  - Beach and Lagoon Improvements will involve several projects that improve the overall tourism infrastructure in the Village associated with the waterfront area.
  - Key components include enhancing the aesthetics and accessibility of the lagoon walkway, creating viewpoints along the waterfront, and building accessible public washrooms in Rendall Park.

### City of Kimberley

- Kimberley Winter Ski shuttle
  - Annual shuttle service

- The shuttle facilitates the movement of visitors from accommodation on the ski hill to the community to patron shops and stores throughout the day and après ski.
- Kneeling BC Transit busses facilitate access for people with mobility challenges.
- Sullivan Mine Interpretive Train Project
  - Completion: 2013/14
  - 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.

## Town of Osoyoos

The Town of Osoyoos conducted an Accessibility Audit of all public facilities in 2013. This study resulted in accessibility features being added to facilities developed by Resort Municipality Initiative funds and a Council direction to ensure that all future public facilities be accessible. As part of their planning for the remaining three years of the Resort Municipality Initiative program, one of the goals is to ensure accessibility to all visitor facilities.

- Waterfront Enhancement Project
  - Anticipated Completion: 2018
  - As part of a larger project, waterfront enhancements will include an accessibility ramp to the water to enable people with disabilities to enjoy the beach and lake. The project also includes a visitor activity centre, walkways, passive recreation areas, and pier and supportive amenities.
  - Work on Gyro Beach has made the area accessible
  - Future plans include installation of a mat that will enable better access to the water
- Marina Ramp
  - Completion: 2014
  - The marina ramp addition improves the access to both sides of the marina.
- Trail Development/Connectivity Project
  - Anticipated Completion: 2018
  - The Town of Osoyoos has been upgrading trails to improve walkability, accessibility and hiking experiences. Completed work includes paving two kilometers of trail and a gravel parking lot, and the construction of a ramp to make the trail accessible at its mid-point.
  - In 2017, 3 kilometres of trail paving was completed making the trail totally usable for accessibility challenged persons. Lighting was also installed on a portion of the trail with completion of lighting targeted for 2018.

## City of Revelstoke

- Mezzanine Walkway
  - Anticipated completion: 2018
  - Upgrades to the Revelstoke Railway Museum will make the space fully accessible by extending a walkway and adding an elevator. These upgrades will provide access to all areas of the mezzanine, which have previously been inaccessible to some visitors.
- Williamson Lake Park Upgrade Project
  - Anticipated Completion: 2018
  - 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.
- Downtown Washroom Facilities
  - Completion: 2016
  - 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.
- Business and Visitor Information Centre
  - Completion: 2013/14
  - This project involved installing an elevator in the Visitor Information Centre, a two-story building, to improve access for all visitors.

## City of Rossland

- Museum/Visitor Centre renovation
  - Anticipated Completion: 2017
  - A large component of the renovation made the washrooms more accessible.

## District of Tofino

- Downtown Vitalization
  - Completion: 2018
  - This project creates a series of public space amenities throughout the village core and provides linkages to connect a network of village public spaces. Accessibility has been a big focus of all the downtown vitalization projects. Tofino has improved accessibility by constructing new wide sidewalks and curb letdowns.
- Installation of Mobi-Mats
  - Anticipated completion: 2017

- This project will provide beach access for people with mobility issues from May to October each year by installing 150 feet of mat length from the foreshore to the water.
- MacKenzie Beach Access
  - Completion: 2016
  - This project saw the construction of a beach access ramp, parking area, and an accessible washroom and change room at Mackenzie Beach.
- Windy Hill Lookout
  - Completion: 2014
  - This project created a wheelchair accessible lookout on Tofino's Main Street with views of Tofino's working harbour and Clayoquot Sound.

## District of Ucluelet

- Terrace Beach Access Project
  - Anticipated Completion: 2019
  - The current trail to Terrace beach is difficult to find and accessibility is poor. This project will rework the trail to Terrace beach making it accessible and will include way finding for tourists.
- Big Beach Visitors Access
  - Anticipated Completion: 2018
  - 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.
- Beach Access Mats
  - Anticipated Completion: 2017
  - The District of Ucluelet installed wheelchair/stroller accessible beach mats for persons with mobility issues to provide an opportunity for accessibility at Big Beach.
  - There will be a signage component to the project to identify the accessibility feature.

## Village of Valemount

- Cranberry Marsh Trail
  - Anticipated Completion: 2020
  - As part of a larger project to complete the Cranberry Marsh Trail, the Village plans to upgrade parts of existing trails for wheelchair accessibility.

## Resort Municipality of Whistler

- Conference Centre Improvements
  - Completion: 2017

- Recent improvements have included the construction of an accessible lift to enable use of the stage area by people with disabilities.
- Village Square Mall Rejuvenation
  - Anticipated Completion: Ongoing
  - This has been a multi-project undertaking. The project has completed the construction of an accessible ramp from the Whistler Village Day lots to the Village entry at Village Gate Boulevard. Accessibility improvements on the Cultural Connector are in progress and will include widening of the Chateau Boulevard sidewalk. Future projects will include accessible village washrooms as well as improvements to other areas.
- Valley Trail Mons Crossing
  - Completion: 2016
  - 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.

## Appendix E: Tourism Events Program

Through the Tourism Events Program (TEP), Government of B.C. has provided support to the following para-events:

### Big White 2017 World Para Snowboard Championships

The event hosted over 100 para-snowboard athletes from 16 countries, competing for the title of World Champion in Para-Snowboard-cross and Para-Banked Slalom.

Feb 1-8, 2017

**Location:** Big White

**TEP Funding Amount:** \$40,000

### 7th Karate-do Goju-kai Global Championships

The 2017 event marked the inaugural launch of the para division and inclusion of athletes with a disability at the event.

Sept 28-Oct 1, 2017

**Location:** Richmond

**TEP Funding Amount:** \$24,000

## 2018 Canada Cup International Wheelchair Rugby Tournament

The tournament raised awareness about the inclusion of persons with disabilities in sporting events and the importance of hosting individuals with disabilities and improving accessibility in the hospitality and tourism sector. It built on the legacies of the 2010 Paralympic and Olympic Games and featured eight of the best national teams from around the world.

June 12-18, 2018

**Location:** Richmond

**TEP Funding Amount:** \$25,000

## Big White 2018 Para Snowboard World Cup

The Big White 2018 World Para Snowboard World Cup hosted 75 para snowboard athletes from various countries.

Feb 5-8, 2018

**Location:** Big White

**TEP Funding Amount:** \$25,000

## 2018 Vancouver Mural Festival

Organizers made the festival site more accessible by:

- Adding 25 reserved parking stalls for people with limited mobility
- Adding 15 additional wheelchair accessible portable toilets
- Including an ASL interpreter at all of the public dialogues and offering a free ASL mural tour
- Adding additional ramps to aid mobility devices mount on to the sidewalks during street closures

August 6-11, 2018

**Location:** Vancouver

**TEP Funding Amount:** \$20,800

## 2019 World Para Nordic Ski Championships

This is the largest para nordic event in the world after the Paralympics. It features cross-country skiing and biathlon.

Feb 13-24, 2019

**Location:** Prince George

**TEP Funding Amount:** \$175,000

## Appendix F: Accessibility-related resources and funding opportunities

### 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.

[Learn more about PWD designation](#)

#### 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 have a disability and cannot work at any job on a regular basis.

[Learn more about CPPD](#)

#### Federal tax credits & 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.

[Learn more about federal tax credits and deductions for persons with disabilities](#)

#### 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.

[Learn more about HAFI](#)

## Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors & 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.

[Learn more about Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Fund](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about CSIL](#)

## Employment Program of BC

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

[Learn more about EPBC](#)

## 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

[Learn more about 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.

[Learn more about 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.

[Learn more about the RDSP](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about Access RDSP](#)

## RDSP Grants & 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.

[Learn more about RDSP Grants and Bonds](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about SAFER](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about Home Owner Grants for Persons with Disabilities](#)

## Transportation Supplement for People with Disabilities

Effective Jan. 1, 2018, people on disability assistance 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.

[Learn more about the Transportation Supplement for People with Disabilities](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about the Fuel Tax Refund for Persons with Disabilities](#)

## Camping for free at BC Provincial Parks

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

[Learn more about camping 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.

[Learn more about the Angling Licence Fee Reduction Program](#)

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

Discount fares are available for B.C. 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.

[Learn more about discounted BC Ferries' fares for residents of B.C. with permanent disabilities](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about Age-Friendly Communities](#)

### Job Creation Partnerships/Community & 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.

[Learn more about JCP/CEP](#)

### 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.

[Learn more about Community Gaming Grants](#)

## Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities – 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.

[Learn more about the OF program](#)

## Sports-related grant programs

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

[Learn more about sports-related grant programs](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about Technology@Work](#)

### Community & 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.

[Learn more about the Community and Employer Partnership Fund](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about the Training Tax Credit for employers](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about emergency preparedness for people with disabilities](#)

### Planning for the future: Age-friendly & 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.

[Learn more on Planning for the Future \(PDF\)](#)

### 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.

[Learn more about the Plan H Program](#)

### 2014 Building Access Handbook

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

[Learn more about the 2014 Building Access Handbook \(PDF\)](#)

## Making Space for Everyone: Accessible, Inclusive & 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.

[Learn more about Making Space for Everyone \(PDF\)](#)

## Accessible Community Garden Guidelines

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

[Learn more about accessible community garden guidelines \(PDF\)](#)

## Creating Healthy Communities

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

[Learn more about Creating Healthy Communities \(PDF\)](#)

## BC Human Rights Code

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

[Learn more about the BC Human Rights Code](#)

## 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.

[Learn more about the UNCRPD](#)